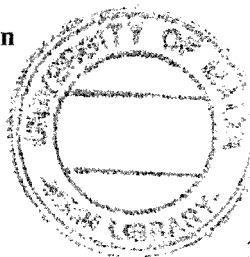


MELITA THEOLOGICA

The Review of the
Faculty of Theology
and the
Theology Students' Association
Malta



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MELITA THEOLOGICA
ISSN 1012-9588

Published biannually since March 1947, treating Dogmatic and Moral Theology, Fundamental Theology, Holy Scripture, Canon Law, Spiritual Theology, Liturgy, Patrology, Ecclesiastical History; Christian Books and Articles are accepted for reviewing.

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c/o Foundation for Theological Studies

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e-mail: melitatheologica@gmail.com

Annual Subscription:

Local: Lm4.00

Foreign: US\$27.00

Typesetting and Printing: Veritas Press, Żabbar

Logo created by: Br Ivan Scicluna O.F.M. Cap.

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Human Rights With A Future

Cultural and counter-cultural aspects from an Eastern Christian Viewpoint

Edward G. Farrugia

The concept of “rights of future generations” may seem to be fully incompatible with the Christian east, often depicted as all lost in wonder with little interest for the pressing concerns of the immediate. So the present paper tries to cull disparate elements from an eastern Christian viewpoint to show the concept’s possible roots in the east itself or, at least, its applicability to it. Given the methodological need to restrict ourselves to a few but central examples, the paper limits itself to a period in which interest in social justice became dominant and was related, positively or negatively, to the Christian outlook. In a first part, 1. *Pravda, truth-justice, or the Quest for Justice*, the brute awakening of independent thinking, or philosophy, in a Russia where serfs were freed only in 1861 is seen to coincide with the desire to attain social status overseas and emancipation at home, with the result that the conceptual tools to promote the cause of social justice are refined but remain open to criticism. This theoretical framework receives a concrete test in a comparison between Vissarion Belinskij and Nikolaj Fedorov, a comparison that shows elements of pluralism, namely: 2. *A two-way future orientation: the future of future generations and the future of past generations*. Though this struggle was at first carried out mainly by baptized Christians, different concepts of what social progress is and of what being a Christian means led to a head-on clash between two great Russian thinkers, Konstantin Leontiev and Vladimir Soloviev, towards the end of the last century; this forms the theme of the third section, 3. *Social Justice and Eschatology in the Crucible*. Finally, a fourth part, 4. *Dialogue between Unequals, or the Scramble*

ABBREVIATIONS:

G. Florovsky, *Russian Theology* II = G. Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology* II, tr. R.L. Nichols, Vaduz 1987.

N.O. Lossky, *Russian Philosophy* = N.O. Lossky, *Hisdtory of Russian Philosophy*, New York 1951.

V.V. Lossky, *Russian Philosophy* = V.V. Zenkovsky, *A History of Russian Philosophy* I, II. Authorized Translation from the Russian by G. Kline New York 1967.

J.M. Edie et alii (ed.s), *Russian Philosophy* I–III = J.M. Edie et alii (ed.s), *Russian Philosophy* (an anthology of texts) I–III, Chicago 1965.

for the Future, tries to work out some of the epistemological implications of this particular search for social justice in the future, especially in view of the collapse of an atheistic experiment which lasted seventy years and which came crashing down under the weight of its own untruthfulness, but from under whose rubble some of the most penetrating cries for future emancipation have become history.

1. *Pravda, or the Quest for Justice*

Nothing is so disconcerting about recent Russian history as the *unpredictable* character of its past – except, perhaps, the *predictable* character of its future! People falling into disgrace and being relegated to non-persons, revisionism as the hermeneutics of survival, but also five-year plans which heralded the eventual end of class-society and its concomitant class-war: all this is too fresh to require here extensive commentary.¹ And yet, the pitting together of predictability and unpredictability is the stuff out of which, for better or for worse, the great sagas of the past as well as the breathtaking vistas of the future are made, so long as they pretend to have something to say for the present.² On the other hand, to try to define culture without counterculture is like trying to shed finite light without shadow or to define human greatness without limits. Precisely this brusque reversal of predictability, not always accessible to western ways of thinking, can help us appreciate why it is imperative, in a quest for eastern correspondences to the concept of “future generations” not to skip to hurdle of analogy, whereby seemingly identical notions can evoke quite disparate connotations.

“What characterizes Russian religious thought,” asserts the great Russian thinker Semyon L. Frank (1877–1950), a convert from Judaism over Marxism and idealism to Christianity and author of *The Unfathomable*,³ “is the prevalence in it of apocalyptic and eschatological themes; besides, the whole of Russian Christian

1. Part of the paradox, however, is that revisionism was officially condemned as equally pernicious as dogmatism, since it did damage to the spirit of the revolution just as dogmatism clung to it uncritically; see S. V. Utechin, *Everyman's Concise Encyclopedia of Russia*, London 1961, 455f. An example of revisionism in this sense would be so-called legal Marxism, which, in the 1880's, attracted a number of economists and sociologists, such as P.B. Struve, S. Bulgakov and N. Berdyaev, who sought to canvass for communism not by underhand means, but in the legal press; *ibid.*, 309.
2. So has E. Bloch commented the historicity of Jesus Christ: “Der Stall, der Zimmermannssohn, der Schwärmer unter kleinen Leuten, der Galgen am Ende, das ist aus geschichtlichem Stoff, nicht aus dem goldenen, den die Sage liebt”; E. Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, Frankfurt a.M. 1959, 1482.
3. N.O. Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*, New York 1951, 268.

conscience may be said to differ from the western mind. Western Christianity succeeded in forming a culture and to put some basic Christian principles into social practice. This, however, could come about only at the expense of the precious awareness in early Christianity that the 'end of the world' was inevitable and close at hand; consequently, every ordering of earthly life is unstable, relative and limited. The opposite happened in Russia. The constant thought of the end of the world, of instability and precariousness of any corresponding world order and, at the same time – and this is the most common variant – the enthusiastic tension towards the ultimate goal of Christian faith, the transfiguration of the world and the coming of the kingdom of God, the realization of absolute *Pravda* (truth-justice) and the advent of 'new heavens and new worlds', entirely dominate Russian Christianity, often at the expense of a moderate and a responsible moral task of illuminating and elevating terrestrial life in a Christian way: or, at least, one does not endeavour to draw a clear limit between these two goals of a different kind.⁴ The difference Russian thought makes, according to Frank, lies in its creative future orientation, but not just of any future, but one of an apocalyptic and eschatological kind, which would account for the creative tension between culture and counter-culture.

In order to understand what kind of truth pravda⁵ is, it is not enough to ask what Russians meant by this term, but one must subsequently integrate the meaning within the wider context of future orientation. Russians had two words for truth, *istina*, which is cognate with Latin and German *est*, is, as well as with Sanskrit *asmi*, *asti*, and the German *atmen*, to breathe. Already this relays accurately one of the main impressions Russians (and, to a large extent, other Slavic peoples) had of the truth as concrete and life-bestowing.⁶ But Russians use another word, *Pravda*, which can signify both justice and truth; thus, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Alyosha Karamazov was cast with the allures of a martyr for the concrete truth, personified in Jesus

4. S.L. Frank, *Iz istorii russkoj filosofskoj mysli konca XIX v nacala XX veka. Antologia*, Washington D.C.-New York 1995, 56.

5. See, on this point, W. Goerdt, *Russische Philosophie*, München 1984, 449–453. On pp. 450–451 Goerdt quotes the text from Nikolai K. Michailowski (1842–1904): "Jedesmal, wenn mir das Wort 'Prawda' (pravda) in den Sinn kommt, kann ich es nicht lassen, mich über seine treffende Schönheit zu entzücken. Ein solches Wort gibt es offensichtlich in kein anderen europäpischen Sprache. Es scheint, nur auf Russisch werden Wahrheit (istina) und Gerechtigkeit (spravedlivost') mit ein und demselben Wort benannt und fließen gleichsam in ein einzige großes Ganzes zusammen. ... Die Prawda-Istina, geschieden von deer Prawda-Sprawedlivost, die Prawda des theoretischen Himmels, getrennt von der Prawda der praktischen Erde, befriedigte mich nicht nur nicht, sondern machte mir Kummer ...".

6. T. Spidlik, *L'idée russe*, Troyes 1974, 72–73.

Christ, and not for just any abstract idea or ideology.⁷ While the concreteness of *Pravda* introduces it into the universe of discourse of culture, its ambitious embrace of both justice and truth raises eyebrows, giving the impression that one will have to wait for a future aeon to see its complete realization. *Pravda* thus becomes a concrete ideal by which to judge reality, rather than something readily identifiable with factual states of affairs; its very unattainability makes it countercultural, putting in question the established order and checking wild dreams.

2. *A two-way future orientation: the future of past and of future generations*

Yet, even to understand *Pravda* as a concrete ideal we must also keep in mind under what specific conditions it was sought. For many centuries, Russian thought seemed to be slumbering in what has been termed “the long prologue to Russian philosophy” (G. Piovesana).⁸ Following the Decembrist Uprising, the first modern Russian uprising, so called because of the revolt on 14 December 1825 at the beginning of Nikolaj II (1796–1855)’s reign (1825–1855), the Czar at once banished philosophy from the universities, a prohibition which lasted from 1826 to 1863, and allotted the philosophical enterprise the limbo-like existence of merely commenting texts from Plato and Aristotle. The philosophical inquisitiveness — awakened by Peter the Great’s (1672–1725) turning to western models, and given a boost by Czar Alexander I’s (1777–1825) entering Paris, on 31 March 1814, with the victors over Napoleon — threatened to be delivered still-born. Had not Alexander N. Radischcev (1749–1802) risked his neck for criticizing the inhumanity of serfdom in his *Journey from St Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) in spite of Catherine II’s (1729–1796) “enlightened” rule (1762–1796), only to be reprieved and put into the State Commission for Codification of Laws, with the result that, nudged on by his incapacity to change the fabric of society, he committed suicide? And, at the other end of the spectrum, had not the Ukrainian Gregory Skorovoda

7. T. Spidik, *L’idée russe*, 76–77.

8. In the first chapter of his work, “Un luno prologo: secoli x-xvvi”, *Storia del pensiero russo (998–1988)*, Milano 1992, 9–41, Piovesana says that, before the outbreak of illuminism, one can only speak of fragments of gold in Russian thought, which together, however, do not yield one big coherent picture. This statement is true as far as it goes, but the author seems to underestimate the presence of other non-verbal communicative systems such as icons, ceremonies, customs, which perhaps render more faithfully the genuinely Eastern spirit. For an evaluation of this work see E.G. Farrugia, “Una storia della filosofia russa”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 59, (1993) 243–248; idem, “Pensiero filosofico russo in prospettiva storica: la storia sollecita paragoni”, *Lateranum LX*, (1994) N. 3, 589–595.

(1722–1794), strictly speaking the first Russian philosopher,⁹ mused socratically, in his own epitaph, about the art of living that, though the world had hunted him, it had failed to catch him?¹⁰

Under these conditions, real philosophical investigation could be carried out only in special circles and for special interests, mostly aiming either to upset the established order, or to strengthen it by developing ideological infrastructures. For the same reason, too, philosophy was exiled from the four quite outstanding Russian theological academies,¹¹ Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev (in the Ukraine) and Kazan (in Tartar Russia), which, taken together, specialized in an all-round patristic programme. In this state of affairs, thinking could thrive only in terms of the goals for which it was pursued, and thus was not infrequently degraded to an “applied”, rather than a pure, science.¹² Unwittingly, however, Russian thinkers were induced to make a virtue out of a vice, and thus were manoeuvred into a position of discovering very vividly the social impact of the quest of truth. Something thoroughly consistent with the eastern holistic viewpoint whereby dogma reflects on one’s ethos and ethos lives up to one’s dogma,¹³ one being the outside view of things and the other the inside vision, so that, ultimately truth and justice belong together within a differentiated unity, in the context of which they can be distinguished, but should never be separated.

And yet, precisely in order to respect the difference in kind of the pursuit of the same goal in east and west: social justice, one may briefly illustrate two different approaches to this goal within Russian thought itself. Although one of them professed himself to be an atheist, while nourishing a great love for Jesus Christ, his thought remains within the orbit of the Christian outlook and even of Christian theology. I mean Vissarion G. Belinskij (1811–1848), social critic and utopist,¹⁴ whom communists were quick to claim as one of their own, considering him to be the founder of criticism of the revolutionary-democratic type. The other thinker with

9. V.V. Zenkovsky, *Russian Philosophy* I, p. 53. He actually came from the Ukraine.

10. V.V. Zenkovsky, *Russian Philosophy* I. p. 56.

11. Martin Köhler, *Die Geistlichen Akademien in Rußland im 19. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1997.

12. G. Kline, “Russian Philosophy”, in: P. Edwards (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 7, New York 1968, 258.

13. This is another way of stating what Cardinal Saliège wrote one day: spirituality is lived dogma; I. Hauherr, *Etudes de spiritualité orientale*, Rome 1969, 145.

14. H.E. Bowman, *Vissarion Belinskij, 1811–1848: A Study in the Origins of Social Criticism in Russia*, 1954.

whom he is to be compared had eccentric views of the resurrection of our ancestors in this present life, but found acclaim, paradoxically from the Communists, too, besides being considered by Fedor M. Dostoevskij (1821–1881) and Lev N. Tolstoj (1828–1910) as their spiritual father. The author in question never wrote a book, but only scraps of paper, later put together by his admirers: Nikolaj F. Fedorov (1828–1903).¹⁵ Belinskij looked foreword to the future of present generations; Fedorov looked foreword to the future of past generations.

The comparison should give us pause, as rarely is the question openly broached, when dealing with future entities, about whose future one is in point of fact discussing: the victims' or the writer's; one can also make capital on poverty, too! Moreover, there exist various kinds of future: there is a future which really is only an extension of the present, as when earthquakes are predicted; there is a future which is a pseudo-idea, because it presupposes it already happening; and there is a future which is made of surprise and different velocities of duration, mirror of human, not mechanical, time, thereby allowing for real unpredictable change.¹⁶ Although it would take us too far afield if we tried to discuss these various possibilities, we cannot formulate a question about the rights of future generations without at least being aware of these various possibilities.

Struck by the grinding poverty he saw on the streets of St. Petersburg, whither he betook himself in 1839, and the reactionary character of Nikolai I's regime, whose accession to the throne in December 1825, as we have seen, was soaked in blood, the two souls in Belinskij's breast, the artist's and the critic's — he was among the very first to recognize Dostoevskij's talents when the latter's first novel, *Poor Folk*, was published in 1846 — veered from his former religious views to one of pronounced atheism; it was his letter to Nikolaj V. Gogol (1909–1852), who hailed from the Ukraine, on account of the latter's book *Correspondence with Friends*¹⁷ which, when read by Dostoevskij in Nikolaj V. Stankevich's (1913–1840) philosophical circle¹⁸ caused Dostoevskij to be condemned, put in front of the firing squad only

15. N.O. Lossky, *Russian Philosophy*, pp. 75–80. Besides having a vast erudition, Fedorov led an intensely spiritual life; Lossky considers him to be “an uncanonized saint”, *ibid.*, 75.

16. On the subject of time and the future see H. Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, Paris 1889; aptly translated as: *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of consciousness*, authorized translation by F.L. Pogson, New York 1960.

17. *Correspondence with Friends* may be safely be considered one of Gogol's less successful works.

18. With N. Stankevitch is usually reckoned the start of the Westernizing movement in Russia; see N.O. Lossky, *Russian Philosophy*, 51.

to be “pardoned” in the last minute and sent off for a four-year prison sentence to Siberia. Although in his letter Belinskij brands the Russian people as “profoundly atheistic by nature”, this turmoil in the heart is only a barometer of the inner struggle that was raging among the people, and need not be taken as a profession of faith; for he wrote six months later: “The Redeemer of humanity came into the world for the sake of all.... He, the Son of God, humanly loved human beings ...”.¹⁹

Belinskij addressed himself to Gogol in these terms:

... you have failed to observe that Russia sees her salvation not in mysticism or asceticism or pietism, but in the advances of civilization, enlightenment, and humanity. She needs not sermons (she has heard enough of them!) or prayers (she has repeated them often enough!) but the awakening in the people of a sense of their human dignity, lost in the mud and filth for so many centuries; she needs rights and laws which conform not to the teachings of the Church but to common sense and justice, and she needs the strictest possible observance of them.²⁰

There is something almost contemporary in Belinsky’s attitude: Christ yes, Church no!²¹ But it would be perhaps better to say that his concern about the future of human beings he saw suffering around him at the hands of those who should have cared for them induced him to criticize a stagnant institution with the hope of making it aware that a religion which does not care is a reality without concrete underpinnings. Having been used and abused so often, his dilemma will seem simplistic; but he fixed the price beneath which an attitude may not qualify as religious: compassion for the socially marginalized, which he found so badly lacking in the Russian Orthodox Church of his day; with Nikolaj Lossky (1870–1965), one my really question whether he really became an atheist.²²

19. N.O. Lossky, *Russian Philosophy*, 55–56.

20. Vissarion Belinsky, “Letter to Gogol”, in: J.M. Edie et alii (ed.s), *Russian Philosophy I*, p. 313.

21. On Belinskij’s attitude towards Christ, the church and primacy see B. Schultz, *Russische Denker*, Wien 1950, 47–72, especially 71f.

22. N.O. Lossky, *Russian Philosophy*, 55.

N. Fedorov likewise grapples with the future,²³ but from a completely different angle, namely in an effort to drum up support for what he called “the common cause”; the bringing back to life of our ancestors! This tenet can only be appreciated from a dual vantage-point. First, a spiritual doctrine: Our social programme is a Trinity, he was fond of saying. In spite of the trenchant criticism which G. Florovskij submitted Fedorov’s ideas from an Orthodox point of view, one cannot ignore Fedorov’s explicit intent to expound his theories in line with Orthodoxy.²⁴ For our purposes here, he is important for the theme of successive generations. At the same time, the gifted and much-consulted cartographer he was, endowed with encyclopaedic knowledge, also had the scientist’s curiosity in discussing means to protract human existence by perfecting medicine and raising standards of living. Decisive, however, is his thematization of the transfiguration of life as the overriding ethico-religious imperative.²⁵ In an ocean of backwardness and social egoism he propounded a theory which greater moved his contemporaries:

23. M. Hagelmaeister, *Nikolaj Fedorov: Studien zu Leben, Werk und Wirkung*, München 1989, 1: “Einige sehen in ihm sogar den russischehn Philosophen schlechthin (*samyj russkij filosof*), den whren Repräsentatnen der welterlösenden ‘russischen Idee’, den Begründer einer ‘Philosophie der Zukunft’. die — gleichermaßen national und universal —, aus dem Geist des Russentums und der ‘Tiefe des russischen Herzens’ (A.V. Gulyga) entstanden, für die gesamte Menschheit wegweisend sei”.
24. G. Florovskij, *Ways of Russian Theology* II, 91–99. Florovskij accuses Fedorov of having all too little Christianity in his philosophy, but of indulging rather in a “too complacent, unruffled and happy optimism” of the Enlightenment (p. 92); that he speaks ‘very rarely and vaguely’ about Christ” so that he has deep down no Christology (pp. 92f); that he is insensitive to “anything beyond the grave” (p. 93), to transfiguration, sin, salvation (p. 93) and grace (p. 94), to the mystery of death, which is reduced to a riddle (pp. 93f), to the doctrine of God-manhood (p. 97), and to the human personality, who is subordinated to the common project (p. 99). The Resurrection itself becomes a redirection and transformation of energy in nature (p. 93), consequence human task of science and art (p. 95). Methodologically, we cannot discuss here all these criticisms, but present an aspect of Fedorov’s thought “from the inside”, as Fedorov himself would have it, so as to say, so as to illustrate the theme which Florovsky himself recognizes in him, and in A. Comte, as central: “a need to overcome the onerous schism between successive generations” (p. 98). Florovskij (1893–1979), one of the most outstanding Orthodox theologians of this century, met with stiff criticism in his turn. While recognizing it as a momentum of erudition, many felt that it applied Florovsky’s own too stiff patristic and Byzantine criteria. N. Berdyaev called this work “No Thoroughfare in Russian Theology”. In effect, only two theologians pass the test: A. Chomjakov and Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow. See J. Meyendorff’s “Introduzione all’edizione russa del 1980,” pp. xxxv–xxxiii.
25. N.O. Lossky, *Russian Philosophy*, 79–80.

The doctrine of raising the dead can perhaps be called positivism, but it is completely opposed to progress as displacing of the older generation by the younger, as the exaltation of the sons over the fathers, and it is also opposed to positivism understood as knowledge only, as a school, as a form of scholasticism. The doctrine of the raising of the dead may be called positivism, but it is a positivism of action, since according to this doctrine mythical knowledge is not replaced by positive knowledge, but mythical, fictitious action is replaced by positive and real action.²⁶

By resurrection of our ancestors Fedorov means something that takes place in the here and now, is thus immanent, and not simply to be transposed into eternity.²⁷ It seems to be a cross between his belief in what Orthodoxy says about the transfiguration of present life-resources and the rising from the dead, and the harnessing of the resources of science. What it exactly means has given rise to wild speculation.²⁸ It comes closer home to say that, according to Fedorov, it is incumbent on Christians to pool their resources together and gradually eliminate whatever destroys human unity through lack of fraternity, “unbrotherliness”, as he called it, and breeds instead hostility. On the contrary, should human beings be able to reconcile themselves with God and among themselves, they should be able to reverse the tide of disintegration, as it concentrates its venom in the sting of disease and death.²⁹ As has already point out, this stance is basically religious, not socio-activist: it does not want to rationalize religion, but to transfigure the human potential so as to accomplish those wonders which only brotherliness, a rare quality, can do. The world would be healthier if progress were not bought at the price of forcing our predecessors to yield their place in life or through the pushingness of the new generation, so easily tempted to dismiss the fathers as out of tune with modern times and so bury them alive. If we define death as a natural process of making place for others, or, what it usually degenerates to, of being forced to relinquish

26. Nikolaj Fyodorov, “The Question of Brotherhood”, in: J.M. Edie et alii (ed.s), *Russian Philosophy* III, p. 45.
27. V.V. Zenkovsky, *Russian Philosophy* II, p. 602: “according to Fyodorov, if there is no immanent raising of the dead, there will be no transcendent resurrection”.
28. According to Zenkovsky, Soloviev certainly misunderstood him when he said: “To resurrect cannibalism, i.e. to resurrect death! What an absurdity!”; V.V. Zenkovsky, *Russian Philosophy* II, p. 602.
29. N. Zernov, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century*, New York 1963, 292f.

one's place, the untapped potential of brotherliness becomes evident in stopping concomitant diseases.³⁰ Unbrotherliness, one may venture to formulate, is that civil war (*Brüderkrieg*) making out of foreigners aliens and out of brothers rivals, thus sapping at the world's chief energy source, the human resource.

These two seemingly diametrically opposed viewpoints, Belinskij's and Fedorov's, meet half-way in their future orientation. Revolution and transfiguration become the common market of all future-oriented thinking, and, by and large, exhaust the whole gamut of possibilities as the outside chance of violence and the inner hope of persuasion. That this Russian debate, in which Belinskij and Fedorov were only two moments, was not simply in vain may be gauged by the fact that its endeavours have left a deep imprint on the language of socio-political struggle for justice: nihilism,³¹ populism,³² reactionism,³³ revisionism, which in turn set the stage for a seventy-year experiment in social justice: dialectical materialism, as the official philosophy of the communist party, which blended materialism with Hegelian motifs was known.³⁴ They are like so many epistemological stations of the cross for anybody who wants to learn from the bitter lessons of the past. No wonder that probably the most successful novel of the Soviet period was a surrealist piece, because it was a parody not of reality as a whole, but of a reality which had departed from reality: Mikail A. Bulgakov (1891–1940)'s *The Master and Margarita*, written against the Moloch of the state in praise of the unorthodox sectarian and socially marginalized Jeshua, whose resemblance with Jesus of Nazareth is certainly fortuitous!

30. So, on this point, E.G. Farrugia, "The contents of Tradition and the Discontents of Culture", *Tradition in Transition*, Rome 1996, 161–171.
31. See V.V. Zenkovsky, *Russian Philosophy*, pp. 74–78. Mikhail A. bakunin (1814–1876), a defender of anarchism, and Fr. Marx' rival at the First International, comes to mind.
32. See V.V. Zenkovsky, *Russian Philosophy*, 278. One of the most prominent founders of populism (*narodnichestvo*) is A.I. Herzen (1812–1870). He believed that Russian could skip the woes of capitalism by staging a peasant revolution with the support of the peasant communes.
33. For several types of reactionary attitudes in this period of time, on a different but related level, see A. Tamborra, *Chiesa cattolica e Ortodossia russa: Due secoli di confronto e dialogo. Dalla Santa Alleanza ai nostri giorni*, Milano 1992; e.g., the influence of Joseph de Maistre, the King of Sardegna's minister to the Czar from 1802 to 1817, pp. 20–26; but also A.N. Murav'ëv's (1841–1846) polemics against Rome, pp. 69–71.
34. S.V. Utechin, *Everyman's Encyclopaedia*, pp. 151f.

