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# THE CLASSICAL CRISIS OF ICONOCLASM

Edward G. Farrugia S.J.

History is more interesting than fiction. This holds eminently true of the history of dogma, provided that this itself is not divorced from the human dimension taken as a whole. If modern theology in the West has found the need of creating a political theology then this is due to the loss of the kind of communitarian theology which makes the core of Eastern theology, the theology of vision, which in turn harks back to the iconic consciousness of which we have already spoken. If Western theologians like John Baptist Metz have felt the need to remedy the situation, it is because the individual himself, and individual disciplines in a theology which has become increasingly more specialized and divided into new auxiliary disciplines in the wake of the Enlightenment, were suffocating for lack of vision of the whole.<sup>1</sup> But a good theology need undertake no such desperado measures. The history of dogma can also be presented, with fully critical means, as the history of the Church's discernment of spirits, and thus attain a synthesis between faith and history, without either collapsing the one reality into the other, or pitting the one against the other from the start.

Of course, at a more specialized level, theology should attend to all the historical and technical intricacies of disputed issues, while keep living from the kind of simple unitive vision enabling the researcher not to lose track of the one reality.<sup>2</sup> But theology as a whole must be aware of the consequences of its ideas. To deny ideas the right to tell a story is like denying colours the

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1. J.B. Metz, *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, (Grünewald; Mainz 1977) 31-33.
2. Cfr K. Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens*, (Herder, Freiburg i.Br. <sup>3</sup>1976) 13-34; E.G. Farrugia, *Aussage und Zusage*, (Pontificia Università Gregoriana; Roma 1985) 161-180.

right to form a picture: both tendencies are iconoclastic and both are widely practised in Western theology. And not only in Western theology. Ideas, including of course theological ideas, are societies in miniature. They reflect society and usually propel it ahead, and at times they even bring about radical change. Any living society is bound to have a social significance. In the case of iconoclasm the involvement of the state to enforce one policy or another was massive. The very study of iconoclasm is in danger of becoming iconoclastic, unless it realizes that the ideas at stake are living ideas. Thus, certain historians of dogma are wont to lament that the treatise on the Church is too juridical, that the communion of saints is forgotten, or mentioned almost as an afterthought, as happens in a textbook of dogma still used in many parts of the Catholic world: L. Ott, *Grundriß der Dogmatik*.<sup>3</sup> The history of the classical crisis of iconoclasm must therefore include the example of saints as a concrete explication of the discernment of spirits which makes of the case-history of sinners the story of the Church, and not simply as a sort of illustration for the sake of anecdote.

## FIRST PART: THE TWO PHASES OF ICONOCLASM

In view of this the concrete case-history of iconoclasm is perhaps even more instructive for the conclusions which so many have refused to draw from it till this day than for those actually drawn. Indeed, should it be true that the dialectic of Church history is the discernment of spirits,<sup>4</sup> in a positive as well as in a negative sense, for the way in which conclusions are drawn from events or left undrawn, then we should expect that the classical crisis offers some hints as to its own interpretation, as well as to the solution of the crisis as recurrent. In the very germs of destruction lies the diagnosis of healing.

We need not go far in order to find an illustration of what we are saying. It is often said in Church histories, especially of the summary type, that the crisis of iconoclasm started in 726 and ended in 843. This abrupt way of seeing things does not square with the facts, if only because the crisis of iconoclasm

3. (Herder, Freiburg i.Br. <sup>8</sup>1970) 378-389.

4. Discernment of spirits means "[t]he special gift of being able to distinguish divine charisms from merely natural or evil influences (1Cor 12,10). To decide whether a particular state of affairs comes from the Spirit of God or from the spirit of evil and error (1John 4,1-6), many fathers of the church and later authors have devised rules, such as those elaborated by St Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) for people doing his Spiritual Exercises" (O'Collins and E.G. Farrugia, *A Concise Dictionary of Theology* (Paulist Press; New York/Mahwah, NJ 1991) 56-57) or a retreat precisely in order to be able to discern God's will in a particular situation.

is recurrent. According to one estimate, this crisis was only one moment, if perhaps the most important moment, in which the constant tension between doctrine and image came to the fore in this period.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, if theology must seek its own image every age, as with education, where every generation has to think out its programme and cannot simply adopt what has been transmitted, then we have, in the crisis of iconoclasm, a constant crisis, re-current as much as the crisis of education, but which in its classical case laid down some constants and left out some variables. The crisis of iconoclasm will always be re-proposed because in it the relationship between image and dogma is put to the test through new variables such as new modes of thinking, new societal priorities and so forth. At the same time, the crisis of iconoclasm will not re-propose afresh everything, it will not be a discernment of spirits *ab ovo*, because some positions were constants and others became constants. This means that no future generation should tamper with certain lessons drawn as a conclusion of that crisis in the eighth-ninth century, because they now appertain to the dogmatic consciousness of the Church. Even then, ample room remains for variables, inculturation and dialogue with the world.

Already the delimitation of the time extent of the crisis forces us to not to isolate the crisis. One factor, especially, makes us wary how to lay down the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem*. In 691-692 was held the famous Quinisext council, also called *in Trullo*, from the domed hall in the imperial palace at Constantinople in which it was held, and whose thirteenth centenary we commemorated last year. It gathered with the express intention of publishing the canons of the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils, held respectively in Constantinople in 553 and 680/681, whence the name: Quinisext. In its 82nd canon this council prohibited depicting Christ, as hitherto, in the form of a lamb, considered to be a monophysitic aberration, but enjoined instead that from now on Christ had to be depicted in human form.

So here we have a hint of the iconoclasm that was soon to shake the whole Byzantine Empire.<sup>6</sup> The date of 726, when Emperor Leo III ordered that the Christ-icon on the Chalce gate of the imperial palace be removed, cannot be an absolute first. Still earlier, for example, was Caliph Yazîd II's edict against religious art in 723, forcing Christians to destroy their images.<sup>7</sup> The same holds

5. Cfr R. Stichel, "Gedanken zur Wesensbestimmung einer Ikone," in W. Kasack (ed), *Die geistlichen Grundlagen der Ikone*, (Verlag O. Sagner, München 1989) 22.
6. H. Ohme, *Das Concilium Quinisextum und seine Bischofsliste*, (Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York 1990) 14-15.330-331.
7. J.M. Hussey (ed.), *The Cambridge Medieval History*, IV/1, (Cambridge University Press;

true for the date given as an end of the controversy. The dispute, supposed to have been held between the deposed John VII Grammatikos, patriarch of Constantinople from 838 to 843, and Constantine the Philosopher, better known as St Cyril, a controversy recently edited by H.G. Thümmel,<sup>8</sup> goes to show that even after the settlement of 843 the controversy in one way or the other continued. The same holds true of the short treatise "Against the Iconoclasts," also edited by Thümmel, who is strongly inclined to believe that it is Photius' work.<sup>9</sup>

Many factors have been adduced for the outbreak of classical iconoclasm. Some have seen in it a pretext for ventilating social grievances in disguise; but, aside from the fact that such a theory leaves us to ask why something should be so important as to make plaintiffs wish to use it as a sounding-box, it leaves the theological origin unclarified. Again, construing the conflict as a clash between Church and State is rather dubious when one thinks that the Byzantine Church was divided over a number of issues and subservient to the State anyhow. Nor can we simply say that it was a matter of emperor's cult against that of Christ, because some of the emperors of the time were quite pious and even dabbled in theology. More recent research has shown besides that to pit out an iconodule monasticism against an iconoclastic army is to over-simplify things, since monks were not to a man in favour of icons. Jewish, Islamic, or Asian influences may perhaps account for a certain Cold War tactic of cooling an issue by watering down its explosive potential, but the nature of Islamic, Jewish and the various Asian iconoclasms are too complex as to account for everything.<sup>10</sup> Nor can one attribute everything to an alleged philistinism of the iconoclastic emperors, because life at court was noted for its pomp and decorations.<sup>11</sup>

It would be better to say that things came to a head, in the classical case of iconoclasm, because matters of principle were at stake. The crisis touches

Cambridge 1966) 65-68; W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival: 780-842*, (Stanford University; Stanford, California 1988) 86.

8 *Bilderlehre und Bilderstreit* (Augustinus-Verlag; Würzburg 1991) 145-152.

9. *Ibid.*, 127-144.

10. As an example, see T. Mooren, *Macht und Einsamkeit Gottes: Dialog mit dem islamischen Radikal-Montheismus*, (Echter/Oros; Würzburg/Altenberge 1991) 62-86. For Jewish iconoclasm see H. Fischer, *Die Ikone: Ursprung — Sinn — Gestalt*, (Herder, Freiburg i.Br. 1989) 21-30.

11. Cfr H.G. Thümmel, *Bilderlehre*, 21-32; also: H. Ahrweiler, in: A. Bryer and J. Herrin (eds), *Iconoclasm*, (University of Birmingham; Birmingham 1977) 23-25.

the roots of Christianity. With John Damascene we may rightly see in it an attack on Christianity itself, especially on the implications of the incarnation. We have therefore to go a step ahead and draw a further lesson from the crisis: it is not enough to admire icons, not even to have a devotion for them. The reason adduced by the Second Council of Nicaea II (787)<sup>12</sup> and the Fourth Council of Constantinople (869/870)<sup>13</sup> is dogmatic: icons represent the union of word and image and are thus guarantors of tradition or faith as a global vision. In this criterion we have a further explicitation of the hermeneutic that Church history is the history of the discernment of ideas, spirits and movements which then, after the sifting on the part of the Church, become living ecclesiology. Naturally, this obtains so long as we do not interpret the discernment itself as an immaterial, spiritualized process but as the Church's adverting, under the guidance of the Spirit, to the several very concrete possibilities among which she has to choose. When we say that icons represent the union of word and image, we mean that the image that thus comes about is that of the Church who listens to the Word but also retains her intuitive grasp of the whole message. The image is that of the community enthralled by the Word and eager to retain continuity also with the coming generations.