3. *Social Justice and Eschatology in the Crucible*

While the two writers we have briefly discussed seem to go in two diametrically opposite directions, the two who come next actually agree fully about the direction to take. Both were, in their own ways, converts to Christianity. From early life Vladimir S. Soloviev (1853–1900), oft hailed as the greatest Russian philosopher, had wanted to be a Christian, and age had lent maturity to his resolve. On the contrary, Kostantin Leontiev (1931–1891) had started out as an aesthete and wound his way to Mount Athos, where he spent a year of his life (1870–1871), only to move, in 1887, to the famous hermitage, Optina Pustin, in the Kaligula Oblast, the unlikely haunt of so many great Russians about a hundred miles south of Moscow, where he became a monk in the last year of his life. Leontiev has even been called the “Russian precursor of Nietzsche” by none other than Nikolaj Berdjaev (1874–1948),³⁵ because of a nihilistic approach to life. A reputation well-earned, if, first of all, we do not push comparisons without ignoring the differences, and secondly, because Leontiev’s fame lies in his being a *destructive* critic of culture.³⁶

In his criticism of the future as a socio-philosophical concept Leontiev’s target was primarily anarchism, under which label he also lumped liberal communists, whereas what he means by “socialism” refers as such to a past, not a present, movement.

[I]f the anarchists and liberal communists, in striving for their own ideal of extreme equality (an impossibility) through their own methods of unbridled freedom from personal encroachments, must bring us, through a series of antitheses, to societies which have yet to live and develop, to great immobility and to a highly significant inequality, then it is possible to assert in general that socialism, properly understood, is nothing but a new feudalism belonging to an already imminent future. . . . [T]hey all consider the ideal of the future

35. Nikolaj Berdyaev, *Leontiev*, tr. George Reavy, London 1940, p. vii.

36. Thus, Constantine Leontiev, in his “The Average European as an Ideal and Instrument of Universal Destruction,” *Russian Philosophy* II, 277, says: “Not considering myself bound to read every book and article in the world, finding this to be not only useless but extremely harmful, I even have the barbaric temerity to hope that in time mankind will through rational and scientific means, reach that end which the Caliph Omar is supposed to have reached empirically and mystically, i.e., the burning of the majority of colourless and unoriginal books.”

to be something like themselves, i.e., to these authors it is rather like European bourgeoisie.³⁷

On the assumption that the homogeneity of culture which began in the eighteenth century was only producing a “bourgeois” type of western European Leontiev argues that the highest degree of social prosperity and of universal political justice, unless tempered by the aesthetic criterion of what is beautiful and elegant and lofty, and especially of what is beautiful, elegant and lofty in religion, would only produce the highest degree of amorality.³⁸

Oscillating between an aesthetic christianity³⁹ and a genuine if not unproblematic conversion,⁴⁰ he did not hesitate to decry Tolsty’s, Dostoevskij’s and Soloviev’s “rosy-coloured Christianity”, because of their humanistic and philanthropic elements,⁴¹ which seemed to him trying to snatch at heaven wherever one could find it — here on earth. In his revulsion to his early worldly life, he became something of a cultural nihilist, full of “philosophical hatred” for contemporary culture.⁴² For him, Christianity in its purity was to be found in its Byzantine form, and was best embodied in monasticism, which, however, required renouncing not only the world but also the aesthetic attitude itself.⁴³

37. C. Leontiev, “The Average European ...,” *Russian Philosophy* II, 278f. Among these authors he means also John Stuart Mill (1806–1873).

38. C. Leontiev, “The Average European ...,” *Russian Philosophy* II, 279f.

39. For example, it was the beauty of the Orthodox liturgy, rather than fascination with her doctrine, which attracted the young Leontiev; F. Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, Turnbridge Wells, Kent, England 1986, I, 186: “In the first part of his life Leontyev’s mind was dominated by the ideal of beauty and the search for it. ... It was not a question of choosing what was immoral because it was immoral. It was a question of what was conventionally regarded as immoral being sometimes beautiful or aesthetically pleasing and as such, justifiable.”

40. Leontiev published this criticism in “Our New Christians,” 1882, a year after Dostoevskij’s death, but which included Tolstoj. “The Christianity to which Leontyev was converted was very different from Tolstoy’s. The God of Leontiev was a fear-inspiring God, the transcendent creator and judge, not a vaguely conceived immanent Spirit, expressing itself in universal love”; Copleston I, p. 189.

41. J.M. Edie et alii (ed.s), *Russian Philosophy* II, 268.

42. *Ibid.*, 269.

43. Copleston I, p. 190.

Leontiev had early affirmed the superiority of aesthetic values over moral and economic ones. Thus, a single century-old tree could very easily be more worth than twenty faceless men.⁴⁴ His Nietzschean nihilism comes to the fore in his attack on closed egalitarian individualism, rather than open aristocratic individualism.

Nietzsche had made a distinction between Christian *Nächstenliebe* (love of one's neighbour) and anti-Christian *Fernstenliebe* (love of the far-off, that is, of future generations). To love and to help one's neighbour, according to Nietzsche, is to preserve the weak and uncreative, thus undermining the living culture of the future. Leontyev drew a similar distinction, but reversed Nietzsche's evaluations, rejecting love of a "collective and abstract mankind" (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 207) and "the feverish preoccupations with the earthly well-being of future generations" (*ibid.*, p. 189) in the name of an inclusive compassion which, though evincing a Christian concern with presently encountered, existing human beings, embraces the strong and creative as well as the weak and suffering.⁴⁵

When, in the last months of his life, Leontiev received news of Soloviev's conference in Moscow, "The Decline of the Medieval Weltanschauung", in which he preached western-style progress, Leontiev could not believe his ears.⁴⁶ To him it seemed as if Soloviev was selling his Christian soul to the devil of progress. Though the angry letter he intended to send his former friend Soloviev never reached him,⁴⁷ news of it did; and the effects are hardly describable, as we shall see later.⁴⁸

In his vast systematic edifice Soloviev gave prolonged attention to the future and to the future of humanity. On his advocating publicly Christian pardon for the murderers of Tsar Alexander II (1818–1881), who had emancipated serfs no sooner he acceded to the throne (1861), Soloviev became *persona non grata* and

44. K. Leontiev, *Sobraniye Sochinenii* I, Moscow 1912, p. 306; see G.L. Kline, "Leontyev, Konstantin Nikolayevich (1831–1891)", in: P. Edwards (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 4, New York 1967, 436.

45. G.L. Kline, "Leontyev, ...", pp. 436–437.

46. Iwan von Kologrivof, *Von Hellas zum Mönchtum: Leben und Denken Konstantin Leontjews (1831–1891)*, Regensburg 1948, 284f.

47. Iwan von Kologrivof, *Von Hellas zum Mönchtum*, 286.

48. Iwan von Kologrivof, *Von Hellas zum Mönchtum*, 13.

relinquished his university post. With him, life and thought were of a piece; no wonder that, in the Introduction to his *The Justification of Goodness* he says that there is only one way to goodness and that is *Pravda* (261). The cause of all human suffering, individual and collective, past and future, he identifies with egoism.

It is the abnormal attitude toward everything else, the exclusive self-assertion, or egoism, which dominates our practical life, even though we deny it in theory — the opposition of the self to all other selves, and the practical negation of the other selves — that constitutes the radical *evil* of our nature. ... For if egoism, i.e., the striving to set up one's exclusive "I" in the place of everything else, to eliminate everything else, is evil in the strict sense (morally evil), the fateful impossibility of actually enacting such egoism, i.e., the impossibility of being everything while yet remaining in one's exclusiveness, is radical *suffering*.⁴⁹

Only through the sacrifice of egoism can human love save the individual as such.⁵⁰ The future-building sacrifice of egoism takes three forms: piety, or respect for superiors (parents), pity for equals (or sym-pathy, that is to say, the capacity to rejoice with them in their successes and suffer with them in their sorrows), and shame (as a kind of moral censorship) for inferiors. Human moral responsibility may be said to be fully expressed in these three relations, which may be reduced ultimately to shame as the root of morality, because through it the religious, social and individual dimensions as the three necessary forms of integrity required in the human, find their expression.⁵¹ These terms may elude us in their immediate grasp; but piety is past-oriented, because it deals with ancestors; pity is present-oriented, because it has to do with our age-group, or contemporaries; and shame is future-oriented, because it concerns our successors. We can even re-phrase somewhat the three key-words and call them: respect, sympathy and criticism. In the third and final part of *Justification of Goodness*, in which Soloviev analyzes goodness in history by discussing the relationships existing between the individual and society, the absolute moral order is identified with the Kingdom of God.⁵² In this

49. V.S. Solovyov, "Lectures on Godmanhood", *Russian Philosophy* III, 77.

50. V.S. Solovov, "The Meaning of Love," *Russian Philosophy* III, 87.

51. D. Strémoukhoff, *Vladimir Soloviev & His Messianic Work*, Belmont, Massachusetts 1980, 267–272. See also H. Dahm, *Solov'ev und Scheler*, München 1971; also: E.G. Farrugia, "Il corpo come imbarazzo e come carisma", *Lateranum* LXII (1996) 479–503.

52. D. Strémoukhoff, *Vladimir Soloviev & His Messianic Work*, p. 274.

way, he prepares the scene for his last great piece of work, *The Three Dialogues*, which include *The Short Story About the Antichrist*. Yet, something unusual takes place: considering the paternity of his own works, he does not show piety but rather exercises criticism: self-criticism!

Like a lightning rod Leontiev's criticism had galvanized the flittering thoughts of Soloviev into action. In *The Short Story About the Antichrist* he wrote in effect a kind of *Retractationes*, for they mark a complete turnabout for a young spirit, who came to distrust any talk that the good future was simply around the corner. The Antichrist is depicted in the very traits of the dashing personality Soloviev had wished to become, but who had failed dismally — so it seemed to him at this critical juncture — his appointment with Christianity. A philanthropic president of United Europe, he seeks everybody's good and even promotes ecumenism, only he does it without regard to the concreteness of the incarnation and is thus a Gnostic, poles apart from the Christian's incarnate interest in human suffering and future improvement. In order to drive the last nail in the coffin of abstract utopianism, Soloviev puts it in a nutshell: whereas Christ is incarnate, the antichrist is disincarnate.⁵³ As incarnate, Christ endures in time and has a future; as disincarnate, the Antichrist has no substance to him, but dwindles into the insignificance of illusion. Both the incarnate and the disincarnate meet on the playground of salvation history and fight for survival. The names of the players are eschatology and unrestrained belief in progress.

In this way, the hyper-eschatological attitude of Leontiev awakened Soloviev rudely from his utopian dreams, enabling him to temper them eschatologically.⁵⁴ However, one should also not forget Georgij Florovsky's scathing criticism of Leontiev, as one for whom religion was merely a way of saving one's soul, not a way of life; in a word: a religion of fear, not a religion of love.⁵⁵

53. Société Vladimir Soloviev, *Oecuménisme et Eschatologie selon Soloviev*, Paris 1994, 160.

54. G. Florovskij, *Ways of Russian Theology* II, 73. Florovsky reproduces also (p. 72) Soloviev's criticism of Leontiev: "Leont'ev's hopes and dreams did not spring from Christianity, which, he confessed as universal truth".

55. G. Florenskij, *Ways of Russian Theology* II, Vaduz 1987, pp. 69–76. On p. 73 Florovsky says: "Christianity has no 'good news' about history or for history. Leont'ev saw no religious meaning in history; he remained an aesthete and biologist in history, and was fully contented with that." See also the introductory remarks to the translation: P.C. Bori, "Introduzione all'edizione italiana," *Vie della teologia russa*, tr. Fl. Galanti, Genova 1987, pp. XIX, XXIII.

4. *Dialogue between Unequals, or the Scramble for the Future*

The foregoing analysis may sound a bit exaggerated, as if the socio-political struggle were all taken up by religious concerns. Yet we need only read the conclusion from VI. I. Lenin's (1870–1924) *What Is To Be Done?* (1902) in which he attacks his former comrade-in-arms and budding economist, about to return to the Church and become one of her most illustrious theologians, Sergej Bulgakov (1871–1944), and one of the most famous, if maverick, Orthodox philosophers, Nikolaj A. Berdjajev (1874–1948),⁵⁶ to persuade ourselves how momentous the whole discussion was. Yet: need it have taken the turn it factually took? Typical of scrambling is the involution, or inward curling, of a linear thought. Soon after their conversion from Marxism S. Bulgakov and others published their *Milestones* (1903),⁵⁷ proclaiming their disappointment with such unfortunate attempts to redress injustice; and, on the eve of the Revolution, *De Profundis* (1917), the swansong of freedom. Almost sixty years later, Aleksandr Soljenitsin (b. 1918) looked back and remembered in his *Form Under the Rubble* (1975). The revolution, which was meant to redress balances, kept rotating around itself; the chase degenerated into a rout.

Again, the analyses offered in this paper may seem meagre. Yet, if we have been able to discuss only a fragment of a thought in the prism of several authors from only one part of the Christian Eastern world, even this fragment might well appear like a splinter from a stray comet, a harbinger of a different planet. And indeed, if human rights leave so much to be desired in the present and so much to shudder about if we include the future, this is in part due to the fact that so little effective dialogue has taken place between various religions, cultures and socio-political systems in the past and the present. There is perhaps a deterrent to such dialogue: unequals sit unwillingly around the same table; or, to put it differently, the table must really be a round one, the conditions of dialogue must be in truth

56. Vl. I. Lenin, "Was Tun?", in: Das Marx-Engles-Lenin-Institut beim ZK der KpdSU(B) (Hg.), *Lenin: Ausgewählte Werke* I, Moskau 1946, p. 323. Technically, Bulgakov started as a Legal Marxist. Berdjajev, in his youth, had been a member of the Social Democratic movement, foresaw the victory of Bolshevism, but broke with them over their repression of freedom.

57. *Vekhi* included the works of N.A. Berdjajev, S.N. Bulgakov, M.O. Gershenzon, A.S. Izgoev, B.A. Kistyakovskij, P.B. Struve and S.L. Frank. See N. Zernov, *The Russian Religious Renaissance*, New York 1963, 111–130.

equal! The first condition has always been “getting to know you”. At the root of so much social injustice is the abysmal ignorance which separates not only the present from the future, but even the present from the present.

Yet the point is not lost in a bid to recover terrain for the rights of future generations. Just as liberal education serves best the utility of the nation, so, too, the most pragmatic way to look at the future is through the telescope of the distant future. The ability to reckon with a not so near future makes the big difference in terms of human maturity and success; while the capacity to order future plans within the framework of a future which is not immediately available is what distinguishes the culture of death, based on immediate gratification, from the culture of life, grounded in more patience than long-range but foreseeable projects call for. Charters of human rights remain paper documents so long as they do not instill a respect for men and women as ends-in-themselves; yet to instill precisely such a respect goes beyond a simple perception of the foreseeable. In politics as in education, few things are so detrimental to real progress as to seek immediate results, instead of preparing stable solutions through painstaking studies, at all pertinent levels.

Of course, a negative experience with one area of knowledge may predispose us against it. The story of human rights is one big concentration camps. However, if it is grossly unfair to keep harping on the black spots of the past, it is even worse to overlook them like so many memory lapses, which once they come back to their senses, can become active once more. Whoever ignores the mistakes of history is likely to repeat them; besides, the possibilities of the past are rarely ever fully activated! Like the seeds of grain found dormant in the pyramids after thousands of years they are capable of coming back to life, *to be resurrected*, as Fedorov might have put it.

Indeed, we cannot do justice to the greatness that is Russia unless we try to keep in mind its potential; never realized fully, it has nonetheless left its mark even where it failed, just as a life's work is to be judged not only by what we do, but also by what we fail to do. With this difference: potency is future-oriented, and, as such, is the language out of which hope shape the future in the concrete. One can also safely predict on the basis of the presence of such a huge potential hardly utilized at all that Russia will yet have a decisive word to say in shaping the future of thought and of human rights, and in a much more positive way than the not so far-off past might have suggested.

This holds eminently true of the rights of future generations on which the sketchy portrayals here may serve to throw a light.

The very immensity of the horizon seems to dictate the enormity of the task. This *Unheimlichkeit*, or not feeling quite at home with oneself or in one's own country, is the vector force of the struggle between progress and eschatology, certainly a dialogue between unequals. The only way out of this impasse is to create a synthesis which respects all the elements of the past, but which is forward-looking. When this integrative force fails, we have a scramble for the future. Communism was an example of precisely such a scramble: its borrowed religious mythology, with the first secretary representing the Messiah and the party the Church, the proletariat the world to be redeemed, and so forth, it was in many ways a secular imitation of the Church.⁵⁸ Communism was but one resolution of the vector forces. There are other — far more creative — possibilities, which are ignored, a lack of interest in Russian thought which one day is likely to wreak havoc on the future.

One abiding lesson from this tug-of-war between eschatology and history is that ethics, especially by Eastern standards, is not to be reduced to housecraft, but has a cosmic dimension which point of departure is the house economy, but soon extends to the *obscina*, the commune. This holds true of Russian society, but deep down it holds true of any society. In this way, the search of the person is something different than the quest of the individual, the former being enmeshed in community by a skein of relationships.⁵⁹

Enmeshed does not mean, or at least should not mean, absorbed. This brings us to the question of rehabilitating past victims. Could this not be one meaning of what Fyodorov is saying? Is the past really so ineluctable? That there are some processes of rehabilitation is clear, if we think of canonizations or political rehabilitations, Pavel Florenskij being a case in point. But rehabilitation, like growth and decline, is a universal process. Can we do justice to our parents, to our teachers, to those who never grew old enough to carry responsibility, to those never born, to whole unborn generations, to whole generations whose birth has been thwarted? Rehabilitating the future is an even more ambitious task, but one which can be tried. Whether we want it or not, the future is already heavily compromised by those ecological factors about which even the papers speak so often. But the future is bigger than whatever

58. B. Russell, *Storia della filosofia occidentale*, tr. L. Pavolini, Milano 1967, 1038–1048.

59. Personalism, we can say, is a trait of many Russian thinkers, such as of N.A. Berdyaev.

compromises it, because it gives rise to hope that we may nonetheless manage to leave a better world behind us.

Finally, we might be turned off by so much talk of monks among the thinkers listed. Being turned off is to interrupt a conversation; whereas the monastic element, in Russian culture, accounts for the counter-cultural ballast. A small indication comes from none other than President Tomáš G. Masaryk (1878–1937), first president of Czechoslovakia and one of the finest Czech philosophers ever, wrote an essay indicating the Russian monastery as the only place where the genuine culture of old Russia is to be found.⁶⁰ And he knew what he was talking about, given that he sensed the death-knell of culture in his country, at least for the immediate future. In view of the general crisis of culture signalled in postmodernism, which is spelled in terms of decline, Gnostic chaos and new age, we think that the culture of the future — the future culture capable of inspiring respect for the human — is to be found in the monastery as a meeting place of all those who realize that only eschatology can prod on the Christian to seek progress and only a sound personalism, so dear to the Christian East, can inject new life into human beings, whatever their station in life, not only as ends in themselves, but as children of the one God.⁶¹

Conclusion

Are progress and eschatology compatible? The struggle seems eternal, aiming at a stalemate, something approaching (in this life) the eternal return of the givens.

Progress and eschatology, however, are not really enemies; they are just unequal. They relate to each other as counter-cultures. First of all they are unequal to their respective tasks, if the tasks are interchanged. Progress would go to pieces on the back of eschatology, just as, in brainstorming, the forward-looking eyes of the creative, cannot at the same time look backwards in self-criticism; both are necessary moments of a solution, but they are difficult bedfellows. Even more so, they are also unequal due to the object they strive to know. Can we really measure eternity with the spoonfuls of time at our disposal? Not only the subjective thrust,

60. T.G. Masaryk, *La Russia e l'Europa: Studi sulle correnti spirituali in Russia I*, tr. E. Lo Gatto, Roma 1925, 9–13.

61. On the monastery of the future as a catechism of hope see E.G. Farrugia, "Every Monastery is a Mission," in: E.G. Farrugia, SJL. Gargano ISB Cam (ed.s), *Every Monastery Is a Mission*, Verucchio (RN) 1999, 178–188.

but also the objective point, changes the object into what it would itself wish to become. Eastern thought is particularly insistent on the ineffability of mystery.

What remains then? A scramble for the future! We have no alternative but to think our metaphysics in terms of the future; to think our theology in terms of the future; to think of ourselves in terms of the future. We are mightily interested in ourselves, and since our potential is hardly ever realized (Aristotle's definition of happiness being a rational nature's realization of its potential) we are greatly inclined to think future, to dream future, to speak future. The Negro singing his or her spirituals for consolation at the thought of the *imminent* presence of the Lord is a case in point. Yet, what we in fact do is to think of the future in terms of the past, to reduce time to space, to devoid meaning of content, purpose of thrust, attention of tension, history of story, movement of orientation.

One need only think what clumsy measures were taken, after the awakening of a newfound sensitivity to the poor, which made the rounds of the world with a much-needed but badly defined catchword, "option for the poor", to patch together truth and justice — or, as they are usually called in the West — faith and justice, to appreciate the insight of a collective enterprise, such as the Russian was from the start, in order to see the necessity to take it seriously. If only for that one word — *Pravda!* Without this word, herald of a unity of faith and justice,⁶² endemic to Christian Eastern thought, as well as without the element of the counter-cultural, guarantee that men and women are not simply reduced to ciphers of a culture but have a transcultural significance as ends-in-themselves, the rights of future generations are in danger of becoming yet an additional ideology, without any self-corrective, and without any real inspiration, because they too would simply aim to take somebody else's place and not create communion between past, present and future generations.

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62. Precisely the integrative character of Christian eastern thought accounts for the unity of faith and justice, dogma and spirituality, and so forth. For precisely the same reason, philosophical and theological themes in Russian thought are usually inextricably intertwined.

Man's Capacity for Self Transcendence – On “Conversion” in Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology* –

John Berry

The concept of “conversion”, while seldom used in his writings until the late 1960's, constituted the major interest of Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984) for more than a generation. For him, the core of conversion itself is the transformation of the “subject”. It is man's call to the realisation of ever higher levels of self-transcendence putting into action the cognitive, ethical and affective response to the religious object. Especially in his Method in Theology, Lonergan explains that only in undergoing a series of conversions – intellectual, moral and religious – culminating in the experience of the love of God (Rom 5,5) by obeying the transcendental precepts that the subject can progressively expand his horizons. In studying the relationship among the different conversions, this essay shows that even if the religious conversion can indeed enjoy a priority over the others, still one is in relation to the other and yet so meaningful on its own. It is a three-dimensional process of self-transcendence taken in whatever order.

In *Method in Theology* and elsewhere, Lonergan¹ describes conversion as a three-dimensional process of self-transcendence,² which is played out, so to speak, on the intellectual, moral and religious levels. Conversion, then, concerns the cognitive, ethical and affective response to the religious object, that is to say, the object of

1. Of Bernard Lonergan, the *Time* magazine remarked that he is “considered by many intellectuals to be the finest philosophic thinker of the 20th century”. Cf. *Time* April 20th 1970, as quoted in Bernard J. Tyrrell, “The dynamics of conversion”, in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 72 (1972) 57.
2. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1972, 237-244; “Self-Transcendence”, in *A Third Collection*, Paulist Press, New York 1985, 131-134.

'ultimate concern'.³ It involves, therefore, man's call to the realisation of ever higher levels of self-transcendence.

1. *The term "conversion"*

"Conversion" is given ample treatment in his *Method in Theology*, referred to by some as "the crowning achievement of a thinker of genius".⁴ Interestingly enough, however, the word conversion does not even occur in the massive index of *Insight*.⁵ In point of fact, it is also true that the whole thrust of *Insight* is toward what Lonergan later spoke of as "intellectual conversion", but in *Insight* he speaks rather of the "self-appropriation of the knower". It was eleven years later, in *The Subject*, that Lonergan decided to discuss and deal with conversion, describing it as "a personal philosophical experience".⁶ Thus, the word "conversion" is seldom used in Lonergan's writings up until the late 1960's. Notwithstanding this, the word refers to realities or occurrences that have perhaps constituted *the* major interest of Lonergan for more than a generation. Becoming a favourite term in his latter years,⁷ conversion appeared as a major theme in the articles entitled "Revolution in Catholic Theology"⁸ and "Theology in its New Context".⁹

Pointing out that Lonergan's discovery of the fact and significance of conversion was not something that occurred between the writing of *Insight* and of *Method*, Donal J. Dorr identifies the articles on *Gratia Operans* as ample evidence of the

3. Cf. Terrence Merrigan, "Imagination and Religious Commitment in the Pluralist Theology of Religions", in *Louvain Studies* 27 (2002) 199.
4. Cf. Hugo Meynell, "Hope, method and genius", in *The Tablet* 226 (1972) 422.
5. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Philosophical Library, New York 1957. *Insight*, Lonergan's monumental opus, has been compared in significance to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. This work is a study of human understanding as it is operative in mathematics, scientists and men in their common-sense activities. Bernard Tyrrell clarifies that as such the whole thrust of *Insight* is toward what Lonergan later spoke of as "intellectual conversion"; however in *Insight* he speaks rather of the "self-appropriation of the knower". Cf. Bernard J. Tyrrell, "The dynamics of conversion", 57-58.
6. Bernard Lonergan, *The Subject*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 1968, 18.
7. Cf. B. C. Butler, "Lonergan and Conversion", in *Worship* 49 (1975) 330.
8. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Revolution in Catholic Theology", in *A Second Collection*. Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1974, 231-238.
9. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Theology in its New Context", in *A Second Collection*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1974, 55-67.

Canadian Jesuit's interest in religious conversion over a period of sixty years.¹⁰ It is not, however our object here to point back to the origins of Lonergan's cognitional theory in *Insight* and even the pre-*Insight Verbum* articles.¹¹ An attempt to trace the development of the notion of conversion over that period is beyond our scope. Our goal is to present Lonergan's understanding of the three conversions and their interrelationship. Thus, there will not be an explanation of the functional specialties and their dynamic interrelationships.

As such, *Method in Theology* has no comprehensive and systematic treatment of conversion but like any other key notions, Lonergan's treatment of the topic must be understood against the background of his earlier writings. Lonergan arrived at his first definition of conversion after conducting an early study on Thomas Aquinas's use of the notion. Lonergan began to understand conversion as a *change* of orientation. He noticed that *conversio*, for Aquinas, did not entail conversion *from*, but simply meant a natural orientation: "the conversion of possible intellect to phantasmata is described ... as a natural orientation of human intellect in this life".¹² This led Lonergan to understand conversion as a change of "intention". Having his interest moved on without discontinuity from philosophy and traditional dogmatics to history and the moral and religious levels of actual human living,¹³ Lonergan shifted his attention to the core of conversion itself, that is, the transformation of the subject. The latter, he maintains, constitutes the basic horizon of the individual.¹⁴

10. The second of these articles (now chapter three of *Grace and Freedom*) present it in Thomistic categories as a *gratia operans* which is a *habitus*. In the final article, he refers to the distinction made by Aquinas between this kind of conversion and how other types – the perfect conversion of the beatific vision and the preparatory conversion which does not involve the infusion of a "habit". Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Theological Studies* 3 (1942) 558; *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1971, 122. The relationship between Lonergan's analysis of conversion and his earlier work on grace has been treated briefly in Kevin Colleran, "Bernard Lonergan on Conversion", in *Dunwoodie Review* 11 (1971) 3-23. For a different interpretation, confer Charles E. Curran, "Christian Conversion in the Writings of Bernard Lonergan", in *Foundations of Theology*, edited by Philip McShane, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin 1971, 41-59; Donal Dorr, "Conversion", in *Looking at Lonergan's Method*, edited by Patrick Corcoran, Talbot, Dublin 1975, 175-186.
11. We refer the reader to chapter 5 in *Method* which gives a kind of diagrammatic view of the functional specialties.
12. Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1967, 160.
13. Cf. Butler, "Lonergan and Conversion", 330.
14. Lonergan, "Theology in its New Context", 66-67.

2. “The Subject” as a knower

The turning towards the subject, remarks Michael T. McLaughlin, characterises Lonergan’s contribution to the renewal of theology after Vatican II.¹⁵ In *Method in Theology*, therefore, Lonergan wanted to contribute not only a theory of knowledge which would open out to a renewal of metaphysics but also a new method in theology itself. The turn to the subject was a way of beginning theology from below.¹⁶ Thus, Lonergan starts with the human person seeking to know himself or herself as a knower, as a knower located in history, and as one who has inherited from the past not only culture but religious beliefs.¹⁷ But let us refer to what Lonergan has to say about “the subject”.

The study of “the subject” – the experience, thinking, judging and deciding subject – is, he says, “the study of oneself inasmuch as one is conscious. It prescind from the soul, its essence, its potencies, its habits, for none of these are given in consciousness. It attends to operations and to their centre and source which is the self”.¹⁸ The subject or self is one who not only experiences, thinks and judges, but also “deliberates, evaluates, chooses and acts”.¹⁹ And in so doing, he (the subject) not only changes his environment; he changes, and indeed in some sense “makes” himself: “he makes himself what he is to be, and he does so freely and responsibly”.²⁰ Lonergan explains that the turning-point for the subject comes when he becomes explicitly aware of this freedom and responsibility for “making himself”, and responsibly chooses it.

Lonergan explains that human persons are subjects by degrees. He presents a scheme where the existential subject stands in distinct but related levels of consciousness:

1. on the first level, the lowest level, Lonergan places what he calls the *merely potentially subject* whereby the person is unconscious in dreamless sleep,
2. then, due to a minimal degree of consciousness and subjectivity, the person is a *helpless subject* of his or her dreams,

15. Cf. Michael T. McLaughlin, *Knowledge, Consciousness and Religious Conversion in Lonergan and Aurobindo*, Pontifical Gregorian University Press, Rome 2003, 55.

16. Cf. *Ibid.*, 55.

17. Cf. *Ibid.*

18. Lonergan, *The Subject*, 7.

19. *Ibid.*, 19.

20. *Ibid.*

3. he becomes an *experiential subject* when he awakes. Lonergan explains that at this stage, people become “subjects of lucid perception, imaginative projects, emotional impulses, and bodily action”;²¹
4. on the fourth level, Lonergan places *the intelligent subject* who sublates the experiential realm. Lonergan explains that the person in this stage, among other things, grows in understanding and expresses his inventions and discoveries;
5. on the next level, *the rational subject* sublates the intelligent and experiential subject. Lonergan explains that at this stage, a person not only questions, but also checks his own understanding and expression. He can also marshal the evidence *pro* and *con* as well as judge something to be so or not to be so;²²
6. Finally, there is human consciousness as its fullest. Lonergan argues that when a person deliberates, evaluates, decides and acts, rational consciousness is sublated by rational self-consciousness. Thus, there comes to be *the existential self*.

3. *Changing horizons: the subject in conflict*

Lonergan relates the idea of conversion to that which Joseph de Finance has named “the vertical exercise of freedom”.²³ There is a bond between conversion (sometimes also referred to as the nature of human authenticity)²⁴ and the exercise of freedom by which one’s horizon is changed. Avery Dulles explains that in undergoing a series of conversions – intellectual, moral and religious – culminating in the experience of the love of God by obeying the transcendental precepts, the subject progressively expands his horizons.²⁵ One can speak of a conversion, remarks Lonergan, when the new horizon is not merely a harmonious expansion of the previous horizon, but is in some respects contradictory to the older horizon.²⁶

Before coming to terms with the meaning of a “horizon”, it should be made clear that Lonergan uses this notion as an image for explaining how conflict can arise. It can be described in terms of conflicting beliefs, differences in horizons, or

21. *Ibid.*, 20.

22. Cf. *Ibid.*, 21.

23. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 237.

24. Conversion is explored in the fifth functional specialty, entitled *Foundations*, however, the most synthetic discussion of the three conversions occurs in the fourth chapter of *Method* dealing with the specialty, *Dialectic*. Cf. Hugo A. Meynell, *The Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, Scholars, Atlanta, Georgia 1986, 15.

25. Cf. Avery Dulles, “Review of *Method in Theology*”, in *Theological Studies* 33 (1972) 553.

the presence or absence of any of the three conversions. Furthermore, conflict can occur in any one of the eight functional specialties from research onward.

The conflicts may be overt or latent. They may be in the religious sources, in the religious tradition, in the pronouncements of the authorities, or in the writings of theologians. They may regard contrary orientations of research, contrary interpretations, contrary histories, contrary styles of evaluation, contrary horizons, contrary doctrines, contrary systems, contrary policies.²⁷

David Tracy, one of Lonergan's disciples, describes horizon as the "maximum field of vision from a determined viewpoint and embraces both relative horizon which describes one's field of vision relative to one's development, and basic horizon which describes the human subject as related to the three transcendental conversions already mentioned".²⁸ Moreover, Michael T. McLaughlin notes that though the image "horizon" is a visual one, its content is not.²⁹

As fields of vision vary with one's standpoint, so too the scope of one's knowledge and the range of one's interests vary with the period in which one lives, one's social background and milieu, one's education and personal development. So there has arisen a metaphorical and perhaps analogous meaning to the word horizon. In this sense, what lies beyond one's horizon is simply outside the range of one's knowledge and interests: one neither knows nor cares. But what lies within one's horizon is in some measure, great or small, an object of interest and knowledge.³⁰

Lonergan identifies four characteristics concerning horizons. Firstly, many horizons, in some measure, include and complement one another. Secondly, horizons may differ "genetically". In other words, each later stage presupposes earlier stages,

26. Cf. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 238.

27. *Ibid.*, 235.

28. For David Tracy, there are four basic conversions: the intellectual, moral, religious and Christian conversion. Cf. David Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*, Herder & Herder, New York 1970, 19-20.

29. Cf. McLaughlin, *Knowledge, Consciousness and Religious Conversion in Lonergan and Aurobindo*, 63.

30. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 235.

partly to include them, and partly to transform them. Thirdly, horizons may be opposed dialectically. For instance, what is true for one person may be false for another. Lastly, horizons are the structured resultant of past achievement and both the condition and the limitation of further development. Lonergan explains that all learning is, not a mere addition to previous learning, but rather “an organic growth out of it”.³¹

At this stage, we cannot speak of conversion without having first presented the conscious and intentional operations which are the “rock” on which Lonergan constructs his theological method.³² The human mind, Lonergan explains, is governed by an unrestricted dynamism toward the fullness of truth, reality and goodness, and that from this dynamism one can distil the transcendental notions of the true, the real and the good. These notions, if taken in reference to Lonergan’s four levels of intentionality (experience, insight, judgement, and decision), yield four transcendental precepts: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible.³³ Frederick E. Crowe explains that these precepts Lonergan offers are concerned with what it is to be an “incarnate subject”. Crowe includes the precept “to be in love”.³⁴ The criteria used in the transcendental method are thus rooted in

31. *Ibid.*, 237.

32. Cf. Lonergan, *Method*, 19-20. Frederick E. Crowe maintains that Lonergan’s work is not “a theory, a model, or a system; not even a way”. It is an *organon*, which concerns “a developed talent of an incarnate subject, a way of structuring man’s conscious activities that has been of immense importance for the ongoing work of the human race”. In this context, the Greek word, *organon*, has been used to designate an instrument of mind. Crowe suggests that specific use of the words “incarnate subject” suggests something more integral than the “mind” which may suggest to some a mental faculty in a body. Integral in the sense of people who experience, question, understand, reflect, judge, deliberate, decide and sometimes fall in love. Thus, calling this methodology an *organon*, emphasis is laid on the inseparability between the theological knowing and who is the theologian. Cf. Frederick E. Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, Cowley, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1980, xiii-iv. 7. 15.

33. *Method in Theology* adapts *Insight*’s four levels of intentionality: empirical (gathering data), intellectual (seeking intelligibility), rational (true judgements), and responsible (action and value). However, reflecting the development in his thought since *Insight*, Lonergan was later to give greater emphasis to the fourth level, the *responsible* level, on which human beings deliberate, decide and act. Initially, the cognitive theory which has been described in detail in *Insight* consisted of three levels of consciousness and intentionality: the *empirical* level on which we sense and perceive, the *intellectual* level on which we enquire, understand and express, and the *rational* level on which we reflect and judge. Cf. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 9; John M. McDermott, “Bernard Lonergan”, in *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapid, Michigan 2000, 328.

34. Cf. Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, xiv.

the very nature of the human mind. In other words, Lonergan's method requires the subject to observe the four precepts.

Obedying these precepts, man expands his horizons and experiences a series of conversions culminating in the experience of the love of God. Furthermore, John M. McDermott explains that along the four levels of intentionality, it is the Spirit who spontaneously advances in self-transcendence to intellectual, moral and religious conversions.³⁵ To quote one of Lonergan's favourite texts, "the gift of God's love flooding our hearts is the gracious gift of a *conversion*".³⁶

4. Conversion as the cognitive, ethical and affective response to the religious object

Understood in this sense, conversion becomes a new type of foundation with which theology nowadays can "mediate between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix".³⁷ Lonergan is concerned with a transcendental method that is not confined to any particular field or subject matter. His method is concerned with meeting the exigencies and exploiting the opportunities presented by the human mind itself. Lonergan describes this method as transcultural and normative, based on the structures of human knowing, which are universal and invariant.³⁸ He argues that since culture has come to be seen as a moving target, theology has to adapt in order to meet its task of mediation.³⁹ On the same lines, Richard M. Liddy comments that what characterises Lonergan's *Method in Theology* is conversion: "the apprehension of conversion through historical scholarship and the communication of the meaning and value of authentic conversion through a methodical theology".⁴⁰

Attentiveness to experience, intelligence in theorizing, reasonableness in judgement, and responsibility in decision imply "authentic subjectivity". Lonergan explains that rather than putting away one's imaginative capacities and taking a look

35. Cf. McDermott, "Bernard Lonergan", 328.

36. Cf. Romans 5, 5. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105. 278, for the context in which Lonergan uses it.

37. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, xi.

38. Cf. *Ibid.*, 14.

39. Cf. *Ibid.*, 4.

40. Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1993, 198.

at reality, "objectivity" is "the fruit of authentic subjectivity".⁴¹ *Method in Theology*, therefore, is "the fruit of a life-time's patient reflection on what theologians do, can do, and ought to do".⁴²

4.1 *Intellectual Conversion*

The first of the three conversions is intellectual. Lonergan describes *intellectual conversion* as the overcoming of all solipsism in and through the realization that the real world is the world mediated by meaning.

Intellectual conversion is a radical clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity, and human knowledge. The myth is that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen and not seeing what is not there, and that the real is what is out there now to be looked at.⁴³

Lonergan distinguishes between the world of immediacy and the world mediated by meaning. Whereas the former is a world known by the sense experience, the latter regards the external and internal experience of a cultural community and the continuously checked and rechecked judgements of the community as foundational. As further explained by Lonergan, the result of intellectual conversion is the position named "critical realism". This is to be distinguished from the naïve realist, the empiricist, and the idealist. All four correspond to totally different horizons with no common identical objects.⁴⁴ Hugo A. Meynell argues that intellectual conversion takes place when the critical realist opts for the fully critical theory of knowledge, and applies it to all his opinions, whether common-sense, scientific, philosophical, religious or anti-religious.⁴⁵

Bartholomew M. Kiely explains that the true, objective, and real are attained in judgment, and that a judgment "must meet conditions" before it can be considered

41. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 292.

42. Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, xiii.

43. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 238.

44. Cf. *Ibid.*, 239.

45. Cf. Meynell, *The Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, 10.

a verified judgment.⁴⁶ He adds however that these conditions vary with the kind of judgment. Kiely shows that in principle, there are a number of steps which the critical realist is not free to take. For instance, he is not free to disregard questions about the genuineness of his values. Conversely, he must always respect the further question, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. Thus, intellectual conversion is the taking up of a position on the nature of knowledge and truth.

For Terrence Merrigan, central aspects to the understanding of the intellectual conversion are both the community and its tradition: “For religious men and women, that meaning is disclosed in the tradition mediated by the religious community”. Merrigan continues that the maintenance of that tradition, in its integrity, is only possible on the basis of the rigorous commitment to truth which is characteristic of the intellectually converted.⁴⁷ As has already been stated, the religious community must be prepared to ‘continuously check and recheck its judgments’ about what it regards as true, good, and worthy of devotion.⁴⁸

4.2 *Moral Conversion*

The second of the three conversions is *moral conversion*. Lonergan describes moral conversion as the radical change in the criterion of one’s decisions and choices from satisfactions to values.⁴⁹ Thus, on the frontier between intellectual and moral conversion lies the judgement of value. In other words, it involves the thrust of our human freedom toward authenticity. He explains that whereas children have to be “persuaded, cajoled, ordered or compelled to do what is right”, an adult can “decide for himself what he is to make of himself”.⁵⁰

46. Cf. Bartholomew M. Kiely, *Psychology and Moral Theology*, Gregorian University Press, Rome 1987, 214.

47. Cf. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 238, 243. Let us refer to what Lonergan remarks on the intellectual conversion: “Finally, among the values discerned by the eye of love is the value of believing the truths taught by the religious tradition, and in *such tradition* and *belief* are the *seeds of intellectual conversion*” (243). On his behalf, Tracy describes intellectual conversion as the “radical reorientation of the authentic subject from some little world of his own... to a world of the intelligently understood and the reasonably affirmed.” Cf. Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*, 231.

48. Cf. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 238, 114-115.

49. Cf. *Ibid.*, 240.

50. Cf. *Ibid.*, 240.

Kiely argues that moral conversion differs from intellectual conversion in that it involves choice and decision, and not only judgement.⁵¹ This can be best illustrated when Lonergan states that moral conversion “consists in opting for the truly good, even for value against satisfaction when value and satisfaction conflict”.⁵² It involves the recognition that the world is “regulated by value,”⁵³ and the willingness to opt for value against satisfaction. Merrigan notes that for religious men and women, the absolute value is the religious object.⁵⁴ Merrigan writes that it is worth noting that Lonergan increasingly highlighted the role of feelings as intentional responses to values.⁵⁵

Feelings reveal values to us. They dispose us to commitment. But they do not bring commitment about. For commitment is a personal act, a free and responsible act, a very open-eyed act in which we would settle what we are to become. It is open-eyed in the sense that it is ... aware that one's present commitment however firm cannot suspend the freedom that will be exercised in its future execution.⁵⁶

In other words, while feelings are vital to religious commitment, such commitment cannot escape the challenge, and the burden, of ongoing critical self-

51. Cf. Kiely, *Psychology and Moral Theology*, 215.

52. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 240.

53. *Ibid.*, 112.

54. *Ibid.*, 115-124. See pp. 115-116, where Lonergan writes that the apprehension of transcendent value “consists in the experienced fulfilment of our unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence, in our actuated orientation towards the mystery of love and awe. Since that thrust is of intelligence to the intelligible, of reasonableness to the true and the real, of freedom and responsibility to the truly good, the experienced fulfilment of that thrust in its unrestrictedness may be objectified as a clouded revelation of absolute intelligence and intelligibility, absolute truth and reality; absolute goodness and holiness.” Lonergan describes the “apprehension of transcendent value” as faith.

55. Bernard J. Tyrrell, “Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values,” in *Lonergan Workshop*, vii, edited by Fred Lawrence, Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA 1988, 331-360; Frederick E. Crowe, *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC 1989, 344-359; Mark J. Doorley, *The Place of the Heart in Lonergan's Ethics*, University Press of America, Lanham, MD 1996, 111-112. See also Bernard Lonergan, “Religious Commitment,” in *The Pilgrim People: A Vision with Hope*, edited by Joseph Papin, Villanova University Press, Villanova 1970, 64-65.

56. Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, 173. Cf. Neil Ormerod, *Method, Meaning and Revelation: The Meaning and Function of Revelation in Bernard Lonergan's 'Method in Theology'*, University Press of America, Lanham, MD 2000, 124-125.

appropriation.⁵⁷ On his part, Meynell highlights the striving for the objective good and the avoidance of any bias. Moral conversion consists in envisaging and striving for the objective good, and in setting oneself against all tendencies to individual and group bias, both in oneself and in one's environment.⁵⁸ The subject, therefore, must "root out bias, acquiring morally relevant knowledge, learning about one's values and motives, and acquiring the habits of a good man".⁵⁹

4.3 *Religious Conversion*

The third conversion is *religious conversion*, "a topic little studied in traditional theology".⁶⁰ Thus, beyond intellectual and moral conversion, but also on the fourth level of responsible, existential consciousness, there is the possibility of religious conversion. Like the other two conversions, religious conversion is a special modality, a crucial instance of self-transcendence.⁶¹ It concerns the being grasped by an other-worldly love. In Meynell's words, It is "a matter of being touched and directed by a basic and unconditional love and good will".⁶² As Paul put it in Romans 5, 5, it concerns God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Religious conversion, then, is "the efficacious ground of all self-transcendence, whether in the pursuit of truth, or in the realization of human values, or in the orientation man adopts to the universe, its ground, and its goal."⁶³

It is being grasped by ultimate concern. It is other-worldly falling in love. It is total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, reservations. But it is such a surrender, not as an act, but as a dynamic state that is prior to and principle of subsequent acts.⁶⁴

Central to Lonergan's understanding of religious conversion is the reality of love, a total, other-worldly, love of God "with all one's heart and all one's soul and

57. Cf. Merrigan, "Imagination and Religious Commitment in the Pluralist Theology of Religions", 200.

58. Cf. Meynell, *The Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, 10.

59. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 240.

60. Lonergan, "Theology in its New Context", 65.

61. Cf. Walter Conn, "Bernard Lonergan's Analysis of Conversion", in *Angelicum* 53 (1976) 387.

62. Meynell, *The Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, 10.

63. *Ibid.*, 241.

64. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 240; (see also 105-106).

all one's mind and all one's strength".⁶⁵ In "Faith and Beliefs", Lonergan points out in his introductory remarks on religious involvement that "man's capacity for self-transcendence" becomes "achievement when one falls in love".⁶⁶ Such a being-in-love brings about a transformation of one's horizon, one's world, one's very being, and so a transformation of the source of all one's discoveries, decisions, and deeds.⁶⁷

Religious conversion, involving "a changed relation to God", is in its total form, "a radical transformation" of the object, "on all levels of living, an interlocked series of changes and developments", accompanied by "a change in oneself, in one's relations to other persons, and in one's relations to God". It is a gift of God, received and accepted by the converted; and it is capable of growth. It is "transvaluation of values".⁶⁸ Thus, it is an existential event, and a gift from God.

There remains however the task of making religious conversion effective in one's life. Lonergan here refers to the distinction between *operative* and *cooperative* grace. The former is religious conversion; the latter is the effectiveness of the conversion. Thus, man is in need of "the gradual movement towards a full and complete transformation of the whole of one's living and feeling, one's thought's, words, deeds, and omissions".⁶⁹

Meynell observes that religious conversion should give us the heart to put forward the effort and endure the hardship involved in undergoing, and fully implementing, the two other kinds of conversion.⁷⁰ Kiely suggests that religious conversion is to be conceived as a beginning, in a manner analogous to the other two conversions.⁷¹ At any rate, the nature of the relationship between religious conversion, and moral and intellectual conversion has generated much discussion. I shall shortly be referring to their relationship.

65. *Ibid.*, 242.

66. Bernard Lonergan, "Faith and Beliefs", (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Newton, Mass., October 1969), 9.

67. Cf. Walter Conn, "Bernard Lonergan's Analysis of Conversion", 389-390.

68. Cf. B. C. Butler, "Conversion and Theology", in *The Tablet* 224 (1970) 425.

69. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 241. On grace as operative and cooperative in St. Thomas, confer *Theological Studies* 2 (1941) 289-324; *Theological Studies* 3 (1941) 69-88; 375-402; 533-578.

70. Meynell, *The Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, 10.

71. Cf. Kiely, *Psychology and Moral Theology*, 216.

Loneragan equates religious conversion with “religious experience” and ascribes it to the action of the Holy Spirit.⁷² In *Method in Theology* he identifies its defining feature as the encounter with “a charged field of love, and meaning.”⁷³ Frederick E. Crowe points out that, as “a religious philosopher groping toward a common language for dialogue among the religions,” Lonergan sought to go beyond “the Christian terms that [were] his predilection,” and develop, as it were, a generic description of the religious differentiation of consciousness.⁷⁴

In any case, Lonergan recognizes that the state of being grasped by ultimate concern is not knowledge as such, by which he means critically reflective consciousness.⁷⁵ Properly religious knowledge is the fruit of abstraction from the original experience. It comes to expression in the “word,” which Lonergan defines as “any expression of religious meaning or religious value.” “Its carrier,” he explains, “may be intersubjectivity, or art, or symbol, or language, or the remembered and portrayed lives or deeds or achievements of individuals or classes or groups.”⁷⁶ Nevertheless, “since language is the vehicle in which meaning is most fully articulated, the spoken and written word are of special importance in the development and the clarification of religion.”⁷⁷ It is above all by means of the word that the religious person is able to relate himself to the religious object, i.e., to what Lonergan, too, calls “the object of ultimate concern.”⁷⁸

72. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105-109, 290. See also pp. 119, 122-123, 266.

73. *Ibid.*, 290. Lonergan appeals, for this characterization, to Olivier Rabut, *L'expérience religieuse fondamentale*, Casterman, Tournai 1969, 168.

74. Crowe, *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, 338.

75. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 106: “To say that this dynamic state [of being in love with God] is conscious is not to say that it is known. For consciousness is just experience, but knowledge is a compound of experience, understanding, and judging. Because the dynamic state is conscious without being known, it is an experience of mystery.” See also p. 57: “As inner experience, it [religious conversion] is consciousness as distinct from self-knowledge, consciousness as distinct from any introspective process in which one inquires about inquiring, and seeks to understand what happens when one understands, and endeavours to formulate what goes on when one is formulating...” Cf. Crowe, *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, 337, n. 17.

76. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 112. The fact that religious experience comes to expression in religious traditions says nothing, of course, about the value of such expressions. Crowe, *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, 325-326, insists that Lonergan held that the Son completes the ‘prior’ mission of the Spirit who is at work in the non-Christian religious traditions and that, according to Lonergan, “the need of the world religions to hear the gospel message is the same need still that the world had when God sent the only Son to be its way, truth and life (Jn 14, 6).”

77. Lonergan, “Religious Commitment,” 62-63.

78. *Ibid.*, 63.

5. *The three conversions as a series of "questions"*

Turning to the question of the relationship of the three conversions to each other, they may be considered first of all in an order determined by the degree of self-transcendence involved. All three kinds of conversion are modes of self-transcendence. Kiely argues that considered in this order, the three conversions appear as a series of "questions" or challenges, each of which leads on to the next.⁷⁹ The sequence to be followed in this order: intellectual-moral-religious.