Opposition to the imperial policy came from several quarters. Patriarch St Germanos I of Constantinople was deposed in 730 for his courageous stand in refusing to go along with the official policy. But the most determined opposition, in spite of defections, came from the monastic rank and file. Not in vain Eastern theology calls monks living icons, for their vocation is to make the world to come transparent in their life-style.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps we should call them religious, if we want to relay an inclusive sense of European togetherness, East and West. The monk St Stephen the Younger (d. 765) tried to argue with the mob along lines familiar to us from St Basil and repeated by almost all of the defenders of icons, that the honour shown to the image rebounds on the prototype.<sup>15</sup> When the crowd refused to go along with his reasoning he asked,

12. N.P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils I*, (Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press; Washington D.C. 1990) 135.
13. *Ibid.*, 168 (= canon 3).
14. *Vida religiosa* 66/3(1989) is entirely dedicated to the theme "Iconos vivientes de Dios." See, in particular: O. Clement, "Función icónica del monacato oriental," pp.174-183.
15. B. Pruche (ed.), *S. Basilii Magni: De Spiritu Sancto* c. 18, no. 45 (=PG 32, p.149c) (Sources Chrétiens 17: Paris 1947). Note that St Athanasius had used before the comparison that respect shown to the emperor's image redounds to the emperor himself; Ch. v. Schönborn, *L'Icone du Christ. Fondements théologiques* (Ed. Universitaires; Fribourg Suisse 1976) 29.

with almost evangelical wit, to have a coin and asked whose image it was. When they told him it was the image of the emperor he threw it on the ground and trod upon it, to show them the absurdity in their way of looking at things. Whereupon the mob lynched him. Afterwards the Church canonized him.<sup>16</sup>

Another monk who had his hands full combating iconoclasm was a monk of St Sabas, St John Damascene (c.675-749). After occupying an important government post under the Caliphs he retired to the monastery of St Sabas (near Jerusalem) and wrote *Three Discourses* (726-730) against the official iconoclastic policy of the Byzantine Empire. It is the same text, edited thrice, and is not, as is his wont, a compilation, but comprises the Damascene's own ideas. It is a paradox for those who would see in Islam the cause of iconoclasm that the Damascene could write vitriolic prose against the Emperor in the last analysis because he was out of the pale of the Byzantines and under Islamic rule. It is to be noted, however, that the Damascene did not have a fraction of the success he had with his *Fountain of Knowledge*, which was to become a classic expression of Orthodox Faith. For *The Three Discourses* in their present form we have only one codex, the Neapolitanus 54, which goes back to the thirteenth century. Although B. Kotter, its recent editor, could make important additions, the anchoring in the manuscript tradition remains slim.<sup>17</sup> Some exaggerated views advanced on behalf of the *Three Discourses*, as when B. Altaner/A. Stuiber claim that St John Damascene provided with this writing the basis for all future justification of Christian veneration for images and relics, although it is an exaggeration of a truth, must be examined afresh in this new light,<sup>18</sup> and not simply assumed tacitly. Now this is important for an aspect which, if it has not directly to do with the discernment of spirits, so at least with spiritual hesitation and tergiversation. In the last century, after a long period of decline in which Eastern art had to adapt itself to Western models, icons began to be rediscovered in Russian culture, a momentous event which we associate with the name of N.S. Leskov and his *Zapечатlennyj angel* [= Sealed Angel] (1873), followed later on, for instance, by I.S. Schmeljow (d. 1950), W. Soluchin (b. 1924), E.N. Trubetskoj (d. 1916) and P. Florenskij (1914: *Stolp i utverzdenie istiny*).<sup>19</sup> The Damascene's Neoplatonic way of

16. Cfr J. Gill, "The Life of Stephen the Younger by Stephen the Deacon. Debts and Loans," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 6(1940) 114-139.

17. Cfr H.G. Thümmel, *Bilderlehre*, 55.

18. See CH.v. Schönborn, *L'Icone du Christ*, 191.

19. Cfr A. Martini-Wonde, "N.S. Leskows Entdeckung der Ikone;" W. Schriek, "Die Ikone im Werk

looking at icons, with his particular slant of explaining that they are carriers of grace and revelation, led, according to Thümmel, to a somewhat one-sided interpretation of history and the essence of the icon.<sup>20</sup>

Directly connected with this narrow hermeneutics is the attempt to make of certain non-naturalistic traits such as "inverse perspective" the essence of the icon. As we have seen, P.A. Florenskij wrote about "inverse perspective" (cfr *Ikonostas* [1922] and even more his *Obratnaia Perspektivie* [1919]). In it he proposed to re-interpret the whole history of art according to this viewpoint. Unfortunately, it is this type of interpretation which has prevailed. Another non-naturalistic trait oft adduced as essential to the icon is the absence of shadows. But as E. Sendler has shown, one of the fascinations of the Vladimir Madonna is that light is reflected on the Mother's nose whose cheek presses that of her child. Maybe this was the artist's way of expressing how the divine and human world meet in the incarnation and deification.<sup>21</sup> Even more surprising is the Madonna of Damascus, which the Knights of Rhodes brought with them to Malta in 1530. There the child has bare feet, although the Mother of tenderness type of this icon is rather monastic or rigid.<sup>22</sup> And before we ascribe such human and all too natural touches to the Sienese way of painting, which we associate with names like Duccio di Buoninsegna (d. 1338) and Simone Martini (d.1344),<sup>23</sup> we have to keep in mind that the Vladimir Madonna dates to the early twelfth century, whereas D. Talbot-Rice suggested that Our Lady of Damascus might be considerably earlier.<sup>24</sup>

But, returning to the interpretation of iconoclasm, we find that a final modification is to be made with regard to the accepted version of the iconoclastic council of Hieria, convoked by Emperor Constantine V in 754.

von Iwan Schmeljow," F. Göbler, "Wladimir Solouchins literarischer Beitrag zur Rehabilitierung der Ikone in der Sowjetunion," in W. Kasack, *Die geistlichen Grundlagen*, 141-174.

20. Thümmel, *Bilderlehre*, 36.
21. E. Sendler, *L'icône, image de l'Invisible*, (Desdée de Brouwer; Bruges 1981) 165.
22. V. Borgia, "Storia di un'icona," *Lo Stivale* 23(1989) 3-14; G. Gharib, *Le icone mariane: storia e culto*, (Città Nuova Editrice; Roma 1987) 148-153.
23. J. Børtnes, *Visions of Glory. Studies in Early Russian Hagiography*, (Solum Forlag A/S; Oslo 1988) 100; see also E. Faure, *Histoire de l'Art: L'Art médiéval*, (Le livre de Poche; Paris 1964) 350-368.
24. M. Buhagiar, *The Iconography of the Maltese Islands 1400-1900: Painting* (Lions Club; Malta 1988) 34. In his letter to the rector of the Church of Our Lady of Damascus D. Talbot-Rice suggests that the icon of the same name could be between fifty and hundred years earlier; Borgia, "Storia", 12.

The ease with which prelates kept changing sides all throughout the classical crisis of iconoclasm seems to confirm the standpoint of those who claim that icons were not as yet clearly anchored in the dogmatic consciousness of the Church, so that the whole issue could seem more like a *quaestio disputata* than anything else. Of particular note are the arguments adduced by the iconoclasts. That they found themselves opposed to Church doctrine in their opposition to icon veneration goes without saying. But the arguments themselves might not have received a full hearing, precisely because they were mixed with indisputable error, so that their legitimate concern was lost with their mistake. One might be inclined to think that what was specific to their arguments was Emperor Constantine V's famous dilemma — that iconodules were either nestorians, if they claimed to portray only the human nature of Christ, or monophysites, if they claimed to portray both the human and the divine natures.<sup>25</sup> But, in effect, the argument that an image has to be *homoousios* or "of like substance" with the prototype deserves closer attention than it has received thus far. On this premiss they further argued that only the Eucharist is the true image of Christ and only the virtuous life is the true image of the saints. Now, J. Meyendorff has claimed that the inspirer behind the iconoclasts' theory was Pseudo-Dionysius, for whom the process of formation of images is the process of the communication of being. While some have put this authorship into question, Thümmel has argued that, independently of who ultimately inspired the iconoclasts, to describe the Eucharistic species as true but dissimilar images is not necessarily a heresy, precisely on account of this neoplatonic idea of the participation of being.<sup>26</sup> After all, the history of dogma knows of the clash between St Augustine's and St Ambrose's idea of the Eucharist, which took place under the Carolingians when the liturgy books ultimately harking back to Augustine, who had a view of the Eucharist which is symbolical, were confronted with those of St Ambrose, who couched his in more realistic terms.<sup>27</sup> Besides, Augustine clearly believes in the real presence, because in a Platonic scheme like his only what is symbolical can exist. However, I am not quite sure whether Thümmel has given us a possible defence or has also actually proved his point. Be it as it may, enough has been said to re-open the dossier of the council of Hiereia, while trying to avoid the shoals of both a superficial revisionism, which is really tantamount to

25. Cfr G. Dumeige, *Nicée II* (Paris 1977) 78-97.

26. H.G. Thümmel, *Bilderlehre*, 34-35.

27. J Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 3, (University of Chicago Press; Chicago/London 1978) 74-80.

iconoclasm, and, that of a traditionalistic tradition, which is deep down fundamentalism. In the history of dogma, too, we need a perspective other than our normal one — a transfigured perspective, faithful to one's deepest convictions in faith, free from prejudices and open to the future.

### *The Council of Nicaea II (787)*

Long before the Council met there was already a theology upon which the prelates eager to re-establish peace with Rome, with the monks and with the tradition of the Church could draw upon. This was that of the monk John Damascene, who might not have had the monopoly of arguments, but had the dubious distinction of having been anathemized in Hieria and was to be re-habilitated with glory at Nicaea II. At any rate, the gist of his argument was that, with the incarnation, the uncircumscribable God had affected a great change in the relationship between spirit and matter. An image is not of the same nature with its prototype, but only similar to it, which amounts to saying that it is at the same time different. And besides, one must distinguish between *latreia*, reserved only for God, and *proskynesis*, the honour we owe to the saints.<sup>28</sup> So reduced to its bare essentials, the theology of St John Damascene was undoubtedly to play a great part in the general formation of right thinking on images.