Intellectual conversion is a conversion towards truth attained by cognitional, self-transcendence.⁸⁰ It implies a willingness to learn, to discover the truth in the light of critical reflection and to accept this truth whether it be pleasant or unpleasant, whether it concerns oneself or anything else. As has been mentioned, moral conversion is a more complete form of self-transcendence than intellectual conversion. On the frontier between intellectual and moral conversion lie judgements of value and the moral challenge that these imply. *Moral conversion* is a conversion towards values apprehended, affirmed, and realised by a real self-transcendence. Moral self-transcendence is more difficult than cognitive self-transcendence. It "goes beyond the value, truth, to values generally".⁸¹ *Religious conversion* is a conversion towards a total being-in-love as the efficacious ground of all self-transcendence, whether in the pursuit of truth, or in the realisation of human values. This grounds the will to live responsibly and to be responsible in the pursuit of truth, however difficult it may be to discover or to accept the truth.

Notwithstanding this, Lonergan proposes to conceive all three forms of self-transcendence in terms of sublation when they occur in a single consciousness.⁸² The three conversions are not necessarily separate events. However, it needs to be said that their interrelations can be complex. McLaughlin explains that the relation of sublation between the three conversions is important because Lonergan wants to avoid at all costs a simplistic dichotomy between the heights of speculative theology and the heights of mysticism. Thus, on the one hand, the theologian must have

79. Cf. Kiely, *Psychology and Moral Theology*, 217.

80. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 241.

81. *Ibid.*, 241-242.

82. Lonergan explains that the notion "sublation" should be understood in a Rahnerian sense rather than in a Hegelian sense. Thus, what sublates needs the sublated, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context. Cf. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 241.

experienced this conversion to be able to evaluate the works of others. On the other hand, no mystic who is at the same time a Catholic can deny the role of reason.⁸³

6. *The three conversions in reverse order*

The three conversions can also be considered in reverse order. Thus, the order would be religious-moral-intellectual. In Lonergan's view, it is the religious conversion which is most vital, central, common, and foundational.⁸⁴ The basic reality is the encounter with God as revealed in Jesus Christ, an encounter which makes a total claim on the individual. The individual's response to this total claim, his letting himself "be seized" by the person of Christ, corresponds to Lonergan's idea of religious conversion. Hence, without religious conversion, a sustained and enduring moral conversion is a *de facto* impossibility.⁸⁵ Likewise without religious and moral conversion a *fully developed* intellectual conversion which enables an individual to arrive at a critically grounded natural knowledge of the existence of God is for all practical purposes an impossible achievement.⁸⁶

At this point, a question may perhaps naturally arise. Why does Lonergan insist on making a sharp and clear-cut distinction between moral and religious conversion? In response to this question, Lonergan distinguishes between moral and religious conversion because he insists on the importance of *distinguishing* between nature and grace.⁸⁷ Thus, while man is capable of rising to various levels of self-fulfilment or self-transcendence (it can be both cognitive and moral self-transcendence), he is not, however, capable of achieving total self-transcendence or religious conversion. Rather he *receives* this type of ultimate self-transcendence as a gift. Evidently, man is not by nature a participant in the divine nature or in the inner life of God, but only by the free gift of God's love flooding his heart through the Spirit which is given to him.⁸⁸

83. Cf. McLaughlin, *Knowledge, Consciousness and Religious Conversion in Lonergan and Aurobindo*, 74.

84. Cf. Tyrrell, "The dynamics of conversion", 58.

85. Cf. Bernard J. Tyrrell, *Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1974, 49, 60, 61. Tyrrell returns to the theme of the religious conversion as the "ultimate and *de facto* existential condition of possibility" of intellectual and moral conversion in "Passages and Conversions", in *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan*, edited by Matthew L. Lamb, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, WI 1981, 22-23.

86. Cf. Tyrrell, "The dynamics of conversion", 58.

87. Cf. Tyrrell, "The dynamics of conversion", 58.

88. Cf. 2 Peter 1, 4 and Romans 5, 5.

Tyrrell points out that while in traditional Catholic theology, the gift of God's love flooding our hearts has been spoken of as sanctifying grace, Lonergan prefers to describe it as the dynamic state of being in love with God. It concerns a radical transformation. Thus, maintains Tyrrell, Lonergan "shifts from a metaphysical discussion of religious conversion in terms of sanctifying grace to a psychological analysis of conversion in terms of a state of being in love".⁸⁹ Here, we are to see both approaches, the classical and that of Lonergan, as simply different ways of approaching what is basically the same reality. It must be stated, therefore, that they are in no way contradictory or mutually exclusive.

Another important dimension in Lonergan's theology of religious conversion is his articulation of faith as "the eye of love" and of the need to distinguish clearly between faith and religious belief. For Lonergan in the conversion phenomenon, it is love and not knowledge which is the heart of the matter. Thus, in the first place, what is at stake is the gift of God's love. Conversion in its first moment is a matter of God taking out the heart of stone and replacing it with the heart of flesh.⁹⁰ Secondly, "the eye of love" or the knowledge which enables individuals to make the value judgement that it is worthwhile to believe, and then to express freely acts of belief, is born of love which is the immediate fruit of the experience of the gift of God's love. This is poured forth into our hearts by the Spirit.

For Lonergan, there exists a major exception to the general rule that knowledge precedes love. This is the gift of God's love flooding into our hearts, the dynamic state of being in love with God. To explain how the love of God, poured forth into our hearts, generates knowledge, Lonergan cites Pascal's famous aphorism: "The heart has its reasons which reason does not know". In this instance, therefore, love does not flow from knowledge, but rather knowledge flows from love. Here, the heart is the subject in love. Tyrrell explains that the reasons known to the heart are the value apprehensions which only the individual who is in love discerns. Only a lover has the experiential knowledge of what it is to be in love. "The individual whose heart is flooded with the gift of God's love *experiences* the fulfilment of the deepest longings of his spirit for absolute truth, goodness and value; and this experience involves a basic shift in value orientation, a transvaluation of values".⁹¹

89. Cf. Tyrrell, "The dynamics of conversion", 61.

90. Cf. Ezekiel 11, 19.

91. Cf. Tyrrell, "The dynamics of conversion", 63.

Thus far, the question of ‘priority’ of the religious conversion over the others should be highlighted. Two theologians who make a critical analysis of Lonergan’s discussion of the relationship between religious conversion, and moral and intellectual conversion are John H. McDermott and Walter Conn.⁹² Both of them seem to have difficulties with Lonergan’s ordering of the conversions in terms of sublation (the religious conversion sublating the moral, and the moral sublating the intellectual). Conn explains that difficulty lies in the fact that Lonergan seems to be saying two different things.

It is not easy to understand how Lonergan can assert an order of occurrence that has religious conversion preceding moral, and moral preceding intellectual, while at the same time claiming that as sublating, religious conversion *needs* the sublating moral and intellectual conversions, and as sublating, moral conversion *needs* the sublating intellectual conversion.⁹³

The same tension in Lonergan’s theory of conversion is taken into question by John H. McDermott.

Without doubt there seem to occur intellectual and moral conversions without religious conversion, but in Lonergan’s system they are ultimately referred to religious, supernatural conversion... Those who stop short at intellectual or moral conversion have not yet completely realized the full implications of their conversions; but implicitly every authentic lower conversion involves a religious conversion.⁹⁴

Conclusion

I would conclude this paper by saying that if there is any tension at all in the relationship between the different conversions, this could be called a “healthy” tension. One is in relation to the other and yet so meaningful on its own. I think that this issue can be resolved in Lonergan’s own words when he points out that these dimensions are “distinct, so that conversion can occur in one dimension

92. Conn, “Bernard Lonergan’s Analysis of Conversion”, 391-394.

93. *Ibid.*, 392.

94. John H. McDermott, “Tensions in Lonergan’s Theory of Conversion”, in *Gregorianum* 74 (1993) 131.

without occurring in the other two, or in two dimensions without occurring in the other one. At the same time, the three dimensions are solidary. Conversion in one leads to conversion in the other, and relapse from one prepares for relapse from the others ... The authentic Christian strives for the fullness of intellectual, moral and religious conversion."⁹⁵ Perhaps, rather than questioning the order or priority of the different conversions, we should focus our attention, with Lonergan, on the religious commitment with its threefold quest to love, contemplate, and attain to, the religious object.

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A Close Reading of Hebrews 3,7 – 4,11 and *Logos* as Christ in Hebrews 4,12

James Swetnam, S.J.

Introduction

Current exegesis of the Epistle to the Hebrews is well-nigh unanimous in holding that the *logos* of Heb 4,12 is the word of God in Scripture, not the Word of God as God, that is, as presented, for example, in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel. The present note is written from the contrary, minority point of view. The first half of the note will present a new argument which points to the *logos* of 4,12 as *Logos*, that is, as being the same as the *Logos* of the prologue of the Fourth Gospel; this new argument is based on a close reading of 3,7 – 4,11. The second part of the note will rehearse the arguments previously given for this understanding of the *Logos* and will situate them in the new context provided by the argumentation in the first part of the note.¹

Hebrews 3,7 – 4,11

A. Group Failure vs. Individual Failure

A common view of Heb 3,7 – 4,11 is that the section presents a symmetrical view of the desert generation of Israel at the time of the Exodus and the Christians who are being addressed by the author of Hebrews. That is to say, this common view maintains that the Exodus generation as a group did not “hear”, i.e., obey, God’s command of faith-trust as they wandered in the desert, and that the Christians as a group were now being presented with the same choice as the one rejected by the desert generation: hear, or lose the chance of entering into God’s rest as a group.²

But a close reading of the text does not seem to support this view.

True, with regard to the desert generation of the Exodus, the entire generation

1. For the present writer’s previous discussions on the matter cf. J. Swetnam, “Jesus as *logos* in Hebrews 4,12-13”, *Biblica* 62 (1981) 214-224; Idem, “The Context of the Crux at Hebrews 5,7-8”, *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 14 (2001) 103-107.
2. For example, this view of symmetrical failure seems to be held by H. W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia, Philadelphia 1989, 113-132.

had a chance of entering and the entire generation failed. This seems clear from Heb 3,16-19 and 4,6. The word of God of Scripture was directed to the entire generation. They were warned not to lose trust in God's saving presence. But they did lose trust and they did so as a group (cf. the way failure is spoken of in the plural at 3,7-11; 3,15; 4,3; 4,5; 4,7). Thus the threat of failure was over the group as a whole, and, as a matter of fact, the threat materialized because of the communal failing of the group to have trust. This much of the common view seems supported by a close reading of the text.

But this view involving group failure does not seem to be applicable to the group of the Christians who are being addressed by the author of the epistle. Whenever the author warns his addressees about the possibility of failure, he does so in terms of the individual. Cf.: 3,12 ("lest there be in any one of you"); 3,13 ("lest any one of you become hardened"); 4,1 ("lest any one of you be thought to have fallen short"); 4,11 ("lest any one fall into the same pattern of disobedience"). But when the author of the epistle speaks in terms of a positive outcome he speaks of a group entering: 3,13 ("encourage each other"³), followed by 3,14; 4,2; 4,3; 4,6; 4,11.

The picture which emerges is thus not one of symmetry between the Exodus generation and the Christian addressees as is envisioned in the common contemporary interpretation, i.e., that the Christian generation was symmetrically threatened with total failure just as the Exodus generation was threatened. The Exodus generation as a group obviously could fail because it did fail. The Christian generation, however, by implication, will apparently fail, if at all, only on a one-by-one basis, not as a group. In other words, the Christians as a group are treated as though they will enter into God's rest, but with the possibility of the failure of some individuals.

B. *The Importance of Hebrews 4,2*

Heb 4,2 is a particularly illuminating verse with regard to the view of symmetry regarding the two generations.

At 4,2 the author of Hebrews continues to draw a contrast between the Exodus generation and the Christians: "For we have received the good news just as they

3. This call to all to "encourage each other" in 3,13 has as its purpose the avoidance of an *individual* falling away, as is clear from the second part of the verse.

did, but the word of hearing did not benefit them because they were not united in faith with the ones who listened". The "word of hearing" (*ho logos tês akoês*) would seem to refer not formally to the words of Ps 95 at 3,7, because the author of Hebrews states in 4,7 that these words were written by David after the failure of the Exodus generation, and this fact figures importantly in his argumentation.⁴ Rather, the phrase would seem to hark back to 2,2, where the Law is referred to as *logos* and where it is presented as being "spoken" (*laleô*) "through angels".⁵ Thus the phrase *ho logos tês akoês* means "the word heard", i.e., the word which depends on hearing to be communicated.⁶

In Heb 4,2 "good news" is said to have been presented to both the Exodus generation and the Christian generation (*kai gar esmen euëγγελισμένοι καθ'απερ κἀκεῖνοι*). In Hebrews, as elsewhere in the New Testament, this "good news" is connected with the "promise" (*epaggelia*) of entering into a rest (cf. 4,1).⁷ In Hebrews this promise would ultimately seem to be the promise made by God to Abraham (cf. Heb 11,9). But in the context of the epistle this promise to Abraham is looked on as having been conveyed to the Exodus generation and to the Christian generation in contrasting ways. In Heb 2,2 these two ways stand side-by-side, just as they stand side-by-side in Heb 4,2. The promise was transmitted to the Exodus generation when the Sinai covenant was promulgated by being "spoken (*laleô*) through angels".⁸ But the salvation of the Christians had its beginning "spoken" (*laleô*) through the Lord. That is to say, inasmuch as the exalted Christ is superior to the angels after the momentary inferiority of his earthly life (cf. 1,5-18), the Christians have received the "good news" of the promise of entering into the rest promised to Abraham from a significantly more powerful source.⁹

The phrase "because they were not united in faith with the ones who listened" (*mê sugkekerasmenous tē pistei tois akousasin*) continues the contrast between the Exodus generation and the Christians. The implication seems to be that both

4. But, of course, the same idea about the necessity of obeying God's command to trust is found in the psalm. It is relevant to the argument materially, if not formally.
5. But the *idea* of hearing alludes to the same idea as expressed in Ps 95 (cf. Heb 3,7a; 3,15; 4,7)
6. Cf. Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 125.
7. On the association between *euaggelizomai* and *epaggelia* cf. Acts 13,31 and the discussion in P. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans/Paternoster, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Carlisle 1991, 241.
8. Cf. also Heb 9,19, where all the commands of the Law are "spoken (*laleô*) by Moses" on the occasion of the inauguration of the Sinai covenant.
9. Cf. J. Swetnam, "The Structure of Hebrews 1,1 – 3,6", *Melita Theologica* 43 (1992) 58-66.

generations listened, but only the Christian generation “heard” (*akouô*) the promise in the sense that it obeyed what it heard, in contrast to the Exodus generation. This statement implies a difference between the nature of the “hearing” referred to in 4,2 by the words *akoê* and *akouô*. The first refers to “mere hearing” (cf. 3,16), whereas the latter refers to “hearing to good effect”, i.e., obeying.¹⁰ The author would then seem to be reasoning thus: “The Christian generation as a whole is hearing to good effect. If the desert generation had only been united to this efficacious hearing, they too would have entered into God’s rest”. What is clear is that for the author of Hebrews the Christians have received their “good news” from a more powerful intermediate source than the Exodus generation did (cf. Heb 2,1-4). But it is not clear if this disparity in “hearing” has something to do with this disparity of source.

According to Heb 4,2, then, the Christian generation “hears” in a way in which the Exodus generation did not. At first glance this efficacious “hearing” of the Christians could well be a simple *de facto* one: as a matter of fact, the Christians *are* obeying, and if the Exodus generation had had this type of hearing, it would have entered into the rest.¹¹ But this view runs into difficulty with a close reading of 4,8-11.

C. *The Importance of Hebrews 4,8-11*

Heb 4,8-11 offers another strong exegetical challenge in the context of 3,7–4,10, for it seems to offer a wholly different perspective on the entering into promised “rest”. Not only is there an apparently arbitrary introduction of Joshua and an allusion to the circumcision he administered to the generation which succeeded the Exodus generation, but the whole point of the passage is to show that the “rest” which the Christians are entering is the Sabbath “rest” of God, not the terrestrial “rest” of the land of Canaan. Faith is not mentioned, but by the fact that even Joshua did not succeed in giving what seems to have been a faithful generation the “rest” promised, it follows that no amount of faith possessed by the Exodus generation would have been availing: the “rest” of God is beyond any human attaining. Thus it would seem that Heb 4,8-11 undercuts the entire discussion about the reason for the failure of the Exodus generation. Even with faith, the Exodus generation could not have entered into the “rest” promised by God. And yet, the emphasis on entering “rest” (*katapausis*, *katapauô*) in the passage (4,8.10.11) indicate that it belongs with what precedes.

10. Cf. the discussion in Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 243.

11. This seems to be the opinion of Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 98, when he speaks of an “eschatological faith”.

D. The Importance of Christ

But there are indications in Hebrews which seem to point a way toward resolving the apparent anomalies involved in a close reading of 4,8-11. In introducing at 3,6 the entire section 3,7 – 4,12¹² the author implies that the trustworthy Christ as Son, in contrast to the trustworthy Moses as servant, is the key for the successful completion of the Christians' attempts at perseverance in their endeavours. And the Christians do so as members of God's "house" (*oikos*) over which the Son has been placed. Membership in this "house" is presumed to be necessary for the Christians. This membership in God's house under the Son is developed at 3,14, where "participation" in Christ is again presumed to be necessary for the Christians as they journey. In these two allusions to participation in Christ through membership in his "house" the author gives, according to the close reading of the text being advanced here, the decisive clue for the mention of Joshua and circumcision in 4,8-11 and thus for the unifying element of the whole passage 3,7 – 4,11. Christ and union with Christ are the unifying elements as well as the point of contrast with Joshua and circumcision.

The Christian generation believed in Christ and are members of God's house over which Christ presides as son (3,6). Their membership will continue as long as the underlying reality (*hypostasis*)¹³ with which they began this association is maintained in its validity (3,14). Implied here is the liturgical act by which the Christians entered into this house cleansed in heart and body (cf. Heb 10,22), i.e., baptism. If the Christian generation maintains the validity of its purity of heart granted through baptism, it will enter into God's own "rest" where Christ has already entered (cf. Heb 2,10).

The use of the name "Jesus" (*'Iêsous*) for Joshua at the beginning of 4,8 sets up an implied comparison with Jesus Christ; the circumcision administered by Joshua sets up an implied comparison with the baptism administered by Christ.¹⁴ The

12. For arguments that these verses constitute a unified section cf. Swetnam, "The Context of the Cruc at Hebrews 5,7-8", 101-102.

13. The word *hypostasis* in 3,14 is taken by the present writer as forming an important part of the full argument regarding the nature of Christian faith. But an adequate treatment of the word as it is found in Hebrews would be well beyond the limits of the present note, which can stand on its own in a limited way.

14. For a presentation of the views of some doctors of the Church about the prefiguration of Jesus by Joshua and of Christian baptism by the circumcision administered by Joshua cf. Swetnam, "Jesus Λουτρο~ in Hebrews 4,12-13", 216-218.

inference intended would seem to be that the ineffective circumcision administered by Joshua is countered in some way by the effective circumcision administered by Christ.

In the context of the preceding part of the section, 3,7 – 4,7, this effective baptism of Christ, which brings about participation in Christ in the “house” of God, i.e., the Church, is what makes entrance of the Christian generation into God’s Sabbath rest possible. As individuals the Christians can fail, but not as a group. (The group failure of the Exodus generation is a warning to the Christian generation, but as individuals, not as a group.) That is to say, as long as Christians remain members of Christ’s “house”, entrance for them is assured.

Here begins to emerge the answer to the question whether the effective “hearing” of the Christians with regard to trust in God is something *de facto* or something deeper. The fact that Christians, as members of Christ’s “house”, are participants in Christ himself (3,14), is surely not without significance. For the risen Christ has already entered into God’s Sabbath rest. Insofar as the Christians remain participants of this risen Christ and thus members of his “house”, eventual success is inevitable.¹⁵

Christ as Logos in Hebrews 4,12-13

This is the background for the author’s use of *logos* in 4,12-13. Elsewhere the present writer has advanced arguments for an interpretation that sees the word at 4,12-13 as having the same meaning as the *Logos* in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel.¹⁶

The difficulties with the prevailing contemporary interpretation in which the *logos* of these verses (the “word” of God as scripture in v. 12, “account” in v. 12) may be summarized as follows:

15. “The prophet Jeremiah foretold a ‘new covenant’ in which there would be a fundamental change in the way the covenant would be regarded. Christians interpreted this new covenant as having a central role in their relations with God, so central that Jesus is pictured as using the language of the new covenant in relation to the Eucharist, the centre of Christian worship. This centrality is matched by the radical change which the Christians thought of as characterizing the new covenant: for them Christ’s death had removed the curse provisions of the old covenant so that there was no more possibility of the failure for the new people of God. Only individuals could fail” (J. Swetnam, “The Old Testament and the New and Eternal Covenant”, *Melita Theologica* 46 [1995] 78).
16. Cf. above, n. 1.

- 1) The terminology is inconsistent: two radically different interpretations of the word *logos* are given when the arrangement of the words in such proximity seems to indicate that they are to be construed as parallel in meaning. The *logos* of v. 12 is found at the beginning of the verse, the *logos* of v. 13 is found at the end of the verse, as though together they were intended to serve as a frame for what is being said.
- 2) The imagery is inconsistent. V. 12 is about the penetrating power of *logos*, whereas v. 13 seems to involve sacrifice.
- 3) The description is inconsistent, for it is not clear how a “two-edged sword” is appropriate for a sacrifice.
- 4) The language is inconsistent. The use of the illative particle *oun* in 4,14 is anomalous; and the use of the participle “living”, *zōn*, would be the only instance in Hebrews of its use modifying non-personal life.

But if one interprets the *logos* of 4,12-13 in the same sense as the *Logos* of the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, these anomalies disappear:

- 1) The terminology becomes consistent: the interpretation of *logos* as *Logos* gives intelligibility to the use of the word as a frame. In v. 12 *Logos* refers to Christ in his divine ability to furnish a spiritual circumcision of the heart necessary to make possible definitive entry into God’s rest. (This has been prepared proximately by the discussion of “heart” in 3,7 – 4,7, and immediately by the allusion in 4,8-11 to the ineffective circumcision administered by Joshua.) In v. 12 *Logos* refers to Christ in his divine ability to act for men as intercessor with God the judge before whom nothing is hidden. The allusion to sacrifice in the verse alludes to the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham.
- 2) The imagery becomes consistent. V. 12 involves the imagery of spiritual circumcision in imaginative terms and relates to what precedes. V. 13 involves the imagery of a sacrificial victim who becomes a priestly intercessor by reason of his sacrifice and relates to what follows.
- 3) The description becomes consistent. The description is of a “knife”, not a “sword”, *makaira* being the word used in the Septuagint for the implement used by Joshua in Jos 5 and by Abraham in Gen 22. The word “two-edged” alludes not only to the double function of the knife—to circumcise and to sacrifice—but also to the double function of *Logos* in the context, referring as it does to what precedes (v. 12) and to what follows (v. 13).
- 4) The language becomes consistent. The illative particle *oun* in v. 14 refers to what immediately precedes, i.e., *oun* is used in its normal sense and refers to the

Logos as intercessor as a result of his sacrificial death on the cross. *Zōn* refers to a person in 4,12, as elsewhere in the epistle.

Hebrews 4,12-13 in the Context of Hebrews 3,7 – 4,11

The arguments given above for the advisability of interpreting the *logos* of 4,12-13 in the same sense as the *Logos* of the prologue of the Fourth Gospel are a rehearsing of what the present writer has previously stated, and seem suasive (nothing else is presumed here) on their own terms. But they become more suasive still (nothing else is presumed here) when placed in the context of 3,7 – 4,11 as advanced in the first part of the article. In these verses a close reading seems to indicate that some transcendent force brought about the certainty with which the Christian generation faced the challenge of entry into God's rest. Membership in the house created by God and over which Christ presides as Son (3,6) is the external sign of membership in the group so benefited, because such membership results in a participation in Christ (3,14). Entrance into this house is effected, of course, by the spiritual circumcision administered by the *Logos* (cf. 10,22 and the connection between baptism, heart and faith referred to there, all in the context of v. 21 with its association of Christ as high priest and the people as his house); perseverance in that house is made possible by the fact that the *Logos* is always in God's presence willing to intercede for his people (cf. 2,17 and the allusion to the mercy and trustworthiness of the Christian high priest).

All of this, for anyone who is cognizant of the Christian tradition, is a way of referring to Christian baptism as the means of entrance into the Church of Christ, i.e., participation under Christ in Christ as an organized body externally visible,¹⁷ as well as the continued helping presence of Christ for the Christians as they journey. It is an example of how working explicitly within the Christian tradition aids the interpreter in arriving at a view of a New Testament which is not only consistent in itself and not inconsistent with his or her faith commitment, but illuminative of that faith commitment as well.

In retrospect, this view of the *logos* of Heb 4,12 as being the *Logos*, i.e., as divine, together with the view that this *Logos* has acted on the Christians to guarantee their

17. "House" is taken here as alluding to the spiritual "faith-dynasty" of Christ (cf. 12,2, where Jesus is portrayed as the "initiator and perfecter of faith") which is outwardly visible in the liturgical groups which celebrate his liturgy (cf. 10,25).

entrance into God's rest, throws new light on Heb 4,2, where the phrase *ho logos tês akoês*, "the word heard", is found. Considered by itself, *ho logos tês akoês* seems to be a rather odd expression.¹⁸ But in the light of the exegesis of Heb 4,12 as the *Logos* who achieves his goal by acting, not by speaking, the expression takes on new intelligibility: it is cast in a form which is designed to contrast with the *Logos* of 2,2. There is the "word which has been heard" in 4,2, and the "Word who has acted" in 4,12.

Conclusion

The above exegesis is offered as a result of a "close reading" of the text. But, as is well known, one interpreter's "close reading" is another interpreter's "eisexegesis". Valid exegesis results largely in free choices, but free choices which are valid to the extent that they can be justified by objective evidence. It is up to the interpreter to make his or her choices of what seems plausible in Heb 3,7 – 4,12. What stands in need of constant re-examination is the objective evidence on which this exegesis was made.

Via della Pilotta, 25
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18. Cf. the discussion in Ellingworth, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 242.

Negotia Christianorum... (Apologeticum 39,1-20).

A study of some salient themes of the moral life and discipline in the daily life of early Christian communities – 2nd & 3rd CE. Tertullian and the Case of North Africa.

Salvino Caruana

In this article, the author attempts an appreciation, description and critical evaluation, of the theological and sociological implications of some of the major philanthropic and other religious activities (negotia) practiced within Christian communities of the second and third centuries CE which Tertullian had come across. The North African theologian meant to bring to the light of day the nature and content of these activities in order to appreciate them and defend them against the futility and injustice of pagan criticism and because of which those quiet and law-abiding citizens Christians in North Africa were being harshly and unjustly harassed and persecuted. Fr Salvino Caruana OSA is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Church History and Patrology in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta, and Director of the Augustinian Institute – Pieta.

In 197CE the Catholic Septimius Florens Tertullianus, otherwise known simply as Tertullian of Carthage,¹ took to the defense of his fellow Christians in two of the more renowned apologetical works of his addressed to the pagan authorities in North Africa, namely, in the *Ad Nationes*, and in the more direct work of his addressed to the magistracy, the *Apologeticum*. The task he had set for his works was a thorough defense of the innocent and impeccable morality of the activities that characterized the daily life of Christians. These were therefore works directed against the classical pagan accusations of the immorality, licentiousness and factiousness in the daily life and gatherings of Catholic Christians in North Africa. The accusation was leveled mainly *vis-à-vis* their neglect towards their duties in daily civic life, their critical

1. For the ancient standard biographical and bibliographical information about Tertullian, see St Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 53: *Patrologia Latina (PL)* 23, 663; and the brief entry in the *Chronicon* for the year 208CE: *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller (GCS)* 47, 212: “Tertullianus Afer, centurionis proconularis filius, omnium ecclesiarum sermone celebratur”.

attitudes towards pagan virtuousness, and their stubborn denial of compliance to the imperial religious obligations demanded by Roman citizenship.

The *Ad Nationes*², in two books, was composed by Tertullian at the beginning of 197CE, and it was the first of its kind in refuting the senselessness of pagan hatred that revealed itself in the different treatment of, and in the kind of judicial process applied against a group of Christians who had been called to appear before the pagan magistrate. This was described as the work of the malignant demons. In the second part of the first book, Tertullian employs all his rhetorical and judiciary expertise in retaliation (*retorquere*) against those infamous accusations of the crimes (*crimina*) with which Christians were constantly being accused: “*Nunc uero eadem ipsa de nostro corpore (re)uulsa in uos retorquebo, eadem uulnera criminum in uobis defossa monstrabo, quo machaeris uestris admentationibusque cadatis*”.³ The last section of the work comprises the North African theologian’s discussion of the three types of theology that is contained in Varro’s *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*. The apologetical work *Ad Nationes* results to be an incomplete task when the end result is compared to what Tertullian had promised to discuss at the outset of the treatise.

Tertullian seems to have composed the work *Apologeticum*⁴ in the winter of 197CE. It is addressed to the governors of this province of the Roman Empire in their task as the competent magistrates in dealing with Christians: “*Romani imperii antistites...praesides*”.⁵ Tertullian presents the work as coming from one who had thought it fit to take upon himself the task of delineating a written and an oral defense of Christianity, a right which had up to now been continually denied to Christians. It is formulated in the mode of a judiciary court procedure. The background set up is wholly fictitious, but has also given the author the advantage of constructing the needed correct humus for his exposition.

In the main part of the treatise, the supposedly *facinora occulta*, occult misdeeds, of Christian morality are examined in great detail. The consequent judicial reproaches, which actually correspond to an exposition of the veracity and truth

2. J.W.P. Borleffs, *CC 1*, Brepols, Turnhout 1954, 9-75.

3. *Ad Nationes* 1, 10, 2: *CC 1*, 24.

4. Eligius Dekkers, *CC 1*, Brepols, Turnhout 1954, 77-171.

5. *Apologeticum* 1,1: *CC 1*, 85; and 2,13: *CC 1*, 89;

(*manifesta*), are then enumerated. In reality, however, these are all meant to make up a negative exposition of the erroneous misconceptions upon which the whole of the accusations of the adversary against Christians have been constructed. The longest section of the treatise is consecrated to an examination of the *manifesta*, which are summed up in the accusation that Christians refuse to give homage to the pagan deities because they do not recognize in them any power to save. On the other hand, they honour the true and only God, the invisible, the incomprehensible who created the whole universe. They also insist that all men ought to have a presentiment of this God and Father of all, as it is of Him, above all, that the soul cries out acknowledging His presence within it, an outcry expressed in that great terse Latin expression of faith: "*O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae*".⁶

The second part is Tertullian's dealing with a second accusation leveled by pagans against Christians, namely that of *lèse majesté*, that they despise and refuse homage to the Emperor, of treason namely. Christians had already been justly (unjustly rather!) accused of dissenting to believe and express their homage to the non-existent pagan gods; but now the accusation of refusing to acknowledge and of paying homage to the reigning Emperor, was an even more heinous and criminal accusation of their pagan accusers. Christians, Tertullian retorts, are the best citizens ever, in that they adore the only true God who with his grace, upholds the life and limb of the rulers themselves. The earthly life of these rulers, had become one which, on the contrary, was being constantly menaced and brought to a tragic and abrupt end by some of their own faithful subjects. Tertullian finally exclaims: "*Nos ergo soli innocentes*",⁷ Christians are the only rightly and truly innocent subjects of the Empire!

The essay aims at an attempt towards an appreciation of, and a critical evaluation of the theological and sociological implications of the major philanthropic and other religious activities (*negotia*) which the Christian communities Tertullian had come across conducted; activities which he meant to bring to the light of day in defense of the futility and injustice of pagan criticism and persecution of such quiet and law-abiding citizens as Christians turned out to be. These spiritual gatherings were conducted in such a manner so as to encourage Christians to lead a morally correct way of Christian life in all its exacting demands. It is *Apologeticum* 39 the

6. Ib. 17, 6: CC 1, 117.

7. *Apol.* 45, 1: CC 1, 159.

point in which Tertullian delineates the *negotia Christianae*: “*Edam iam nunc ego ipse negotia Christianae factionis, quo minus mala refutauerim, bona ostendam, si etiam ueritatem reuelauerim*”.⁸ This section of the *Apologeticum* has also been entitled *De disciplina Christiana*, in which Tertullian took upon himself the onus of describing in detail the nature and content of all those laudable and beneficent activities that characterized the daily life and liturgy of these early Christian congregations, in spite of the unjust accusations and harassment they underwent at the hands of their persecutors.

Celebrations of unity within Christian communities

The great sense of unity and community that reigned within Christian communities, seemed to have been the vaunt of the majority of Catholic Apologetical literature of the time. Christians appeared to the pagans to form one single cohesive body, *corpus*, or else a *coetus*, or a *congregatio*. These terms, and their innermost connotations, must have been also very well known among pagans. But the *genre* of seemingly similar congregations, or fraternities, in pagan society, was limited to same-sex adherents, male, and who came from the same social standing, and their activity was indeed of a very limited nature, philanthropic mainly. On the other hand, Christians formed one single body, in spite of their coming from diverse social levels; they came together to celebrate from several and distinct communities, but in no way were they reduced or engulfed by any one in particular. Thus, each community retained its local particular characteristics.⁹

In order to elucidate that other aspect of the affirmation, namely, that according to Tertullian, Christian communities in North Africa were indeed very much conscious of the fact that they formed a *corpus*, a body, the North African apologist employed the term *tertium genus*.¹⁰ The expression, however, which can already be read in the *Kerygma Petrou*,¹¹ was originally an expression by which pagans derided Christians, but which, eventually, became one which Christians cherished to assume as it expressed an important aspect of their religious and social identity,

8. Ib. 39, 1: CC 1,150: “*I shall proceed at once to show the peculiarities of this Christian society, that, as I have refuted the evil charged against it, I may also point out the positive aspects*”.

9. For a thorough discussion of the argument of the Pauline significance of the local and global characteristics of these early Church congregations, see Pierre Battifol, *L'Église naissante et le catholicisme*, Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1971, 89-92.

10. *Ad Nationes* 1, 8: CC 1, 21: “*Plane, tertium genus dicimur*”.

11. For the *Teaching of Peter*, see fragments in St Clement of Alexandria, *Tapestries* 6, 5: PG 9, 288.

the novelty of their existence as an *ekklesia*, the New People of God, a race set apart from all the rest.

The novelty in Tertullian's use of the above terms, however, was not in order to emulate the more common finality of similar meetings organized by some pagan corporate societies, in that they met simply in order to feast. The Christian meetings, on the contrary, met in order to witness primarily to their internal cohesion, their unity, and one in expressing they expressed thanks to God in prayers in common: "*Coimus in coetum et congregationem facimus, ut ad Deum quasi manu facta praecationibus ambiamus. Haec est Deo grata est*".¹²

... for the celebration of the reading of the Scriptures and preaching ...

"*Coimus ad litterarum diuinarum commemorationem, si quid praesentium temporum qualitas aut praemonere cogit aut recognoscere...*".¹³ Tertullian describes the major reason for these gatherings, in that before all else, they were meant for praying together. They read and prayed the Sacred Scriptures in order that in them they might find those salutary lessons and teachings. Tertullian too gives us that ancient reason behind the frequent reading of the Catholic Scriptures by Christians, namely, that they might illuminate the moral and disciplinary obligations of Christians. Scriptures thus served the purpose of strengthening and nourishing of the faith (dogmatic), of sustaining the hope and fidelity of Christians, as well as in order to tighten up the ecclesial discipline. The task of this last aim of the reading of the Christian Scriptures was considered to be the enforcement of that *Rule of Conduct*, which, according to the North African apologist was expressed in: "*exhortationes, castigationes, et censura diuina*".¹⁴ The Christian correct moral way of life was expressed by this rule, by this *dogma*. It was in the light of, and on the basis of, this rule of conduct, as well as of faith, that later on these Christian communities would declare some of their adherents guilty of incorrect moral conduct, unworthy of participating in these meetings, and would consequently be *excommunicated*

12. *Apol.* 39, 2: CC I, 150: "We come together as an assembly and congregation, that, offering prayer to God as with united force, we may wrestle with Him in our supplications. This violence God delights in". Similar ideas can also be read in St Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, *First Apology* 65: PG 6,428.

13. *Apol.* 39, 3: CC I, 150.

14. *Apol.* 39, 4: CC I, 150.

from participation of these holy things: “*si quis ita deliquerit, ut a communicatione orationis et conuentus et omnis sancti commercii relegetur*”.¹⁵

The presiding authority during assemblies

The element of Church order throughout these assemblies stands out clearly. It must be emphasized and made clear that according to Tertullian’s description, the celebrations of these Christian assemblies were definitely entrusted to the presidency of *seniores probati*, namely, to some of the more expert elderly priest members of the celebrating Christian community. These were certainly the presbyters as many orthodox Christians in Carthage would have been outraged if a layman had performed such *sacerdotalia munera*.¹⁶ Such men must have also proved their worth thanks to their *testimonium*: “*sed testimonio adepti*”.¹⁷ Tertullian was also indeed extremely cautious to rule out any kind of simony, or other pecuniary elements, involved in the election of these *seniores probati*: “*neque enim pretio ulla res Dei constat*”.¹⁸ In this text he does not delay too much in describing the degree of authority of the presidency of these gatherings. He simply declares that they are baptized elderly and are to be dedicated primarily to the ministry of the word.

Pecuniary administration

The things of God can never be described or measured against pecuniary considerations, Tertullian retorts. The income from the offerings that came from collections during the liturgical celebrations of these sacred gatherings was immediately passed into the common box which known also as the *arca*. From what can be deduced regarding the description of the nature and finality of these collections, it becomes clear that these early Christian communities, in second century North African society, were considered to be operating within the legal framework relevant to the *collegia tenuiorum*, congregations erected for pious purposes such as, for instance, the funerary associations. Ever since the time of the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great, these associations or

15. *Ib.*

16. *De praescriptione haereticorum (The prescription against heretics)* 41, 8: CC 1, 222: “*Itaque alius hodie episcopus, cras alius; hodie diaconus qui cras lector; hodie presbyter qui cras laicus. Nam et laicis sacerdotalia munera iniungunt*”.

17. *Apol.* 39, 5: CC 1, 150.

18. *Ib.*

congregations had been tolerated and recognized thanks to a senatorial indult.¹⁹ In the classical work of later Roman imperial jurisprudence known as the *Digesta*, a normative collection of opinions of renowned Roman jurists, compiled under the auspices of the Roman Emperor in the East, Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Justinian (527-565CE) in the year 533CE, it was stated: “*Permittitur tenuioribus stipem menstrum conferre, dum tamen semel in mense coeant, ne sub praetextu huiusmodi illicitum collegium coeat*”.²⁰ “Waltzing in his classic study of *collegia* stopped short of claiming that the government achieved the objective of compulsory ‘unionism’. Membership of a *collegium* was not in fact necessary for the practice of a craft, either in theory or in practice. But Waltzing did hold that all workers’ associations were hereditary attached to some public service from the time of Constantine – the aim being to ensure that vital public functions were performed and essential supplies furnished”.²¹

The only difference, however, but also a great one in the case of Christian collections, was that the donors were not in any way obliged to contribute. They did so out of their own generosity and spontaneously, each and every one was encouraged to contribute, even the smallest possible amount within his poor means. It is also necessary to keep in mind that the rich converts to the Christian faith were expected to contribute heavily towards the coffer for the poor. This collection was known as the *depositum pietatis*, as it was meant only and primarily towards the upkeep of the poorest members of the Christian community:

“These gifts are, as it were, piety’s deposit fund. For they are not taken from it in order to be spent on feasting, and drinking-bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined not to the house; such, too, as have suffered

19. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (136CE) 14,2112,1: “*Kaput ex senatu consulto populi romani: quibus coire collegiumque habere liceat. Qui stipem menstruam conferre uolent in funera, in id collegium coeant conferendi causa unde defuncti sepeliantur*”.
20. Book 47, 22, 1: “*It is allowed for societies to collect money monthly, on condition that they meet once a month, and do so for no illicit purposes*”, see also J.A.C. Thomas, *The Institutes of Justinian*, London 1975. See also the work of J.-P. Waltzing, *Étude Historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les romains depuis les origines jusqu’à la chute de l’empire d’occident*, Louvain 1896.
21. P. Garnsey – C.R. Whittaker, “Trade, Industry and the Urban Economy”, in, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 13. The Late Empire, A.D. 337-425, University Press, Cambridge 1998, 318.

*shipwreck; and if there happen to any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession".*²²

That money could only be directed and spent for charitable causes. Literary proof for one of these afore-mentioned cases that would be alleviated thanks to these collections, can be read in the account of the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*:

*Then Tertius and Pomponius, the blessed deacons who ministered to us, obtained with money that for a few hours we should be taken forth to a better part of the prison and be refreshed. Then all of them going out from the dungeon took their pleasure; I suckled my child that was now faint with hunger. And being careful for him, I spoke to my mother and strengthened my brother and commended my son unto them. I pined because I saw they pined for my sake. Such cares I suffered for many days; and I obtained that the child should abide with me in prison; and straightway I became well and was lightened of my labour and care for the child; and suddenly the prison was made a palace for me, so that I would sooner be there than anywhere else".*²³

It was the practical aspect of Christian charity that actually enraged the pagans most!

Other aspects of Christian charity

It is this novel aspect of Christian charity that Tertullian underlined, and described in all its details, accompanied with all the typical vehemence of his expressions. It was also this aspect, rather peculiar to Christianity, which vexed the pagans all the more as they saw in it the basic moving force behind their unity and togetherness: "*Vide, iniquiunt, ut inuicem se diligent*".²⁴ In the same sentence, the

22. *Apol.* 39, 6; CC 1.151: "*Haec quasi deposita pietatis sunt. Quippe non epulis inde nec potaculis nec ingratu uoratrini dispensantur, sed egenis alendis humanisque et pueris ac puellas re ac parentibus destituis [iamque] domesticis senibus iam otiosis, item naufragis, et si qui in metallis et si qui in insulis uel in custodias, duntaxat ex causa Dei sectae, alumni confessionis sua fiunt*".

23. J.A. Robinson, *The Passion of S. Perpetua (Texts and Studies 1, 2)*, Cambridge 1891.

24. *Apol.* 39, 7: "*See, they would retort, how they love one another*": CC 1.151.

African theologian engaging his mastery of the Latin language to its utmost, and in his typical method of contrasting and reconciling seemingly contradictory aspects, describes this uncommon and unconceivable love of Christians for one another in the words: "...for themselves they are animated by mutual hatred; how they are ready even to die for one another, for they themselves will sooner be put to death".²⁵ The other fact that Christians addressed one another as *brethren, fratres*, an aspect of their love for one another, however, became one of the most displeasing element which brought upon them all the hatred of their malign enemies who showered on them all kinds of accusations of debauchery and licentiousness practiced during their evening meetings. Tertullian countered this accusation thanks to his recourse to the fundamental underlying aspect of the unity of Christians in one Church, namely, that enhanced thanks to their adoption by God as His children, in Christ Jesus: "*At the same time, how much more fittingly they are called and counted brothers who have been led to the knowledge of God as their common Father, who have drunk in one spirit of holiness, who from the same womb of a common ignorance, have agonized into the same light of truth!*"²⁶

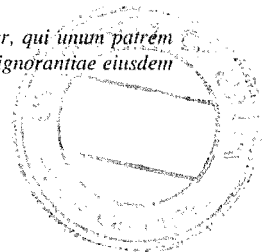
The significance of the description of the above Trinitarian union is the basis for that communality aspect that is expected to be imitated by each and every one: this is, however, not a description solely of a community of belongings, but of that free and generous use by all, of all that one disposes of: "*Omnia indiscreta sunt apud nos...*"; this harkens also that famous dictum that among friends everything ought to be in common:

*"But on this very account, perhaps, we are regarded as having less claim to be held true brothers, that no tragedy makes a noise about our brotherhood, or that the family possessions, which generally destroy brotherhood among you, create fraternal bonds among us. One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us".*²⁷

25. Ib. 8: CC 1,151: "...*ipsi enim inuicem oderunt; et ut pro alterutro mori sint parati, ipsi enim ad occidendum alterutrum paratiores*".

26. *Apol.* 39, 9: CC 1,151: "*Quanto nunc dignus fratres et dicuntur et habentur, qui unum patrem Deum agnouerunt, qui unum spiritum biberunt sanctitatis, qui de uno utero ignorantiae eiusdem ad unam lucem expauerunt ueritatis?*"

27. Ib. 39, 11: CC 1,151.



Tertullian does not refrain however, from inserting that lapidary proviso: that among Christian all is held in common... except wives "*praeter uxores*". Tertullian embarks here upon a long apologetical invective against those notorious and illicit hated pagan customs in the sphere of conjugal morality:

"We give up our community where it is practiced alone by others, who not only take possession of the wives of their friends, but most tolerantly also accommodate their friends with theirs, following the example, I believe, of those wise men of ancient times, the Greek Socrates and the Roman Cato, who shared with their friends the wives whom they had married, it seems for the sake of progeny both to themselves and to others; whether in this acting against their partners' wishes, I am not able to say. Why should they have any care over their chastity, when their husbands so readily bestowed it away? O noble example of Attic wisdom, of Roman gravity—the philosopher and the censor playing pimps!"²⁸

Agape meetings

Tertullian then proceeds to describe those Christian meetings which express the sublime aspect of that unity which he is taking pains to discuss against pagan accusations. These meals in common were known as *cenulae*. He intends primarily to draw out the details and describe the validity and holiness of these sacred meals from the religious point of view, namely as Christian *agape* meetings. In the description of these gatherings, Tertullian seems to want to distinguish them from the celebration of the Eucharist. Even though, however, the Eucharist did take place during these *agape* celebrations. Thanks to a famous letter of the pagan Roman governor of

28. *Apol.* 39,12-13: CC 1,151-152: *"In isto loco consortium soluimus, in quo solo ceteri homines consortium exercent, qui non amicorum solummodo matrimonia usurpant, sed et sua amicis patientissime subministrant, ex illa, credo, maiorum et sapientiorum suorum disciplina, Graeci Socratis et Romani Catonis, qui uxores suas amicis communicauerunt, quas in matrimonium duxerant liberorum causa et alibi creandorum. Nescio quidem an inuitas: quid enim de castitate curarent, quam mariti tam facile donauerunt? O sapientiae Atticae, o Romanae grauitatis exemplum: leno est philosophus et censor!"*

Bithynia, a certain Pliny the Younger,²⁹ to his emperor, Trajan,³⁰ we have a detailed description of the daily life of second-century Christians. In *Letter 96*, addressed to Trajan, Pliny speaks of two daily meetings of Christians, one which took place in the morning, probably the *antelucani coetus* of which Tertullian speaks, and the other evening meeting, in which the *agape* was celebrated. Pliny reported that:

“...they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honour of Christ as if to a god...after this ceremony it had been their custom to disperse and reassemble later to take food of an ordinary, harmless kind...”³¹

Pliny also reported that upon examination, accompanied by harsh methods of investigation, of those seemingly innocent practices, in spite of persecution, the majority of these Christians were ready to abandon the first practice, but categorically refused to do so as regards the second.

The details of Tertullian’s description of the celebration of these Eucharistic meals recorded from early Christianity also conform to those given by Hippolytus of Rome,³² in the *Canons* drawn up by him.³³ Before and after these meals, it was to be kept in mind that all through, God was to be invoked and adored, before as well as after, and all through the night He was to be invoked and adored. After, there followed the ritual of the washing of hands and the reading of texts from Sacred Scripture or else improvised spontaneous prayer, as well as singing. From the description forwarded of the celebration of the *agape* from some early Christian

29. Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundinus born in 62CE and died towards the year 114CE, was born in Como, Italy. He studied law in Rome under Quintilian and made a brilliant legal career in the City. He was also befriended to Tacitus and was finally given the imperial charge of one of the Roman Provinces, Bithynia-Pontus. Pliny delivered a famous panegyric in honour of Emperor Trajan. Of all of Pliny’s works there are still 247 *Private Letters* extant. The more notorious of them was *Letter 10* to Trajan, against Christians.

30. Pagan Roman Emperor Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus born on the 18th of September 53CE and died on the 9th of August 117CE. He ruled the Empire between 98CE and 117CE, he is commonly known as Trajan, and was the second of the *Five Good Emperors* of the Roman Empire. Under his rule, the Empire reached its greatest territorial extent.

31. *Letter 96*, 7-9: “...quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere...rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum”.

32. A Christian priest who lived and worked in Rome during the first half of the third century CE.

33. H. Achelis, *Die ältesten Quellen des orientalischen Kirchenrechtes*. I. Die “*Canones Hippolyti*,” in, *Texte und Untersuchungen* 6, 4, Berlin 1891 (see *Canones* 32, 164 – 35,185: 105-111).

sources, it seems to have been therefore a meal during which one consumed food according to his appetite: “*editur quantum esurientes capiunt; bibitur quantum pudicis utile est*”.³⁴ The meal was celebrated towards the end of the day, and after which everyone returns to his home conscious of having rather fulfilled one’s duties (*disciplina*) than of having simply dined: “*Inde desceditur non in cateruas caesionum nec in classes discursationum nec in inceptionses lacuiarum, sed ad eandem curam modestiae et pudicitiae, ut qui non tam cenam cenauerunt quam disciplinam*”.³⁵

Tertullian refuted the pagan accusation of any kind of intemperance in the consumption of food; as a matter of fact, the poor as those who benefited from all of it at the end of the day. The accusation of any secrecy involved in the location of the *rendevous*, or of immodesty or indecency of behaviour involved in this innocent consumption of food by Christians in common, is also strongly rebutted by Tertullian in the words: “*Haec coitio Christianorum merito sane illicita, si illicitis par, merito sane damnanda. Si non dissimilis damnandis, si quis de ea queritur eo titulo, quo de factionibus querela est*”.³⁶ Tertullian does not hesitate to admit and make it clear the fact that these gatherings are also regulated by the *disciplina Christiana*, which was extremely important and necessary; it appears that this must have been also one of the bones of contention with pagans. He retorted that anyone failing to observe these rules of conduct, risked the heavy punishment of exclusion from the community (excommunication): “*Sed dicet aliquis, etiam de nostris excidere quosdam a regula disciplinae*”.³⁷

Conclusion

This study and analysis of chapter 39 of the *Apologeticum* has revealed some salient aspects of the daily Christian life and practice of second century Christianity as regards the role of the *presbyter*, the prayers preceding and following of their *agape* and Eucharistic meetings, as well as the kind of charitable assistance to the needy as a show of social cohesion.

The text has also revealed the kind of ingenious technique in the defense of Christian piety against pagan accusations, which Tertullian had opted for, thanks, namely, to a kind of a positive and a negative exposition of his ecclesiological

34. *Apol.* 39,17: CC 1,152.

35. *Ib.* 39, 19: CC 1,153.

36. *Ib.* 39, 20: CC 1,153.