But, as we have said, this theology was bought at a price. At a political price. The story of how the Empress-regent Irene had her own son Constantine VI blinded is too well known to need to be recounted again. But that happened in 797, ten years after the Council had been successfully convened. As regent for her son Irene had shown some savvy. Since most bishops had been implicated in the iconoclastic council of Hieria of 754 she took the momentous step of nominating her secretary, Tarasius, patriarch. Now Tarasius was a layman. This way of proceeding was to set a dubious precedent for the elevation to the patriarchate of a great layman and scholar, Photius. Be it as it may, the tactic offered Irene precisely the kind of advantage she sought: somebody who did not have an unfortunate record of iconoclasm and who was willing to go along with her reform policy. Already in 786 a council was convened in Constantinople, but it proved to be abortive. There was unrest among the military. This need not mean that the whole army was iconoclastic. It must also be remembered that icons were restored through the intervention of two women, Irene in the first phase and Theodora in the second, who,

28. Cfr St John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, (St Vladimir's Seminary Press; Crestwood, New York 1980) 73-74.

whatever their merits, were certainly not talented militarily. The memory of the glorious days of the imperial army under the iconoclastic emperors Leo III and Constantine V must account for strong army backing, at least in some quarters. Finally a council could be convened on 24 September 787 at St Sophia, Nicaea.

Perusing the Horos we are struck by its use of the argument of St Basil that the veneration shown to the image redounds to the prototype.<sup>29</sup> As is well known, a defective translation was forwarded to the Franks, with the result that the latter could consider the Greeks to have gone over to "adore" icons. The Franks' hostile reaction was soon to find expression in the synod held in Frankfurt in 794. This hostile interpretation found a fertile ground.

Trouble between East and West had been brewing in the eighth century. Here we may recall some stepping-stones. First of all, we may note a certain parallel development. Leo III (emperor from 717-741) managed to lift the Arab siege of Constantinople in 718, whereas Charles Martel beat the Arabs at Poitiers in 732. This double victory injected a feeling of self-confidence in two upstarts become rulers and in their peoples, and this helped them to drift away from each other, conscious that they could handle their own problems on their own. In the same year 732 Leo III transferred the jurisdiction of Calabria, Sicily, Crete and East Illyricum from the pope to the patriarch. Ravenna, the jewel in the crown ever since Justinian I had embarked on his ambitious programme of reconquest of the lost Western provinces — his general Belisarius conquered Ravenna in 540 — was now lost to the Lombards in 751. By the year 800, with the surprise crowning of Charlemagne on Christmas night by Pope Leo III in St Peter's Basilica, the dream of one Christian Empire was badly compromised. In the 860's the Photian schism will shake the dream of Church unity, a blow from which the united Great Church never completely recovered. The dream of one united Church, living under one political government and having one supreme spiritual authority, will be dreamed again and again. In Jurij Krizanič (d. 1683) and V. Solovi'ev (d. 1900) this meant the Czar and the Pope respectively. Others disagreed, but were inclined to accept in principle the possibility of one government and one spiritual authority. Saints Cyril's and Methodius' formula was not to burn the bridges in the direction of anybody: as envoys of the Emperor, to seek the pope's protection and remain on friendly terms with Photius, a former colleague of Cyril's.

29. See *De Spiritu Sancto* 18, Nr. 45.

After a period of quiet, persecution of iconodules resumed around 815. We now come across a wider spectrum of attitudes, ranging, among iconoclasts, from rabid rejection to an acceptance of icon veneration in all but some forms. By and large the iconoclasm of the second phase may be described as tolerance of the icons for purposes of illustration, but rejection of them as objects of veneration or as special carriers of tradition. An iconoclast of this period is so described by a saint of this period: "He (= the heretic) said that honour passes over, but not veneration. I too honour the icon of Christ, when it is placed up high; but I do not venerate it..."<sup>30</sup> Once again, we see a great saint who rises to the defence of icons. The saint in question is St Theodore Studites (759-826). His life-work helps us correct some stereotypes about iconoclasm. For one thing, Theodore had already been involved in a controversy with Constantine VI over the latter's marrying his mistress, an issue which was to divide the contemporary Church and which thus shows how misleading it is to see Church as a monolithic group opposing the State. For his courageous stand Theodore was exiled in 795, but that was by no means the end of his worries. His greatest work was without a doubt the reform of monasticism — but that goes to show that monasticism, too, did not take a stand as a monolithic group over and against the State but was rent by inner tensions. At any rate, the Studite's reforms were to have a lasting effect on the kind of monasticism that thrived on Mount Athos.

St Theodore's arguments are instructive. Appealing as St John Damascene had done to tradition Theodore could turn Constantine V's christological dilemma to his advantage. If we cannot portray Christ, then he either lacks a true human nature, a position which would amount to docetism, or else his human nature is so submerged in the divine that it is lost, a thesis which would imply monophysitism.<sup>31</sup> But there are some differences between the Damascene and the Studite. While serious problems present themselves if we were to try to distinguish between Aristotelians and Platonists in the eighth and ninth century, the Studite is more influenced by Aristotelianism whereas the Damascene by Neoplatonism.<sup>32</sup> And so Theodore argues that the icon offers only the concrete configuration of Christ or the saint represented, not his essence.<sup>33</sup>

30. St Theodore Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, (trans. by Catherine R. Roth) (St Vladimir's Seminary Press; Crestwood, New York 1981) 60.