37. *Ib.* 46, 17: CC 1,162.

ideas, which, at the same time, underlined the role of that unique unity between the militant Church on earth, reflecting also the Church of the One and Triune True God of Christianity.

Tertullian shows how the Church is the society of the Christian faithful, and which saw the light of day on the day of Pentecost.³⁸ It is also *apostolic* by origin, and its distinctive marks are those of faithfulness to its origins, and the community of the faithful as adopted children of God in Jesus Christ. Tertullian harped on the note of *catholicity*, namely of universality, of the Catholic Church.³⁹ He also invoked the solidity of the principle of social cohesion as reflecting the disciplinary aspect of unity of belief and of Christian hope.

Tertullian was also the first Christian Writer to have brought out in all its force the idea of the *mystery* which the Church reveals to be. Thanks to his vivid esoteric writing, he succeeded in underlining all the aspects of the vitality of that form of love which characterized all of the Christian forms of celebration of these early Christian North African communities which he had come across. Tertullian thus explained to their pagan accusers the importance of these Eucharistic assemblies of Christians, known as *cenae*, or *agape*. As it has already been noted above in the discussion of the text from *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, it was also thanks to these celebrations whence Christian martyrs had obtained such kind of great courage and heavenly comfort to meet their final struggles with the devil in the form of gladiators against whom they were about to battle. This resulted in the enormous show of courage and lack of fear on the part of Christians, in face of such harsh torture that awaited them, and which had proved to be wholly incomprehensible to their pagan persecutors. It must also be noted, however, that after Tertullian had passed over to Montanism,⁴⁰ he reproached Christians with dietary intemperance in the practice of such meals, especially considering that it was the case of their last meal before being condemned for supplication, a practice therefore, which could

38. *Praesc.* 22, 11: CC 1, 204.

39. See also other texts in this regard, for instance, *Praesc.* 26: CC 1, 208: "*quam catholicae in medium proferebant*"; and *Aduersus Marcionem (Against Marcion)* 2, 17, 1: CC 2, 494.

40. A heresy which arose around 172CE in Phrygia, Asia Minor. It was founded by a certain Montanus, a recent convert to Christianity, who, it was claimed, had uttered prophecies during trances, predicting the imminent descent of the heavenly Jerusalem at the village of Pepuza in Phrygia. As a result, he strongly urged his devotees to assemble there, to practice rigorous fasting, and to contribute sums of money towards a common fund.

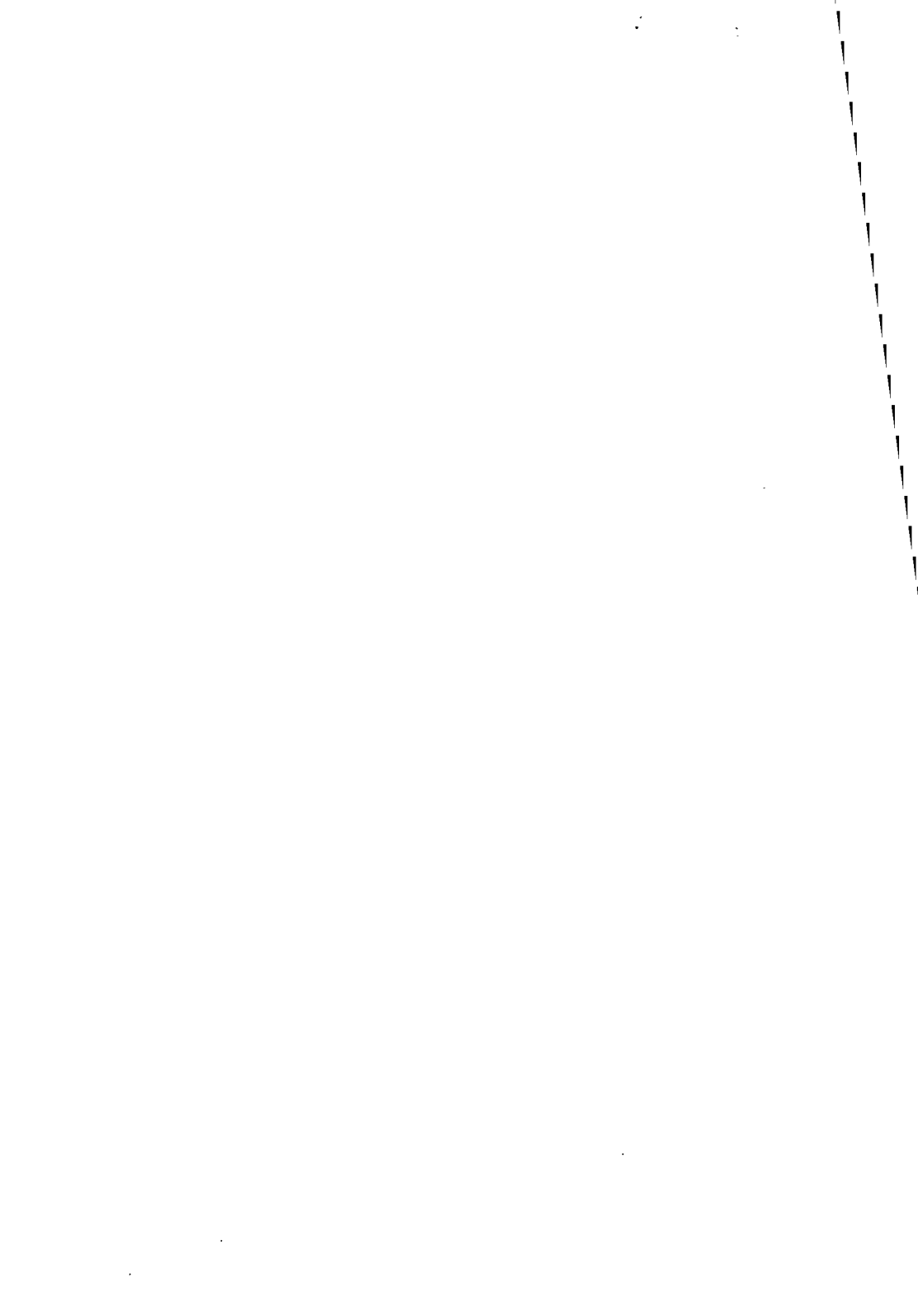
have easily involved the risk of weakening their resistance.⁴¹

Finally, in this text, Tertullian has also enlightened us as to the nature of some of the more original religious cults practiced, and the nature of the texture of the social customs of these early Christian communities in the midst of a pagan world and regime in Roman North Africa in the second and third centuries CE.

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41. See *De Ieiunio (Aduersus psychicos) (On fasting)* 12, 2-3: *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 20 (G. Reifferscheid – G. Wissowa, Vienna 1890), 290: “...sed ad praemiendam per nosmet ipsos nouissimorum temporum condicionem indicentes omnem g-tapeinophronēsin, cum carcer ediscendus et fames ac sitis exercendae et tam inediae quam anxii uictus tolerantia usurpanda sit, ut in carcerem talis introeat christianus, qualis inde prodissit, non poenam illic passurus, sed disciplinam, nec saeculi tormenta, sed sua officia, eo que fidentior processurus ad certamen e custodia abusus nihil habens carnis, sic ut nec habeant tormenta materiam, cum sola et arida sit cute loricated, et contra ungulas corneus, praemisso iam sanguinis suco tamquam animae impedimentis, properante iam et ipsa, quae iam saepe ieiunans mortem de proximo norit. 3. Plane uestrum est in carceribus popinas exhibere martyribus incertis, ne consuetudinem quaerant, ne taedeat uitae, ne noua abstinentiae disciplina scandalizentur, quam nec ille pristinus uester non Christianus martyr adtigerat, quem ex facultate custodiae liberae aliquamdiu fartum, omnibus balneis quasi baptismate melioribus et omnibus luxuriae secessibus quasi ecclesia secretioribus et omnibus uitae istius inlecebris quasi aeterna dignioribus hoc puto obligatum, ne mori uellet, postremo ipso tribunalis die luce summa condito mero tamquam antidoto praemedicatum ita eneruastis, ut paucis unguis titillatus (hoc enim ebrietas sentiebat) quem dominum confiteretur interroganti praesidi respondere non potuerit amplius, atque ita de hoc iam extortus, cum singultus et ructus solos haberet, in ipsa negatione discessit.” (“...enjoining every species of ταπεινοφρονῆσις, since the prison must be familiarized to us, and hunger and thirst practiced, and capacity of enduring as well the absence of food as anxiety about it acquired: in order that the Christian may enter into prison in like condition as if he had (just) come forth of it,—to suffer there not penalty, but discipline, and not the world’s tortures, but his own habitual observances; and to go forth out of custody to (the final) conflict with all the more confidence, having nothing of sinful false care of the flesh about him, so that the tortures may not even have material to work on, since he is cuirassed in a mere dry skin, and cased in horn to meet the claws, the succulence of his blood already sent on (heavenward) before him, the baggage as it were of his soul,—the soul herself withal now hastening (after it), having already, by frequent fasting, gained a most intimate knowledge of death! 3. Plainly, your habit is to furnish cookshops in the prisons to untrustworthy martyrs, for fear they should miss their accustomed usages, grow weary

of life, (and) be stumbled at the novel discipline of abstinence; (a discipline) which not even the well-known Pristinus – your martyr, no Christian martyr - had ever come in contact with: he whom - stuffed as he had long been, thanks to the facilities afforded by the “free custody” (now in vogue, and) under an obligation, I suppose, to all the baths (as if they were better than baptism!), and to all the retreats of voluptuousness (as if they were more secret than those of the Church!), and to all the allurements of this life (as if they were of more worth than those of life eternal!), not to be willing to die - on the very last day of trial, at high noon, you premedicated with drugged wine as an antidote, and so completely enervated, that on being tickled—for his intoxication made it feel like tickling - with a few claws, he was unable any more to make answer to the presiding officer interrogating him “whom he confessed to be Lord;” and, being now put on the rack for this silence, when he could utter nothing but hiccoughs and belchings, died in the very act of apostasy!”).



κρείττων *and the disproportionate typology*

Laurențiu Ionescu

Introduction

Word studies certainly do not fulfil the ultimate goal in New Testament exegesis, but nevertheless they are basic and essential for an accurate interpretation of the New Testament. The goal of this study is to show the semantic nuance of the word κρείττων and the typological value¹ of this term in Pauline epistles.

Several assumptions about the nature of language as a vehicle of communication are implied in this work:

- (1) An author uses written language signals in an attempt to communicate cognitive content, emotive feelings, and desires for an appropriate response from his audience.
- (2) An author shares a vast amount of information with his intended audience, such as world view, culture, and specific circumstances involved in the communication situation. Much can therefore be left unexpressed because the author is confident the audience will infer it aright.
- (3) Although a biblical author's purpose and meaning are largely available to us today only through the written text, his purpose and the meaning he intends to communicate are antecedent to and have priority over the written surface forms he uses.
- (4) Meaning is conveyed through a hierarchically arranged set of units which are related in semantically appropriate ways to other units.
- (5) Within a given unit, some constituents of meaning are nuclear (central) and others satellitic (supportive) of them. The units that are nuclear have natural prominence.

1. The question of emphasis or the doctrinal centre of Hebrews is a vital one. It is generally agreed by the interpreters that the epistle have one "master idea" to which all others sections of theology are subordinate. For a detailed discussion see William G. Johnsson, "Issues in the Interpretation of Hebrews," *Andrews University Seminary Study* 15 (1977) 169-188; P.P. Saydon, "The Master-Idea of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Melita Theologica* 13 (1961) 19-26; David J. MacLeod, "The Doctrinal Center of the Book of Hebrews," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 146 (1989) 291-300.

- (6) An author can use various grammatical and lexical devices to signal that certain meaning units have marked prominence.

The occurrence and the usage

In determining the meaning of a word, the inductive method is the only really scientific one. In the study of the usage of a word in the New Testament, there is a general rule that was followed. The nearer the occurrence of the word is chronologically and contextually, the more influence it has in determining the meaning of the word in the passage being studied. If the word occurs in the same paragraph, it normally will have more bearing on its meaning than if it is found several chapters later. The word should be studied in the book in which it is found, then in all of the writer's books, and finally in the entire New Testament.

Forms

There are two forms in which the term under study can be encountered in the New Testament text: κρείττων or κρείσσων. The two forms reflect the alternative pronunciation specific to different regions of Greece. The alternation of τ and σ can be found in other cases² in New Testament vocabulary.

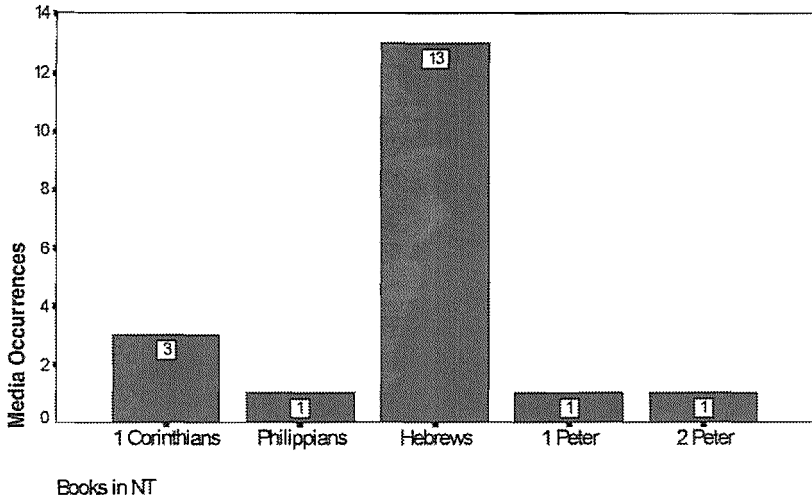
Occurrence

The root κρείττων is found 19 times in NT in 18 verses. From 19 occurrences, 2 are in the First and the Second Epistle of Peter and 17 in the epistles of Paul.

It is interesting to note that the majority of occurrences are found in the Pauline epistles. The occurrence in the Pauline epistles is distributed in following proportion: 3 occurrences in 1 Corinthians, 1 occurrence in Philippians and 13 occurrences in Hebrew.

The following graphic shows the disposal of the occurrence in the books of NT.

- Example: γλωσσα-γλωττα. For a methodological approach of Greek phonology see Margaret E. Dean, "The Grammar of Sound in Greek Texts: Toward a Method for Mapping the Echoes of Speech in Writing." *Australian Biblical Review* 44 (1996) 53-70.



The semantics of the root

The ANLEX³, the latest New Testament dictionary, describe κρείττων as being the comparative of κρατύς (*strong*). The possible translation is *better, more advantageous, more useful, etc.*⁴

The term is used to qualify different things, persons, and actions. In this type of context ‘greater’ must be understood in the sense of “more important,” or “of higher rank,” or “of greater authority”.

3. Timothy Friberg and Barbara Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament ANLEX*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2000.
4. κρείττων, ον, gen. ονος and κρείσσω comparative of κρατύς (*strong*) used as a comparative of ἀλαθός (*good*); (1) of persons *superior, better, higher in rank* (Heb 1,4); substantively *more important person* (Heb 7,7); (2) of what is *more advantageous, better, more useful* (1Cor 7,9); neuter as a substantive τὸ κρείττων *the advantage, the more profitable thing* (1Cor 11,17; perhaps Heb 12,24), opposite τὸ ἥσσω (*the worse*); τὰ κρείσσωνα *more useful things* (Heb 6,9); (3) neuter as an adverb (*in a better way*) (probably Heb 12,24).

The LNLEX⁵ describes two semantic levels that define the root κρείττων:

- a) **Value** – κρείττων, ον or κρείσσων: being superior to something else in characteristics or function - better, superior.
- b) **Status** -κρείττων, ον, gen. ονοϋς: having a higher status in comparison to something else - *better, greater, superior to*.

The distinction that exists between these two levels of semantics is important in the context of the exegesis of Epistle to Hebrews.

The pattern “shadow-reality”

Types are pictures, object-lessons, by which God taught His people concerning His grace and saving power. A person, event or thing is so fashioned or appointed as to resemble another; the one is made to answer to the other in some essential feature; in some particulars the one matches the other. The two are called ‘type’ and ‘antitype’; and the link which binds them together is the correspondence, the similarity, of the one with the other.

It is somewhat difficult to give a satisfactory classification of Biblical types⁶, but broadly they may be distributed under three heads:⁷

- (1) Personal types, by which are meant those personages of Scripture whose lives and experiences illustrate some principle or truth of redemption. Such are Adam, who is expressly described as the “figure of him that was to come” (Rom 5,14), Melchizedek, Abraham, Aaron, Joseph, Jonah, etc.
- (2) Historical types, in which are included the great historical events that under Providence became striking foreshadowing of good things to come, e.g. the Deliverance from the Bondage of Egypt; the Wilderness Journey; the Conquest of Canaan; the Call of Abraham; Deliverances by the Judges, etc.
- (3) Ritual types, such as the Altar, the Offerings, the Priesthood, the Tabernacle and its furniture. There are typical persons, places, times, things, actions, in the

5. J. P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* United Bible Society, New York 1988.

6. Chad L. Bird, “Typological Interpretation Within the Old Testament: Melchizedekian Typology,” *Concordia Journal* 26 (2000) 36-52; Edward Glenny, “Typology : A Summary of the Present Evangelical Discussion,” *JETS* 40 (1997) 627-638.

7. Peter V. Legartha, “Typology and its Theological Basis,” *European Journal of Theology* 5.2 (1996) 143-155.

Old Testament, and a reverent study of them leads into a thorough acquaintance with the fullness and the blessedness of the word of God.

The literary structure and the rhetorical procedure used in Hebrews follows the pattern of a comparative typology. In Epistle to Hebrews the term κρείττων is the heart of this typology.

A short survey of the structure of the epistle reveals that its content is structured and organized using the comparative model. The role, service, faith, nature of Christ are defined by this comparative qualification.

The analysis of the 12 verses where the term κρείττων occurs, gives a large picture of this comparison.

The objects of comparison are:⁸

- the angels⁹ - 1,4 τοσούτω κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν αγγέλων
- better things [that accompany salvation] – 6,9 τὰ κρείσσενα καὶ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας
- the less, insignificant¹⁰ [person] – 7,7 τὸ ἔλαττον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος εὐλογεῖται.
- the hope¹¹ - 7,19 κρείττονος ἐλπίδος
- the covenant¹²/testament¹³ - 7,22; 8,6 κρείττονος διαθήκης
- the promises – 8,6 κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις
- the sacrifices – 9,23 κρείττοσιν θυσίαις
- the substance/possessions¹⁴ – 10,34 κρείττονα ὑπαρξιν

8. Based on Gerald L. Borchert, "A superior book: Hebrews," *Review & Expositor* 82 (1985): 319-322; Thomas G. Smothers, "A superior model: Hebrews 1:1-4:13," *Review & Expositor* 82 (1985): 333-343; Alan Culpepper, "A superior faith: Hebrews 10:19-12:2," *Review & Expositor* 82 (1985) 375-390.

9. The phrase κρείττων γενόμενος 'having become better' is translated 'having been exalted'. The superiority relates to position and power and is a difference of kind, not of degree.

10. It refers to status.

11. It emphasizes quality and implies contrast as well as superiority

12. Roger L. Omanson, "A superior covenant : Hebrews 8:1-10:18," *Review & Expositor* 82 (1985) 361-373

13. It is emphatic by word order.

14. It indicates superior quality and given separate identity

- the better¹⁵ [heavenly] country – 11,16 κρείττονος ἑπουρνίου [πατρίς 11,14]
- the resurrection¹⁶ - 11,35 κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως
- the thing¹⁷ - 11,40 κρείττον τι προβλεψαμένου
- the blood¹⁸ - 12,24 καίϊματι ῥαντισμοῦ κρείττον λαλοῶντι παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ¹⁹

A short analysis of the elements of this comparison discovers that the use of comparison and the subject of comparison imply:

- a superiority to position and power
- a difference of kind, not of degree

The relations between the elements that are compared have different semantic nuances.

There are some aspects that the comparison delineates and underlines:

- it refers to status
- it emphasizes quality
- it implies contrast as well as superiority
- it indicates separate identity
- it is qualitative

All the subjects of the comparison are related to Christ – the Son. The two semantic levels mentioned by LNLEX provide the basis for understanding the nature of this

15. They refer to πατρίδα 'homeland' in the preceding verses
16. It is qualitative. The phrase κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως 'better resurrection', refers to resurrection to a different and better life. For a detailed discussion see Peter R. Jones, "A superior life: Hebrews 12:3-13:25," *Review & Expositor* 82 (1985) 391-405.
17. It refers to the fulfilment of the promise in Christ, full fellowship with God through the work of Christ, the new covenant with its blessings, the superiority of the Christian revelation. It includes a better high priest, sacrifice, covenant, and country.
18. What does κρείττον 'better' modify? a) It can be the predicate of λαλοῦντι 'speaking': speaking a better thing than Abel or b) it can be adverbial, modifying λαλοῦντι 'speaking': speaking more effectively than Abel. This adjective is also translated as an adverb: 'more eloquently', 'more effectively', 'and more insistently'
19. παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ 'than Abel'. Two meanings with some variants are possible: a) 'than the blood of Abel': with these nuances a) could mean 'than Abel's blood spoke'; b) it could mean '(better) than Abel's blood was'; or b) 'than Abel': (speaking better) than Abel (spoke).

comparison. The superiority of the Son must be understood in two manners:

- a) The Son is superior in value
- b) The Son is superior in status

This double aspect (value and status) have a profound significance in understanding the theology of Hebrews. The apostle Paul draws the typology *shadow-reality* using this contrastive method. This typology consists in an *unbalanced/ disproportionate antithesis*. This kind of antithesis is not new in the literature of the apostle Paul.

The pattern of a *disproportionate comparison* can be found in three types of antithesis that Paul introduces in Romans.

Here is the summary of these antitheses:

The Christological Antithesis:

Christ is superior to Adam. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men... by one man’s offence death reigned by one; **much more** they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ”(Rom 5,12.17).

The Soteriological Antithesis:

The grace is greater than the sin. “But where sin abounded, grace did *much more* abound” (Rom 5,20)

The Eschatological Antithesis:

“Romans 5,9-11 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, *we shall be saved from wrath* through him. ...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God... *much more*, being reconciled, *we shall be saved* by his life. And not only so, but *we also joy in God* through our Lord Jesus Christ... (Rom 5,9-11).

The relational coherence of the passage consists of its having two basic parts: *one*, the *problem* (12b–14) of the universality of spiritual death brought on by Adam and, *two*, the *solution* (15–21).

The 5,12–21 paragraph consists of a series of contrasts between the effects on humankind arising from what one man, Adam, did, and what another man, Jesus Christ, did. The contrasts are indicated by the use of the recurring word ‘one’ to refer to these two individuals, which device makes the set of contrasts prominent.

- (15–19) contrast the sin of Adam with the greater righteous act of Christ and its universal effects;
- (20–21) contrasts the sin of human beings with the greater grace of God.

The Epistle to Hebrews is the culmination of theological thinking that has its roots in the epistle to Romans.

Conclusion

Despite the controversy about the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it seems that the typology of disproportionate antithesis is specific to Pauline literature. It was not the aim of this paper to establish who the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is. It meant only to suggest a thematic connection between the typological patterns of Pauline theology and the rhetorical device of the Epistle to Hebrews from the point of view of the use of κρείττων. The usage of the term receives a preponderant value in the epistle. Beyond the semantic value, the rhetorical usage of κρείττων is the main pattern of the argumentation used in Hebrews. The *disproportionate antithesis* between Christ and the past form or agents of revelation (Moses, angels, prophets, Abraham, covenant) permits the author to introduce the superiority of the sacerdotal service of Christ.

The *disproportion* does not destroy or undervalue the less significant element of the comparison. It puts a special emphasis on Christ’s service and his role in salvation. This approach gives to the reader the certainty, the sureness, of the Christian faith.

The use of κρείττων in Hebrews proves the crystallization of Pauline theology. It represents the mature work, the climax of this theology. The rhetorical elements are used to show to the reader, in an artistic manner, the superiority of Christ’s service in favour of mankind. The resemblance with the human experience must be understood not in the way of similarity or identity but in a *disproportionate* likeness in which Christ always is κρείττων - *better, greater, superior*.

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Suggestions for a Discourse Analysis of Amos 5,1-6,14*

Anthony Abela

Summary: This short study is part of a wider investigation into the rhetorical and discourse features of Amos 5,1-6,14. The purpose of this wider research will be to demonstrate that this text may be read as one piece of communication. In this present paper we shall investigate how the author is organizing his material into three 'stanzas', an introductory piece (5,1-3), and two larger ones, each introduced by the messenger formula in 5,4 and 16. In this study the author examines also the rhetorical function of the initial "appeal for attention" in 5,1a which here serves to introduce the unity as a whole. "Word" assumes a special meaning.

1. Preliminaries

In this paper we shall investigate authorial markers of rhetorical arrangement in Amos 5,1-6,14. Normally this text is splintered into several smaller units which are supposed to have originated separately and within different vital contexts; the understanding behind this procedure is that each unit has to be read as a separate entity set within an artificial and secondary literary context which is the present text of Amos (cf. Mays 1969; Wolff 1973 for such approach). A discourse approach to the text, however, would reveal that the current context is its "co-text" (cf. Brown & Yule 1983:46-50 for this concept) and hence necessary for the complete understanding of all the elements of the text we have in our hands.