31. Cfr St Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons* 9.

32. H.G. Thümmel, *Bilderlehre*, 50.

33. H.G. Thümmel, *ibid.*, 47-48.

The end of official iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire came in 843 in a synod held at Constantinople. It was the first Sunday of Lent. The Orthodox Church still celebrates the "Triumph of Orthodoxy" that day on every first Sunday of Lent. A special *Synodikon*, anathematizing iconoclasts and all heresies as well as extolling iconodules and all lovers of orthodoxy, is read for the occasion.<sup>34</sup> The icon used for this feast is the Vernicle or the Sacred Face of Christ. But why the victory over iconoclasm should be recorded as the Feast of Orthodoxy may be lost on many. Iconoclasm may be viewed, in retrospect, as an unfortunate episode and a devious doctrine; but have there not been heresies much worse in their purport than iconoclasm? Why should precisely the victory over what might seem to have been a case of acute fever from which nonetheless one has emerged happily intact be taken to be the expression of the be-all and the end-all of orthodoxy?

Several factors contribute to underline the importance of this feast. For one thing, the dispute found a viable solution in an ecumenical council, Nicaea II, which has come to be subsequently considered the last in a series of seven important councils. These Seven Councils represent something which both East and West, especially Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, have in common. They offer us a chance for dialogue between our Churches, but also an occasion to discover our common roots in Europe. The reception of a council has often been interpreted in a short-range way.<sup>35</sup> Well, there is also a medium-range and a long-range reception, both of which can help us to better understand the Christian message of our times, as an interpretation of the past and as a prognosis of the future.

These Seven Councils have come to play such a role in Eastern Orthodoxy that, while the possibility of other ecumenical councils is generally admitted, none of the many important councils in medieval and modern times qualify as the eighth council for them. We see here a source of consolation. Eastern Orthodox may not have gone along with Roman Catholics, but in a very important sense they have not gone away without them.<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, the

34. J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie: Édition et commentaire," *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967) 1-316.
35. For the meaning of reception see A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche* 2/1: *Das Konzil von Chalcedon: Rezeption und Widerspruch (451-518)* (Herder, Freiburg i. Br. 1986) especially pp.6-11.
36. See on this point, *The Living Faith: A Catechism for the Christian Faith*, II, (St Vladimir's; Crestwood, New York 1989) 308-309.

West only caught up with the import of the Seventh council in the Protestant crisis, when it was already too late.<sup>37</sup>

But there is another reason accounting for the importance of the victory over iconoclasm. It has been suggested, by both C. Mango and H-G. Thümmel, that Photius played an important part in fixing this date in Orthodox consciousness. He was related to Tarasius, and belonged to a family who had suffered exile because of its stance in favour of icons, a position which he could use in his struggles against Patriarch Ignatios. Moreover, he not only discussed the issue in his writings and sermons, but also embarked upon a Church decoration programme, of which the apse mosaic in Haghia Sophia is an eloquent example.<sup>38</sup>

In the fourth council of Constantinople of 870, generally considered by Catholics to be the Eighth Ecumenical Council, we read in canon three:

Just as through the written words which are contained in the book, we shall all obtain salvation, so through the influence that colours in painting exercise on the imagination, all, both wise and simple, obtain benefit from what is before them; for as speech teaches and portrays through syllables, so too does painting by means of colours.<sup>39</sup>

Photius himself said in the inauguration of the mosaic of the enthroned Virgin with Child:

These things [of faith] are conveyed both by stories and pictures, but it is the spectators rather than the hearers who are drawn to emulation.<sup>40</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The history of iconoclasm and of the various councils which met to resolve the issue are inextricably intertwined with politics. The crisis of iconoclasm was to drive a wedge between East and West. If the break-up was not

37. H.G. Thümmel *Bilderlehre*, 92.

38. C. Mango, "The Liquidation of Iconoclasm and the Patriarch Photios" and P. Karlin-Hayter, "Gregory of Syracuse, Ignatios and Photios," in Bryer/Herren (eds), *Iconoclasm* 133-140.141-146.

39. N.P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, I, 168.

40. Bryer/Herren, *Iconoclasm* 186.

immediate, this was due to so many still active and vital forces, like monasticism, which managed to avert the catastrophe at least for the time being. The Photian crisis which set in a short time after the official resolution of iconoclasm could perhaps be viewed as the last round in an issue which was in effect global, i.e. touched not only faith matters but also politics, including ecclesiastical politics.

Secondly, the main dogmatic issue adduced for upholding the veneration of icons is dogmatic: the union of word and image in the icon as a symbol of tradition or Christianity grasped globally by the Apostles and developed piecemeal through the various pastoral needs, including the intellectual ones, of the successive epochs of Church history. This latter reflection is called dogmatic development and finds its articulation in theology, whereby dogmatic development is essentially more than theological development.

Finally, after iconoclasm there followed in the Byzantine Empire a cultural revival, which has been adequately described by W. Treadgold as a "renaissance before the renaissance."<sup>41</sup>

## SECOND PART: A WORD ON HERMENEUTICS

It is hard to tackle so many problems without a key to resolve them. The crisis of iconoclasm, we have just seen, contained in itself the germs of its own resolution. It helped, perhaps for the first time, the emergence of various parties, for and against icons, and thus led to a debate on something, already present but in a somewhat ambiguous form. The iconoclasts could claim several precedents. Besides the appeal to Ex 20,4 and Rom 1,18-23, they could cite Origen (d. c. 254),<sup>42</sup> canon 36 of the Council of Elvira (c. 300-316), Eusebius' (d. 340) letter to Constantia, refusing to acquiesce in her request to have a portrait of Christ; Epiphanius' (d. 403) tearing of an image and apposite comments; and Amphilochios of Ikonion (d. after 394), who enjoined that instead of painting the physical form of saints one ought to imitate their virtues. But the iconodules as well could call to mind not only other Scripture passage but a whole list of Fathers including Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 200), Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), Athanasius of Alexandria (328-373), Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 390), Pseudo-Dionysius (6th Century) and Hypatios, archbishop

41. Cfr W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival 740-843*, (Stanford University Press; Stanford, California 1988); *Idem (ed.), Renaissances Before the Renaissance* (Stanford University Press; California 1985).

42. See Ch. v. Schönborn, *L'Icone du Christ*, 77-85.

of Ephesus (d. after 538).<sup>43</sup> Precisely the seemingly contradictory character of the appeal to authority would later on induce Peter Abelard (d. 1142) to appeal to dialectic in his famous *Sic et Non*. Here we can content ourselves with what the Fathers did in both East and West with the most sacred of texts, the Bible, in order to elicit its meaning. Indeed, one of the lasting glories of the Fathers is that they not only were the first exegetes but also reflected on their methods and thus laid the foundations for the right interpretation or hermeneutics of scripture.

### *Hermeneutics*

Generally speaking, hermeneutics is the art and science of interpretation. But it is as much a question of interpreting an object as it is a question of the influence exercised by that object on the subject. This reciprocity takes place in turn within a community, be it that of critics, admirers or the faithful.<sup>44</sup> Naturally, here we cannot possibly go into a detailed discussion of hermeneutics as such. However, we can construct a small analogy. The scriptures are Holy Writ and an icon is "written". Could we therefore elicit something common to the ways of reading these different types of writings?

For the reading of Scripture we are superlatively informed. The various senses of Scripture have been elaborated from the earliest times and have had a great tradition in both exegesis and spirituality. At once the names of Origen (d. c. 254) and St Bonaventure (d. 1274) come to mind. But really a whole tradition was soon developed. Similarities and differences between Alexandrian allegory and Antiochene *theoria* have been repeatedly discussed. The problem accompanied the whole Medieval period and found expression in a famous two-line composition:

"Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,  
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia."<sup>45</sup>

We may name four meanings which have gained prominence in the interpretation of scriptures: the literal sense, bound to the gesta and the data; the allegorical sense, which sketches faith-contents in symbol; the moral sense,

43. Cfr A. Bryer and J. Herrin, *Iconoclasm*, 180-181.

44. Cfr J. Hospers (ed.), *Introductory Readings in Aesthetics*, (The Free Press; New York 1969); H.G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, (J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen 1975).

45. H. de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, (Aubier, Paris 1959).

which points to what one has to do, and the anagogical sense, which goes beyond the mere givens towards the transfigured world of the eschaton.

The good dividends hermeneutics has yielded over the years can now be applied analogously to other areas, so long as due allowance is made for the peculiarities of these areas. From a sketch of the problematic of iconoclasm and its ultimate resolution we have reached the conclusion that the icon is the intrinsic unity of word and image. Restricting himself to sermons and commentaries on Genesis, such as Basil's homilies on the *Hexaemeron*, H. Maguire undertook to study floor-mosaics in their relation to early patristic literature on natural history. From the start he rules out the possibility of a one-to-one correspondence between texts and images on account of the nature of images themselves, which, like keys which can unlock several doors, may either have more than one meaning (ambiguity) or a shift in meaning (ambivalence).<sup>46</sup> Thus, the portrayal of four rivers can signify the four main rivers Gehon, Phison, Tigris and Euphrates of the inhabited world or assume a symbolical meaning of waters of baptism etc. From the example of the floor-mosaics in the Basilica of Thrysos in Arcady, which does not try to convey any special symbolical meaning, Maguire reaches the conclusion that one may resort to symbolical interpretation only when the context demands it.<sup>47</sup> On further analysis of allegory, partial and otherwise, as well as other ways of correlating image and text, Maguire's work suggests a whole programme of possibly correlating word and image in other areas as well.

When we turn to icons we have to distinguish between various ways of reading the icon. We may distinguish between the story which is at the basis of the image, the colours and the geometrical designs. The story is biblical, but can also be coloured by apocryphal contents. When we read Syrian Fathers of the Church such as St Ephrem we realize that with words one can draw an image. Naturally, whoever prefers exactitude to anything else is likely to have problems with such an inexact way of saying things. As a matter of fact, however, one should also ask oneself whether the absolutization of this criterion is not due to a rationalistic prejudice, which is intolerant with poetic connotation and is satisfied only with concrete denotation. But already Shakespeare had to avow, "There are more things in heaven and earth ... than

46. H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art*. Published for The College Art Association of America, (Pennsylvania State University Press; University Park and London 1987) 8-9.