In this essay we shall not offer an exhaustive discourse analysis of Amos 5,1-6,14; we shall only examine what would appear to be markers from the "author" to indicate the organization of the composition. Specifically we shall examine the "appeal for attention" in 5,1a and the "messenger formula" in 5, 3.4.16 for their rhetorical function within the text under study. Naturally, studying this text as a literary unity would constitute for some a shift in their methodological approach to the prophetic literature, the consequences of which may not all have been envisaged

(cf. Gitay 2001). But this is the only type of exegesis that is helpful to people who seek to know the text in order to translate it.

2. “Listen to this word” (5,1a)

Wendland (1988) and Abela (2002) propose to read in this verse initial “appeal for attention”¹ the authorial intention of employing it as a boundary marker, an intention which comes into clearer light if we compare the use the author makes of the formula in 3,1 and 4,1, and possibly as a title for the ensuing text²; however, the exegete has to disengage this appeal from its syntagmatic context. For “translation tradition”³ that can be traced back through masoretic exegesis, the recensions, and on to the proto-masoretic stage⁴ of the text’s development, has constantly connected this appeal with the clauses that follow it in 5,1. The LXX interpreted the lexeme אָשַׁר in this verse as a relative pronoun anaphorically oriented towards הַזֶּה הַדָּבָר, “this word”, and as the grammatical subject of the ensuing relative clause, literally saying “which I am going to raise against/upon you”. This latter clause very much resembles syntactically the typical clause of its kind (cf. Clines, *DCH*, 1993:419-423). Semantically אָשַׁר would appear to be the object of the verb נִדְּבַע⁵ (literally, “to raise”). A problem with this parsing arises since the clausal verb apparently has another object, קִינָה, “lamentation”. To assess how strange this grammatical analysis results, it suffices to read the literal translation of the LXX: ὃν ἐγὼ λαμβάνω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς θρῆνον, “which (acc.) I am giving to you a lamentation,” where the verb λαμβάνω commands both the relative pronoun ὃν and the noun θρῆνον. The Vulgate managed to somewhat lessen the syntactical awkwardness of the LXX by translating אָשַׁר through “quod”, an ambiguous lexeme that may serve both as a relative pronoun qualifying the neuter noun “verbum”, as well as conjunction, “because”. This rendering, perhaps by chance, recuperates what some consider as the original meaning/function of the connecting word אָשַׁר in Hebrew,⁵ that of “relative conjunction” with the meaning ‘that, because’ (cf. *DCH*, 1:431-433).

1. Cf. Koch 1964.²1967:205 for this formal description of the initial imperative in 5,1. For nomenclature from form-critical studies of prophetic literature I depend upon March 1974:141-178.
2. This text cannot extend beyond 6,14 given the diverse literary nature of what we find in 7,1-9.
3. For this concept one may consult Buzzetti 2001.
4. For nomenclature being employed here, and for a history of the text of the Hebrew Bible cf. Tov 1992.
5. Cf. Joüon & Muraoka (2006): § 145a.

If this is the case, the LXX has completely misunderstood the word as its qualifying the cluster τὸν λόγον by adding κυρίου (“of the Lord”) further confirms.⁶ Later translations attempt to improve upon LXX’s parsing by defining the noun קִינָה as being in apposition to the expression “this word”⁷, but they still follow the grammatical analysis of the Greek translators. A few translations would show what this parsing entails:

TOB: Ecoutez cette parole, cette lamentation que je profère sur vous, maison d’Israël.

NJB: Listen to this word which I utter against you, it is a dirge, House of Israel.

NJPS: Hear this word which I intone as a dirge over you, O House of Israel.

CEV: Listen, nation of Israel, to my mournful message.

REB: Listen, Israel, to these words, the dirge I raise over you.

In this essay I am proposing a different parsing, translation, and interpretation of Amos 5:1. a) In order to discern authorial intent behind this verse we should start with parsing the particle אֲשֶׁר as a “relative conjunction” and not as a relative pronoun. Secondly, we should read the noun קִינָה as the object of the verb נִשָּׂא. These two options would render the syntax of the verse much smoother,⁸ and would deal with the suggestion that the term “lamentation” was a gloss to explain the expression “this word” (cf. Robinson³1964; Delcor1961:209). At this stage, a preliminary translation of 5,1 may be offered:

“Listen to this word, O House of Israel, for I am about to utter a dirge about you.”

b) What is the real meaning of the term הַדְּבָר in this verse? As we have seen, it is normally translated as “word”, “message” and is taken as basically referring to the contents of the lamentation. We may quote Andersen & Freedman’s as being a typical exegesis:

“Verse 1 is the introduction, v.2 the qinah. The unit is unusual in several ways. The call to listen to ‘this message’ leads to expect an

6. On the translation strategies adopted by the LXX’s translator of Amos cf De Waard (1978):342.

7. A case of “loose apposition”, see Joüon & Maruoka(2006):§131m; and Andersen & Freedman(1989):473 for this parsing.

8. One should consult Lambdin (1971):65 with profit.

oracle of conventional type—an accusation or a judgement speech or a reproach in the form of a Woe, as in 4:1 which begins in the same way. The message is then identified as *qinah*...a song of grief, the text of which immediately follows” (1989:472).⁹

But is this the real meaning of “this word”? Is it referring to the subject-matter of the lamentation? The parallelism with 4,1 would rather reveal that there exists a syntactical caesura between the imperative clause in 5,1a and the **שׁוּעַ** clause in 5,1b.

c) Therefore, taking the cue from Giovanni Rinaldi (1963:166-167), I prefer to read “word” here as a “title of literary unity” with the meaning ‘composition’ as in Amos 1,1 and a limited number of other texts listed in *BDB*:183. The earlier translation of 5,1 may now be improved upon:

Listen to this composition:
For I am about to utter a lamentation upon you,
O House of Israel.

This exegesis and translation of 5,1 make it necessary to counsel the reader against the interpretation offered by Andersen and Freedman in their influential commentary (1989:475); these exegetes suggest that Amos 3,1 should be taken as model for 5,1. Instead, the reader should look at 4,1 for a parallel with 5,1; in 4,1 it becomes evident that the grammatical dissonance between the first half of the verse and the second would entail that the addressees of the imperative **שׁוּעַ** “Listen” are not the “cows of Bashan” (Abela 2002). Therefore the “appeal for attention” in 4,1 should be read as a semantic and syntactical unit, separate from the rest of the verse. On the other hand, the identical form of this appeal for attention in Amos 3,1; 4,1, and 5,1 would suggest that they all have the same literary/rhetorical function of introducing the ensuing material as being similar literary units. This means that the plural of **הַדְּבָרִים** in Amos 1,1 would imply that the Book of Amos is being perceived as an ensemble of such “literary units”. One such literary unit is 5,1-6,14 being hemmed between the appeal for attention in 5,1a and 7,1 which introduces a different kind of literary unit, namely, a vision.

9. Cf. also Alonso Schökel & Sicre Diaz (1980):974-975; Coggins (2000):123; De Waard & Smalley (1979):95; Mays (1969):64.

3. *The rhetorical function of the messenger formula within 5,1b-6,14*

Before embarking on an investigation into the formal function of the messenger formulas within the scope of “this word” (5,1-6,14), we shall premise: a) a short morphological and syntactical analysis of each instance of the formula in this unit; b) an examination of the semantic value of the cluster/lexeme אָדָנִי in 5,3 and 5,16.

3.1 *Grammatical Analysis of 5,3;5,4; and 5,16*

Even if the writer of Amos 5,1-6,14 is drawing this formula from narrative and prophetic tradition (cf. Rofé 1997:61-62), he does not refrain from manipulating its form, syntactically and morphologically, to make it fit his general purposes (cf. Andersen & Freedman 1989:476). If one takes the clause כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה “thus says the Lord”, that predominates in Amos’ harangue against the nations (1,3-2,16) to be the nucleus of the formula, one cannot but describe the formula within the unit 5,1-6,14 as “marked”. In 5, 3 the messenger formula is qualified by both the conjunction כִּי and the cluster/word אָדָנִי which replaces יְהוָה as head of the clause, with the tetragrammaton being in apposition to the new “head”.

Were these the only qualifications of the nucleus of the messenger formula in 5,3? *BHK* suggested a transposition to the end of v.3a of the adjunct יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבַיִת (literally, “to the house of Israel”) in v.3c. *BHS* maintains the suggestion on the presumption that there exists a perfect parallelism between vv.3a and 4a. Some would consider the adjunct in v.4a as an addendum, but keep it in the text (Soggin 1987:81-82); others drop it from the text as unnecessary (*NV* and *NIV*; cf. Andersen & Freedman 1989: 476). *BHK*’s proposal has been accepted by a few authors like Alonso Schökel & Sicre Diaz (1980) and Delcor (1961).¹⁰ Some exegetes parse the preposition ל as meaning “in reference to, with regards to” (*GHC*: §§119u and 143e for this meaning) and transfer the preposition and the phrase it commands to after the *verbum dicendi* in v.3a (*NJPS*, Rinaldi). I prefer the more common parsing for this lamedh as a *nota dativi*.¹¹

What occasioned this debate concerning the transposition to v.3a is the term’s

10. “De tels déplacements sont facilement explicables” (“Such displacements are easy to explain”) (Delcor 1961:209).

11. Andersen & Freedman’s parsing of the preposition ל as lamedh vocativum based on presumed parallelism to “house of Israel” in v.1 is inadmissible; especially since these scholars do not consider this lamedh as a morphological marker for the vocative (cf. Dahood 1970).

position as a sentence-ending element. In a footnote to the verse Mays (1969:84) sententiously claims: “The phrase does not fit the syntax or metre of the sentence; perhaps it has been displaced from the introductory formula at the beginning of the verse.” Mays translates the phrase and puts it at the end of v.3a, though within brackets. But as one may surmise on checking the old Greek, Aramaic¹², and Latin versions, there exists no textual basis for transposing לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל in v.3c to after יְהוָה in v.3a as if this phrase were meant to supply the indirect object of the verb אָמַר in the messenger formula of 5,3. Hence one understands why the authors of the fifth volume of the *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*¹³ had no comment to make on BHK’s and BHS’s suggestion.

Postposition of the phrase “to the house of Israel” to the very end of the oracle, notwithstanding a sense of syntactical awkwardness, constitutes conscious strategy. It answers to two rhetorical needs that the author had: emphasis, and the marking of an inclusio with the same phrase in v.1b (cf. De Waard & Smalley 1979:95.205; Carroll 1992:224). Of course, in translation one needs not woodenly reproduce the form of the Hebrew text so as to maintain the place of this phrase at the end of the strophe (compare Chouraqui, *RSV, NRSV*, and *TEV*). I think the phrase should be taken as qualifying the head noun הָעִיר (“the city”) in v.3b (cf. Andersen & Freedman 1989:476). The writer is describing the decimation of Israel’s armies that would go out for battle from the various cities and strongholds; this decimation of the armies made possible the devastation amidst the civil population, a devastation that is graphically depicted by the word picture of v.2. The particle כִּי at the head of the messenger formula carries the poet’s interpretation of these two events as intimately linked (*contra* Delcor 1961:209), so that for the author of 5,1-6,14, v.3 should be read and translated as constitutive of the קִינָה (cf. also Mays 1969: 85-86).

In 5,4 the formula is very similar to that in 5,3. The cluster אֲדֹנָי “my Lord”, which features prominently in 5,3, is missing, but it too has the clause-initial כִּי with causal or emphatic sense, and has also the referent to the addressee of the messenger formula, לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל which is completely lacking in 5,3. Very probably, this variation points to the different functions of the two messenger formulas within the unit 5,1-6,14 as a whole. Again in 5,16 one may notice a small number of changes in the formula over its form in 5,4. Instead of the causal/emphatic כִּי we find another particle, לְכֵן, normally translated “therefore” (*LXX, Vulg, RSV, TEV, TOB, MBS*,

12. Cf. Sperber(1992):422.

13. New York, United Bible Societies, 1980.

Chouraqui, Delcor, Andersen & Freedman) which logically links the ensuing to what precedes it (not simply to the former verse, insisted De Waard & Smalley 1979:112). Of course, the logical relationship between what precedes the formula and what follows it may be restructured differently (cf. *GNBibel*). Some translations ignore the semantic value of this particle (cf. *BLC*) while *NJPS* reads לְכֵן as an emphatic particle rather than as a conjunction (cf. also *DCH*, IV, 548 and *PdV*).

What is novel about the messenger formulas in 5,1-6,14 is the phrase or phrases אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֲדֹנָי “my Lord God of hosts” hanging in apposition to the head element in the clause, that is the nominal יְהוָה. This title is described as “cumbersome and unusual” by Andersen & Freedman (1989:516). But its cumbersomeness does not justify suppressing the end element אֲדֹנָי (*contra* LXX and the Vulg together with some modern translations and commentaries like *PdV* and Mays1969:96). This word/cluster stands in apposition to the tetragrammaton and not to the preceding phrase which in turn is also in apposition. May be, Andersen & Freedman were correct in reading אֲדֹנָי ... יְהוָה, “my Lord YHWH”, as enclosing the rest of the complex divine title in 5,16. They also make this suggestion that the “peculiarity of the expression in v.16 should be viewed in relation to the equally unique rubric in v.27b. This line balances v.16a and both serve as a frame to embrace and unify vv.16-27 as a larger ensemble of oracles and related pieces” (*Ibid.*).

One should also notice the inversion of elements within the nuclear phrase יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי (5,3;6,8), with אֲדֹנָי being postponed to an emphatic end-position within the clause.

3.2 *The semantic value of אֲדֹנָי*

In two out of three instances of the messenger formula in 5,1-6,14 we encounter the noun or noun cluster אֲדֹנָי which relates to the proper name יְהוָה. In 5,4 אֲדֹנָי is missing. In 5,3 it is found in its “normal position” with respect to the tetragrammaton (cf.6,8; Andersen & Freedman1989:516). In 5,16 the word or word cluster clearly carries the nuance of emphasis. The question arises: what is the real meaning of אֲדֹנָי and why has the LXX systematically suppressed the word?¹⁴

14. Later manuscripts of the LXX have not elided the word in v.3 and got the awkward combination κύριος κ̄ριος, which explains the option of the original Greek translators; in 5.16 these translators simply ignored its significance, and hence the instruction in *BHK* to delete it.

Strictly speaking, the only bone of contention has been the semantic value of the morphological marker of possession attached to the plural of the lexeme אֲדֹנָיִם//אֲדֹנָי “lord//lords”. It is symptomatic of the difficult situation in which scholarship finds itself with regards this word that while *BDB* (10-11) and *Koeler-Baumgartner* (1:12-13) treat אֲדֹנָי under the rubric אֲדֹנָי, *DCH*(I:133-135) discuss this as a separate item. Joüon & Muraoka (2006:§136d) consider the word as a majestic plural employed only for the divine name יְהוָה. The gamesq̄ in the concluding syllable is emphatic while for these two grammarians “the value of the suffix is practically nil: the Lord.”

This judgement seems to have been subscribed to by modern scholarship at large, as attested by a number of translations and commentaries. In 5,3, for instance, in order to avoid the stylistic awkwardness of the LXX, many authors opt to follow the Vulgate’s translation strategy of rendering אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה as if it were the composite name יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים (cf. Abela 1994): “Dominus Deus,” cf. *BJ*, *GNBibel*, *NRSV*, *CEV*, *REB*, *BLC*, Delcor, Mays.¹⁵ For 5,16 one may consult *BJ*, *GNBibel*, *NRSV*, *CEV*, *REB*, *BLC*, Soggin, and Mays whose judgement is typical: “‘Lord’ is certainly secondary, as is possibly the entire title”(1969:96). We may also mention those authors and versions who drop אֲדֹנָי from their translation (cf. Alonso Schökel & Sicre Diaz; *PdV*). But there are authors who neither drop אֲדֹנָי nor rate as semantically zero the morphological marker that qualify the nucleus אֲדֹנָי; they interpret the lexeme as a cluster and translate it as “my Lord” in both 5,3 and 5,16 (*TOB*, *NJPS*, *MBS*, Andersen & Freedman, cf. *DCH*I:135). This means that for these translations the relational element is constitutive of the messenger formula in 5,1-6,14 as its positioning in both verses underlines. The speaker whose words the writer purports to report is “my Lord”; the writer is emotionally involved as he utters these words. He is very much the *homo sympatheticos* described by Abraham Heschel (1962).

3.3 Different rhetorical functions

We are now in a position to study the real formal and rhetorical function of these messenger formulae in this communicative act which is 5,1-6,14. We shall move through our analysis step by step:

15. Rinaldi treats אֲדֹנָי in 5, 3, 16 as a proper name, Adonai,: “poichè così dice Adonai, il Signore”(“for thus says Adonai, the Lord”); likewise Chouraqui.

3.3.1. One may start with consulting form critical analyses of prophetic literature (cf. Westermann 1960; Koch 1964, 1969; March 1974; Sicre 1995; Rofé 1997). Unfortunately this line of research will not lead to certain necessary conclusions; for while the messenger formula is usually discourse initial in use, the prophet/poet's creativity may devise other employments for specific poetic purposes. This becomes evident in Amos 5,3. The formula introduces יהוה's or ארני's discourse in v.3b.c; but the formula does not open the literary unit 5,1b-3. It is rather part of the weave of the fabric labelled by the author as קינה. It logically (hence the use of כִּי) connects the Lord's declaration about the decimation of Israel's armies to the picture of devastation drawn in v.2. This makes it clear therefore that the messenger formula in 5,3 is not a boundary marker; instead it may be termed as a "logical conjunction."

3.3.2. There exist indications that the formula in 5,4 has been meant by the author to function as boundary marker and as a sign that a new discourse unit is beginning. Several scholars have noticed the rhetorical use of "house of Israel" in 5,1b.3c as an inclusio (cf. Andersen & Freedman 1989:476; Carroll 1992:224). But that a caesura is seen to exist between vv.3 and 4 may also be deduced by the change of subject-matter as well as the style. In vv.2-3 the poet speaks in the third person even when he reproduces the speech of the Lord (v.3). In v.4, after the messenger formula, the Lord addresses the "house of Israel" in the second person throughout the entire strophe (vv.4-7), though at one point he shifts to the third person when he speaks about himself (v.6) and about the addressees themselves (v.7). There is strong evidence, however, to show that the messenger formula in v.4 is meant to introduce a new discourse unit regardless of how one chooses to define this unit.

3.3.3. Within the textual and translation traditions, there is partial acknowledgement of the anaphoric nature of 5:16a. Taking the cue from the masoretic division (the *sethumas* after vv.15.17), several versions and translations consider vv.16-17 as forming one strophe (cf. *Vulgata Clementina*, *REB*, *BJ* [+ subtitle], *PdV*, *NJPS*, *NV*, *GNBibel*, *BLC*, Rinaldi). Some would not even accord this discourse initial character to v.16a and read the formula as being rather confirmatory and emphatic in nature (cf. *TOB*, *MBS*, *NV*). A number of scholars dislodge vv.16-17 from their current position within the co-text and transpose them elsewhere to form other semantic units (Soggin, Mays). Others read vv.16-17 as the concluding strophe of a wider composition comprising 5,1-17, a composition that is chiasmically disposed, within which vv.16-17 correspond in function to 5,1-3 (cf. De Waard 1977; De Waard & Smalley 1979:189-192; Wendland 1988; Carroll 1992:221-240; Bovati & Meynet 1994):

“The closing oracle (segment a¹) complements the opening lament (segment a) by means of a sequence of references to *mourning*, presumably over the *fallen* in Israel (5,2-3), that is, effect/cause. An inclusio is formed by repeated mention of the divine name coupled with the second person references to the addressees, that is verse 1a(plural) and verse 17b (singular, collective)...”(Wendland1988:16).

“This concluding strophe rounds out the chiasm by returning to the theme of lament. The most striking difference between these verses and the matching member (5:1-3) is that this mourning is taken up by the nation itself; it is no longer Yahweh who lifts up the dirge”(Carroll1992: 237).

The only Bible translation that I know of which graphically acknowledges the presence of this concentric structure within 5,1-17 is the *Gute Nachricht Bibel* (1997). This edition marks by letters the various members of the structure: A(vv.1-3), B(vv.4-6), C (v.7), D (vv.8-9), C¹ (vv.10-13), B¹ (vv.14-15), A¹ (vv.16-17).

A number of questions need to be asked before one subscribes to the statement in favour of this overall structure within 5,1-17. First of all, the only “lexical recursion” between 5:1-3 and 5:16-17 concerns the messenger formula with its formulaic language.¹⁶ But do these instances of the formula really correspond functionally? Because if they do not correspond functionally how may one state that they are meant by the author to act as markers of correspondence within the structure? And if the formulas in vv.3 and 16 were chosen to counter-balance each other, why was the formula in v.4 left without a matching element within the overarching structure? Of course one may not deny the possibility that there exists some symmetrical patterns within 5,4-15; in this respect it’s enough to mention the recursion of the *דרש* (“seek”) motif . However, any statement concerning the presence of structures

16. The proponents of the hypothesis that here there exists a concentric structure suggest that there are significant genre-related correspondence that links these two sections. If one takes them together one may notice that v.1 functions as introduction to a little “lament” with vv.2-3 giving the reasons for the song(death in battle and the horrible consequences for the population), while vv.16-17 report the result (widespread mourning).. On the structural level, however, nothing is offered by the poet to make us read vv.16-17 together with vv.1-3 as if they were one literary unit so that one may see vv.16-17 as complementing vv.1-3. Vv.1-3 function as the introduction to 5,1-6,14 while vv.16-17 are meant to introduce the subsection 5,16-6,14. The rhetorical function of the individual subsections will be fully appreciated when “this word” 5,1-6,14 as a whole will have been studied in greater detail.

and symmetrical patterning in a text needs to take into account all discourse and rhetorical features. Otherwise it will be hard to avoid falling into eisegesis.

Secondly, does the לכן clause in 5,16 form a structure with the other instances in vv.11 and 13? “The particle *lkn* that opens v.16 is the last and climax of a chain of three after the hymn (5,8-9) that declare the judgement of Yahweh (5,11.13)” (Carroll 1992:237). But a superficial reading of 5,10-17 would demonstrate that while the particle לכן marks the semantic cause-effect relation, rhetorically it functions quite differently. In 5,11 the particle is strengthened by the causal conjunction ע” [cf. *DCH*, IV:548] and is situated in the middle of an argumentation that starts in v. 10 and ends in v. 13. In this latter text לכן heads a clause that seems to bring to a close an argumentative strophe (notice the imperative ררשו in v.14). In 5,16 the particle לכן “commands” the messenger formula that appears to being anaphoric in character.

The question that remains to be settled concerns whether the formula introduces a minor or a major division within “this word” of 5,1. In other words, does 5,16a form part of a concentric or a linear arrangement of the material available to the author of 5,1-6,14?¹⁷ Is Amos 5,15-16 harking back to 5,1-3, somehow adding commentary to what the poet says there, or is 5,15-16 ushering us into a distinct though logically related subdivision in the wider composition? It is the thesis of this study that the messenger formula in 5,16 marks the beginning of a new section, 5,16-6,14 just as the same formula in v.4 heads the unit 5,4-15.¹⁸

3.4 *The messenger formula in 5,16 as boundary marker for 5,16-6,14*

The question to be discussed is not whether we can read v.16a as a boundary marker, but whether this reading forms part of the authorial design when 5,1-6,14

17. Cf. Wendland 1988:1-8 and 1994:28-46 for useful considerations on discourse aspects of Hebrew poetry.

18. Of course one may not exclude the possibility that the poet is superimposing a concentric pattern over a linear one; we must normally assume that the linear pattern is the primary pattern unless the author gives evident structural or linguistic marks to show that the concentric pattern should be taken as primary. In our case the linear seems to be the primary pattern. I am afraid that the concentric arrangements noticed by other colleagues abstract from the structural indications given by the author of the present text. Again, there exists the possibility that v.16 is meant to have a double function and hence may serve both the basic linear pattern as well as the superimposed concentric pattern. But this has yet to be investigated into and proven; the argumentation in paragraph 3.4.1 is meant to show that vv.16-17 are not part of a concentric pattern that starts at 5,1.

was composed as **הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה**; if so we ought to follow the author's own exegesis as encoded into the text.

3.4.1 *Amos 5,16 is not part of 5,4-15*

In this paragraph we shall build a negative argument to demonstrate that Amos 5,16-17 does not form part of the sub-unit 5,4-15; according to authorial arrangement though it is constitutive of 5,1-6,14. I shall first offer a brief though necessarily incomplete rhetorical analysis of vv.4-15.

The text 5,4b-7. The main formal characteristics of this text are the motif *drš* ("seek", vv.4.5.6) with (YHWH) as object, syntactically and semantically combined to the verbal concept **חַיֶּה**, ("to live"), and the technique of contrast: seek/don't seek. The negative formulation has 'Bethel' for object while the exhortation "seek YHWH" has another two negative imperatives to counterbalance it in v.5 with two verbs of motion which have 'Gilgal' and 'Beersheba' as destination points. The three names mentioned in the negative formulation of the instruction are place names of cult so that the imperative "seek YHWH" may have a cultic connotation in vv.4-5. One should notice also that the two cola with the negative imperatives in v.5b are chiasmically disposed. The justification for the strong prohibition in v.5a-b (worth noting is the supportive alliteration in the second colon in v.5) is given in v.5c: Gilgal and Bethel's future has been signed already. The destruction of the central sanctuary in the south of Palestine (Beer-sheba) is not spelled out in this text unless Bethel and Gilgal are seen as merismic for places of irregular cultic practice, or else the poet means to draw a concentric structure with Beer-sheba as the central element that he wants to criticise. One should notice that the place names in vv.5-6 come in this order: Bethel, Gilgal, Beer-sheba, Gilgal, Bethel. The recursion of 'Bethel' at the beginning and the end of the Lord's utterance seems to function also as an inclusio.

The imperative **דַּרְשׁוּ**, seek, in v.6 marks a break from preceding argumentation and the beginning of a new strophe. One may note also a shift from the first person to the third person style. In this second strophe¹⁹ it seems that it is the prophet's voice that is being heard: it is his prophetic voice commenting on the previous exhortation (vv.4-5) and repeating its contents (hence the recursion of the head word) with

19. For the meaning of "strophe" in this essay cf. Zogbo & Wendland 2000:53-54.

some variation. The argument in favour of seeking the Lord is no longer based upon the prophecy of doom and future chastisement of the cult places; instead we find an open threat of sheer destruction of the entire 'house of Joseph/Bethel'. One may therefore notice a progression of thought in the sense of an intensification that takes the form of a sudden "irruption" of YHWH in human history. This irruption is symbolised by fire that consumes before it can be quenched.²⁰

How do the phrases **בית יוסף** and **לבית אל** ("house of Joseph" and "to Bethel") behave within the grammatical weave of the second strophe? In the second colon of v.6 "house of Joseph" is better parsed as a vocative since no "commanding" preposition is employed after the verb **יצלח**, 'break out' which therefore may be parsed as intransitive (cf. *Koehler-Baumgartner*, 3:1026; but consult also the apparatus of *BHS*). The same may be said of the corresponding phrase **לבית אל** (literally, "to Bethel") parsing the lamedh as a vocative marker.²¹ Of course, even if one opts to parse the verb **חלצ** as being transitive with "house of Joseph" as its object and the lamedh attached to Bethel as being *nota dativi*, the two phrases "house of Joseph" and "Bethel" would still be corresponding pieces within the general structure of v.6.

The two cola in v.7 stand in apposition to "Bethel". They offer the characterisation of "Bethel", centre of religious power) as subverting justice, perhaps in the name of the official religion.

The text 5,8-9 This is a strophe which the author dedicates to יהוה. Its main literary features are these: first we have a prevalence of active participles describing the Lord's behaviour in nature(v.8) and then in human history(v.9). Second, there is the recursion of the verb **הפך** literally, overturn in v.8 that features so prominently

20. The third colon in v.6 describes the action of the fire (hence the feminine morphology(cf. *REB*). This means that Mays (1969:86, note 6)'s judgement on **יצלח** (which according to Soggin is a *hapax legomenon*), that the masoretic text here "makes little sense in this context" is unacceptable. De Waard & Smalley (1979:103) though seems to endorse this statement of Mays.. The clause in the third colon of v.6 functions like a circumstantial or relative clause that qualifies **אש** fire, *contra* Chouraqui who considers the clause **ואכלה ואין מכבה** ("and it will consume and there will no one to quench") as being predicated to יהוה (YHWH). The Lord is being compared to an inextinguishable fire.

21. Cf. Dahood & Penar1970:407 for this grammatical feature. Andersen & Freedman (1989:478-480) proposes the same parsing but does not cite this grammatical function of the lamedh in this cluster.

also in v.7 where it is used to characterize the behaviour of Bethel. The use of the same verb is probably meant to enhance the contrast in the behaviour of the Lord and the people of Israel who are the addressees of the poet. The asyndeton at the beginning of the strophe in v.8 underscores this sense of distance between the two characters, the Lord and the people. Third, the poet postpones the identification of the subject of the verbs in v.8 to the very end where we meet the emphatic statement “Yahweh is his name”. This strategy was used by the poet to link the statements in v.8a-c to the following v.9 to which it also provides the subject for the verbs; the two cola in v.9 are elliptically in apposition to the tetragrammaton.²² Through these two cola the poet characterizes YHWH as effectively acting in human history.

Finally, the prophet is the speaker in this strophe; he meditates on the Lord’s grandeur in nature and in the history of human beings, and reasons that the Lord is capable of exerting influence on contemporary Israel’s daily affairs and of holding them accountable for their ethical misbehaviour. Is this “hymnal fragment” harking back to what went before or looking forward to what is still coming? In the previous strophe (v.6) the poet hints already about the possibility of Israel’s annihilation were they to refuse to repent of subverting justice using perhaps religious institutions to cover up their bad practices in the judicial field. Besides, the asyndeton in v.8 would suggest that in this strophe the poet is looking forward rather than backward. This means that the arrangement is linear rather than concentric.

The text 5,10-13 With v.10 we arrive at a new strophe; these are some of its characteristic features. First of all, the shift from the third person singular subject in v.9 to the plural שִׂנְאוּ “they hate”, with the subject encoded in the morphology of the verb) in v. 10, provides the boundary marker. But only the first two cola speak of the subjects in the third person plural. In v.11 the poet shifts to the second person plural. In v.10 the poet attempts to explain the addressees’ mismanagement in the judicial area while in v.11a (the עַיִן clause) he appears to be giving the motivation for the Lord’s oracles. Klaus Koch would call this “the indication of the situation” (cf. March 1974:159). The לְכֵן “therefore” clauses in v.11b-c would resemble what Koch would label as a “prophecy of disaster” even though there is no messenger formula to identify them as the Lord’s “word”. Instead it is the prophet who is speaking throughout this strophe. This becomes even more clear in v.12 where the

22. One may see here a case of “loose apposition”, cf. Joüon & Muraoka 2006:§131m.

speaker switches to the first person singular style: ידעתִי, “I know”. The prophet lets his addressees know that he is well informed of their “many transgressions”, short-listing three in 5,12b. In v.13 he depicts a very gloomy situation.

We ought to discuss who the addressees of the strophe in vv.10-13 are since they are not explicitly identified within the text. Perhaps on the basis of the principles of “co-text” and “local interpretation” which modern linguistics has emphasized (cf. Brown & Yule 1983: 46-50.58-61), one may deduce that the addressees are the **בית ישראל** “house of Israel” of 5,4 which is the head of the unit 5,4-15; this is further qualified as “the house of Joseph” and possibly “Bethel” in v.6.

The text 5,14-15 The two imperatives **דרשו** “seek” and **שנאו** “hate” at the head of vv. 14,15 make it clear that we have two strophes in this complex. In the first strophe (v.14) we once again have the motif *DRŠ* placed in a prominent position, combined syntactically to the theme **חיה**, “live”, and the use of contrast. The theme of “living, surviving” is further developed in v.14b. In the second strophe (v.15) the verb *DRŠ* “seek” is replaced by the verb ³*HB*, “love”. Both have **טוב**, “good” for object so we are justified in surmising not only that their respective cola are parallel but they carry equivalent meaning. The negative elliptical imperative **רע לא** literally, “and not evil”, is replaced by the positive imperative clause **שנאו רע** “hate evil”. The verb *ŠN* is the antonym of ³*HB*. The second colon of v.15a function as an explanation of the first colon: “setting/installing (**הציגו**) justice” at the gates amounts to “seeking good.” One may read **טוב** as a divine title as Andersen & Freedman 1989:506-507 suggests,²³ or interpret it in the moral sense as “good” with “evil” also to be taken as carrying a moral meaning. The personification of good and evil would underline the function of vv.14-15 as parallels to vv.4-7 within the overall structure of the unit 4-15. The problem is that **רע** as divine epithet referring to some Canaanite divinity is not that self evident within the Old Testament.²⁴ Amos 5,14-15 would then be a perfect match to 5,4-7 where the addressees are exhorted to seek the Lord and shun the places of false or ambiguous cult that are held responsible for the people’s overturning of justice; the specification of what this means are afterwards given in vv. 10-13.

But there are other elements in vv.14-15 to show that these vv. are being seen by the author as corresponding elements within a wider literary structure. In vv.4-7

23. Cf. Dahood1966:296-297; Dahood1970: 187.399.407; and Viganò 1976:182-193.

24. But cf. Andersen & Freedman1980: 476-477.

the addressees are identified as “House of Joseph” and later as “Bethel” (v.6). In vv. 14-15 the addressees, again at the end of the unit, are identified as “the remnant of Joseph” (v.15). Through the concept “remnant” (שְׂאֵרִית) the poet appears to link the complex vv.14-15 to the theme of survival announced in v.3. This indicates that vv. 4-15 are being seen as forming part of a literary unit that transcends its boundaries in vv. 4 and 15.

Moreover, vv.14-15 do not constitute a perfect replica of v.4-7. The latter strophe contains a warning to the Israelites that they should seek the Lord and should avoid the cult located at Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba. In the same strophe Bethel, a metonymy for “house of Joseph” / “house of Israel” is depicted as a people who were currently overturning judicial rights (v.7). In vv.14-15 one finds no explicit mention of the cult issue though the binary טוב/רע, “good/evil” may be hinting at such a concern. What is new in vv. 14-15 with respect to its corresponding match is the author’s expressing the hope that “the remnant of Joseph” could still be delivered, that is, that “YHWH, the God of Hosts” would show favour (יְחַנֵּן) to what remains of the house of Joseph (v.15b). This would mean that the development of thought and arrangement of material in vv.4-15 are not simply concentric but linear as well.

The strong correspondence between vv. 4-7 and 14-15 would justify labelling them by the same alphabetic symbol within a diagram representing the unit 5,4-15; on the other hand, the differences between these clusters of cola would require that the alphabetic symbol representing vv.14-15 be slightly differentiated as well; hence A/A¹. These two text blocks envelope two strophes, one characterizing YHWH as the prime mover in nature and human dealings (vv.8-9, this we represent by the letter B; the other strophe is painting the addressees as utter and irresponsible sinners (vv.14-15), this we mark as C. These addressees here must be identified with the “the house of Israel” of 5, 4 seeing that no other explicit identification is made by the poet (unless he is thinking of “the remnant of Joseph” of v.15b). Thus we have in 5,4-15 this simple structure:

5, 4a	messenger formula and boundary marker	
5, 4b-7	exhortation to <u>seek the Lord</u>	A
5, 8-9	statement about the LORD	B
5, 10-13	statement about the house of Israel	C
5, 14-15	exhortation to <u>seek the Lord</u> in view of his showing grace	A ¹

The presence of this overall pattern within vv.4-15 would demonstrate that this unit was meant to be open-ended and not closed as it would have been had it been a perfect structural symmetry. The wish in v.15a (אולי, “perhaps, may be”) would call for a progression of thought that would include how the Lord was going to show his graciousness. Instead, what we find after the messenger formula in v.16a is the Lord’s word about the universality of mourning among the Israelites. All or most of the statements after this messenger formula are judgmental prophecies of doom. The Lord has “come across his people” (v.17) and they could no longer expect any more חן (“grace, favour, graciousness”) after this “visitation”. All this shows that vv. 16-17 do not belong to the sub-unit 5,4-15 but to the following sub-unit that starts with v. 16 and ends at 6,14 since no other messenger formula occurs to segment the intermediate text into smaller sub-units.

3.3 Preliminary Conclusions

- a) The rubric שמעו את־הדבר הזה, “Listen to this word” was probably meant to introduce a compositional unit that extends from 5,1b to 6,14. This hypothetical statement requires further detailed rhetorical and discourse analysis in order to make clear how this text functions as a whole. At the current stage of this investigation one may say only that there exist indications to this direction. When and if the compositional unity of 5,1-6,14 will be demonstrated, we will be able to show that the lexeme הדבר “the word” in 5,1a refers not to the Lord’s “word” spoken by Amos but to Amos’ word within which the Lord’s word is inset and commented upon by the prophet.
- b) This compositional unity is made up of three sub-sections: first comes an introduction (vv.1b-3) defined by the author himself as קינה, “lamentation”, though one may study further whether this identification does not cover the whole of 5,1b-6,14.²⁵ Then we find two larger sub-sections, each being introduced by the messenger formulas in vv.4 and 16. The first large section covers 5,4-15 while the second section include the text 5,16-6,14. Each of these sections has a different rhetorical built as a preliminary reading of their respective components hints at.
- c) In this essay we have examined, in some detail (though not exhaustively), the first sub-section in order to demonstrate that between vv.15 and 16 the author intends a caesura, and that 5,16a introduces another section of the larger “this

25. Wendland1988:14-15 already hints that this lamentation may be including vv.1-17.

word". The section 5,16-6,14 requires a separate study in order to arrive to some understanding of how 5,1-6,14 is really functioning rhetorically.

- d) This study is addressed to Bible translators who work with the Hebrew text as their source text. It is meant to show how exegesis for translation purposes may not start with abstract theories about the text's origins or its rhetoric; the point of departure should remain the text itself mainly in its consonantal form, since its masoretic vocalisation and apparatus already testify to tradition as it tried to cope with the consonantal text. Adequate exegesis and the subsequent translation should account for every consonant in the text unless this proves to be evidently corrupt. The approach to the text followed here searches for authorial markers for the text's segmentation into smaller units which are not meant to be autonomous but parts of a rhetorical and semantic whole. This approach would not deny the possibility that the text has had a history which presupposes an independent pre-textual existence for some or all components. But now these "texts" are simply components of a wider unit outside of which they cannot "communicate". They are part of a whole and as such they should be read.

* First published in *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 16(2003)67-85. This edition contains a few changes

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BOOK REVIEW

Carmel Bezzina, *Saydon. Biblišta u Studjuž tal-Malti*, Publikazzjoni Preca, Malta 2006, ix-xx.393pp.

An interesting contribution indeed to the slowly growing 'Saydon Studies' and to Maltese linguistics in general. As the author candidly admits in the forward to the volume, the present publication owes its origin to his MA dissertation, written under the tutorship of Rev Professor Carmel Sant, himself a student and a close collaborator of the defunct scholar, and defended at the University of Malta in 1979. The writer then took other directions in his studies and research, and it was only later with the turn of this century that the author conceived of the idea of translating into Maltese and publishing his dissertation in book form after due reworking of the material gathered and studied, since several developments have taken place in Maltese studies (p.ix), and not only in Maltese studies one should add. The value of this book lies perhaps not only in its author's description and evaluation of Saydon's contributions to the different areas of study, but also in Bezzina's situating these contributions within the context of the evolution of research.

Carmel Bezzina covered all aspects of Professor Peter Paul Saydon's work in the areas of Maltese linguistics, literature, and Bible translation. As a literary genre, this volume has rather the characteristics of 'handbook' wherein the revered professor's life and work are narrated and evaluated from every angle.

The only aspect which is left 'suspended' is Saydon's contribution to professional biblical exegesis(p.294); Bezzina though offers already an initial evaluation of this aspect in chapter 13 where several recensions of Saydon's translations are mentioned(see also bibliography on p.387) and discussed in some detail. Probably, a critique of Saydon's share in exegetical debates has to start with Sant's reviews of the single books of Scripture as they were printed and such exegetical studies like "Gleanings: Philological notes on Romans" in *Melita Theologica* X/1(1957); "Philological and Textual Notes to the Translation of the Old Testament" in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* XXIII(1961)249-257; and "The Maltese Translation of the Bible" in *Melita Theologica* XVI/1-2(1964)1-22. In this regard, it is a pity that the collection of such scientific research works has not included the work by Prof Carmel Sant, *Bible Translation and Language. Essays into the History of Bible Translation in Maltese*. Melita Theologica Supplementary Series, 2 Malta 1992.

Carmel Bezzina's volume consists of a Forward in which the author traces the genesis of the present volume, a Presentation by Professor Oliver Friggieri, six *taqsimiet*, sections, each made up of one or several chapters, sixteen chapters, an Epilogue, four 'chapters' of appendixes, and a comprehensive bibliography. In this short review we shall simply have a look at the contents of each *taqsimia* and then spend few words of general comment here and there on the contribution of the author in this work.

The first section (pp.3-52) is dedicated to an outline biography of Saydon (chapter One, pp.3-36), and to the professor's intellectual prowess (chapter Two, pp.39-52). In sections II (pp. 55-103) and III (pp.105-149), Bezzina reviews Saydon's participation in the hot debates raging in Malta during the twenties and the thirties concerning the 'Language Question'. Ever since 1931 (up to 1964) Saydon was Professor of Holy Scripture at the Faculty of Theology of the then Royal University of Malta, while during the short period of 1932 till 1933 he was also the President of the *Għaqda tal-Malti* (University Branch) and editor of *Lehen il-Malti* for the period 1931-1939. The three roles involved Saydon in controversies. The first was over issues of methodology in theological research and teaching with his colleagues of the Faculty, the other two concerning matters of Maltese linguistics. One merit of Saydon was that while the debates about the language were often tinged with expressed or hidden political agendas, he confined himself to strictly lines of scientific argumentation, and avoided to overstep the boundaries of petty party politics.

In section III Bezzina explains and discusses Saydon's views on the origins and linguistic composition of the Maltese language. The writer traces Saydon's theories as they evolved and as they had ultimately to be abandoned because they proved inadequate in face of emerging data and studies. It is a pity that Bezzina does not include, discuss, or at least mention more recent opinions and works like John Micallef's unpublished MA Dissertation in Comparative Philology, with the title 'The Sicilian Element in Maltese', that was defended at the London University as early as 1959, and the more recent major work of Professor Dionysius Agius that was recently published with the title *Siculo Arabic*, Kegan Paul International, 1996.

Section IV focuses on several papers by Saydon on Maltese phonetics, phonology, grammar, and lexicon. Saydon brought to the discussion of the various issues discussed his good grasp of both biblical Hebrew and Arabic, and some of his observations still hold ground even though Bezzina does not always register the validity of his positions.

One small detail. In one short note published in *Lehen il-Malti* 53-54(1934)24-25 entitled 'Irqaqat tal-Kitba' Saydon discussed the gemination of the so-called 'weak consonants' /j/ and /w/ in certain morphological contexts. This matter created huge strain on some grammarians of Maltese when politicians who thought themselves infallible even in areas they know nothing of, prescribed on what should be done with the use of these two consonants [Reference is being made to the letter sent by the late Professor Joseph Aquilina to the present reviewer and published in the journal of the Malta Bible Society, *Sijon* 9/1(1997)87-88]. Bezzina considers Saydon's theory on the maintenance of gemination of these consonants in some forms of verbs which have one of these consonants as second radical as simply Saydon's *fehma personali* and makes no evaluation of the revered linguist's proposal. Instead he reports in note 12 of p.180 that Professor Saydon counselled his readers to follow the grammar rulings of the *Għaqda* and not his private views. But for some reason the *Għaqda* never came with a proper linguistic discussion of this item, even after Professor Joseph Aquilina acknowledged in his dictionary [*Maltese –English Dictionary*, 1, Midsea Books, Malta 1987, 596 for the /j/ but not for the /w/] that Saydon has been "the one grammatically correct" in this discussion.

In 1996 the Malta Bible Society publishes the second edition of its *Il-Bibbja* under the general editorship of the present reviewer, and in the introduction to this edition acknowledged that in this and other linguistic matters the Society followed the linguistic analysis of Professors Saydon and Aquilina. For the time being even the *Kunsill Nazzjonali ta' l-Ilsien Malti* finds it difficult to deal with the issue linguistically: if a mother tongue speaker of Maltese 'feels' the presence of a second /w/ in *dawru* and would write *dawwru* just as he would 'feel' the presence of a second /s/ in *kissru*, why should prescriptive grammar hinder him from reproducing in writing the language he/she speaks while it justly obliges him/her to reproduce in writing consonants like /gh/ even in morphological contexts where it is mute as in the word *għamel*?

In section V Bezzina examines quite exhaustively Saydon's competence as a writer of Maltese literature. The chapter contains four chapters. In chapter 8 he exposes Saydon's ideas expressed in his lecture given at the British Institute in 1943 with the title "Maltese Literature and its Future in its Relation to National Character" which he later published in book form in 1946 under the same title. In the next three chapters Bezzina reviews the various genres of literature Saydon tried his hands at: narrative and descriptive pieces (chapter 9), his epigrams which Saydon employed as a tool for social critique (chapter 10), and his play on St Catherine

which he wrote for his Żurrieq compatriots as a pastoral endeavour. Bezzina is not so enthusiastic about the literary qualities of this play (chapter 11).

The author of this volume dedicates the final section VI (pp. 243-323) to Saydon as translator of the Bible. This section comprises five chapters: in chapter 12 Bezzina tries to describe the historical context in which Saydon put pen to paper (literally, since the final text of his translation was handwritten as the originals now prove, cf. Dun Anton Abela, “Inventarju tad-Dokumenti ta’ Mons P.P. Saydon” *pro manu scrittu*. Only a few introductions to one or two biblical books were actually typed). Important in this concern is Bezzina’s situating Saydon’s translation within the Maltese ‘translation tradition’ which could already count on a number of attempts as to move Saydon himself to write ‘a history of the Maltese Bible’ (cf. bibliography). This history was then adjourned by Prof Mgr Carmel Sant in several articles the greater part of which are cited in the bibliography; Professor Sant consulted the archives of the British and Foreign Bible Society and then of the United Bible Societies for the correspondence regarding the activities of Protestant missionaries working in and from Malta during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; this correspondence had not been available to Prof Saydon so that the history of Bible translation he wrote left space for improvement. The majority of this correspondence was reproduced in the volume published by the Faculty of Theology in 1992 as the second volume in the Melita Theologica Supplementary Series with the title *Bible Translation and Language. Essays into the History of Bible Translation in Maltese*; in this volume are included all of Sant’s articles narrating this history as well the studies of Prof Saydon concerning the same history. This volume merits at least to have been included in the bibliography.

For chapter 13 where Bezzina evaluates the accuracy of Saydon’s translation he understandingly relies on authorities, especially Professor Sant his mentor who could judge the value of Saydon’s translation strategies. But he fruitfully employed also the works of Saydon himself as he explained his strategies in such articles as “Philological and Textual Notes to the Maltese of the Old Testament” published in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* XXIII(1961)249-257 and the other better known article published in the 1964 *Melita Theologica* with the title “The Maltese Translation of the Bible.” But Bezzina mentions also the evaluation made by such biblical scholars as Alberto Vaccari who had been Saydon’s teacher at the Pontifical Biblical Institute during his formation period. In the following two chapters (14.15) Bezzina passes under scrutiny lexical and syntactical aspects of the Saydon translation and its literary and stylistic merits. In the final chapter (16)

Bezzina narrates in short the history of the Saydon translation's second edition which was presumably done on the basis of notes that the author himself prepared in view of this development. One finds this second redaction in the three-volume edition of 1977.1982.1990 with the title of *Bibbja Saydon* which had its own editorial board; but there may be some room for discussion whether the elegant 1995 edition published with the title *Il-Bibbja* to commemorate the centenary of Saydon's birth in 1895 actually constitutes the 'second edition'; this edition had a different editorial board which took liberties with the text of the translation which the original author did not take in the second edition, and which he would probably not have tolerated in view of the debate reported by Bezzina in note 16 of the chapter [Cf. Anthony Abela, "Two Professional Bible Translations of the Bible in Maltese in the 20th Century" *Melita Theologica* XLVIII/2(1992)15-35].

The book ends with an epilogue (pp.325-332) which seems to have been written years after the 1979 dissertation where the author offers a *post-mortem* evaluation of Saydon, four sets of appendixes (etymological notes compiled from several of Saydon's works (I, pp.335-348); a list of archaic vocabulary employed by Saydon in his translation(II, pp.349-359); a list of derived vocabulary, that is, words that are not found in Maltese lexicography but which Saydon 'created' on the basis of roots of words commonly employed in the spoken language (III, pp.361-372); a list of Semitic syntactic structures (IV, pp. 373-379), and a well organised bibliography (pp.381-393). Missing in a book like this is an index (authors', for instance), or perhaps more than one. One should mention also that throughout the book many photos of Professor Saydon are reproduced.

What would one say of this volume of Carmel Bezzina? The present reviewer believes that the author should be thanked and congratulated for the immense task of compiling all this material and writing this monograph. Not to mention the work of translating his original dissertation into Maltese. Bezzina rendered a good service to Maltese and to the nascent Saydon Studies. The problem for the author was the chronological caesura between the time of writing the original dissertation (1979) and the time of publication of this volume (2006). This made the up to date of the work in all its aspects really difficult, especially in areas where the author could not be as proficient as in others. For instance: while for a narration of the story of the troublesome sixties in Maltese history Bezzina referred to the 2005 two volume *L-Istorja Kostituzzjonali u l-Isfond Storiku* of Joseph M. Pirota (p. 8 note 20) [for the crisis in the thirties he could have added the book of Dominic Fenech, *Responsibility and Power in Inter-War Malta*, Book One, Endemic Democracy(1919-1930),

Publishers Enterprising Group, Malta 2005], for Bible translation theory he cites a few times Eugene A. Nida's *Bible Translating* (London 1961) and *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden 1964); however, he neglected the fact that Nida wrote two other classics of translation theory, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (together with Charles Tabor), Brill, Leiden 1969; and together with Jan de Waard *From One Language to Another. Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (United Bible Societies, New York 1986). Not to say that Nida founded a translation tradition (represented for instance by such Bible versions as the *Good New Bible* and the *Contemporary English Version* which are widely acclaimed and very influential) and theory called 'dynamic equivalence' or 'functional equivalence' [cf. Timothy Wilt (ed.), *Bible Translation, Frames of Reference*, St Jerome Publishing, Manchester UK 2003, for an evaluation] which Saydon did not follow at all. The present reviewer mentioned a few other cases, also in the linguistic field, where this *aggiornamento* could have been done, and hopes it will be done when a second edition will be prepared. For this volume contains so much good material that when time comes it merits to have a second edition which will serve better the current of Maltese Studies we are terming 'Saydon Studies'

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