47. H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 26-28.

are dreamt of in your philosophy.”<sup>48</sup> E. Trubetskoj has aptly described the icon as theology in colours, precisely because in it theology declares her colours, assumes subtly position for all to see in a vision of the whole. And geometrical designs remind us, as innocent bystanders, of the invitation spelled out by the icon, in its own silently eloquent way, to join in God’s banquet, offered freely for all to accept. One need only think that around the question of the hesychasts — “What was the nature of the light perceived on Mount Thabor?” — St Gregory Palamas (d. 1359) built his whole theology and spirituality.

Given these particular traits of icons which any interpretation of them has to take carefully into account we have to find a point at which interpretation and image meet more directly. No better case could be offered than that of the doctrine of man and woman created in the image and likeness of God.

### *The problem of interpretation presented by Gen 1,26-27*

The first attempt to find a solution is to try and interpret God through His works, especially His great work: man. At once there crops up the question: Is man really the image and likeness of God? Some of the early Fathers, like St Irenaeus (d. c. 200), have tried to construe an anthropology around Gen 1,26-27, claiming that man was created in the image of God, which image of God, however, was blurred through sin, but which through grace may be straightened out again. Through his endowment of reason and will man is created in God’s image, and, if he uses them well to become like God, he may be described also as “according to His likeness.” Now, eminent Protestant theologians of our times like K. Barth, E. Lehmann and E. Nygren have called into question precisely this traditional interpretation. According to them the Old Testament passage does not intend, in the first place, to describe any human similarity with God, but rather the fact that Yahweh is completely dissimilar from the other gods. Thus, the stars are degraded from being the Babylonians’ gods and become mere luminaries. And whereas in the Babylonian ten-day scheme (week, creation) man was created on a separate day, for Genesis man is created along with the animals. The point is clear: human beings are similar to the animals, but, should there be any animal which bears some similarity to God, if only in a very remote way, then only the human pair can come in question. But the literary point of saying first

48. W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act I, scene v, line 166.

“in the image,” and then “according to the likeness” is a device, typical of Hebrew parallelism, which weakens the first affirmation.<sup>49</sup>

So Protestants are right after all. And wrong. Then they concentrated too much on the Hebrew Bible, leaving out of consideration the later — Greek! — developments. We can agree with them that man is not the image of God. Woman is not the image of God, either. Only Christ is, according to Colossians 1,15, the true image of God, because in Him the invisible God has become visible. In Him God’s gift of the Spirit has become tangible. In this zoo often falsely raised to divine dignity only humans relay a faint idea of who God is. Not man alone, nor woman alone, but both in their interrelationship. Just as God rules in sovereign kindness over humans, so should man and woman try to rule humanely over the sub-human world.

### *Interpreting man through God’s Spirit*

A narrowly understood biblical interpretation cannot satisfy, because the word without spirit is an abstraction. Therefore, we must interpret human work through God’s Spirit. It is not we who can grasp God, but it is God who grasps us. In this sense, the Spirit implies the Word. The Spirit is the Spirit of God the Father and the Spirit of the Son. A free-floating Spirit is not the third Person of the Trinity. The icons which suggest the Holy Trinity, like the famous Philoxenia of Abraham type, especially in the well-known Roublev version, transmits a sense of perichoresis or mutual interpenetration of the Persons within the Trinity and, by the way the focus of the painting converges on the spectator, relays an offer of communion. Taking up the offer means re-interpreting one’s stance in reality. A typical example of how interpretation means change is the icon of the Transfiguration. Who really changes: Christ or the Apostles?<sup>50</sup> Certain icons of the Transfiguration suggest that it was the Apostles who could see more because of enhanced maturity.<sup>51</sup> In order to enjoy communion with God, we need apophysis or purification of the intellect in theology and ascesis or purification of the senses in life.

In brief, we can draw the following conclusions.

(1) Taken in isolation Gen 1,26-27 cannot be made to demonstrate the kind of anthropology which is the backbone of Catholic-Orthodox theology of the

49. V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, (St Vladimir’s; New York 1974) 125-139.

50. G. Habra, *La transfiguration selon les Pères Grecs*, (Éd. S.O.S.; Paris 1973) 185.

51. See J. Bortnes, *Visions of Glory*, 188-190.

image, which in turn captures the essential epistemological differentiation between Catholic-Orthodox and most Protestant theologies. But in the light of Col 1,15 as well as that of other passages (e.g., Rom 8,29-30, Heb 1,3) this Catholic-Orthodox anthropology becomes the only one which is feasible.

(2) Apophatic (or negative) theology no more contradicts a positive (or cataphatic) theology of the revelation than avoiding a naturalistic form of art renders iconography impossible.<sup>52</sup> Both negative theology and antinaturalism are meant to be processes of purification. Apophaticism wants to protect us from rationalism, but without denying the creature status of reason as a means of growing nearer to God. And asceticism does the same for the will. Similarly, the strange or apophatic character of icons is meant to protect us from the kind of illusion which optic naturalism, or depicting things as they appear to us, may easily lead to. Both iconography and positive theology is made possible by the incarnation, and so is communion. Indeed, Eastern theology, so famous for its negative theology, is equally famous for its icons.

(3) Interpretation is a process. It is based on the reciprocity that obtains between the one interpreting and what has to be interpreted. But it entails also a process of conversion: a judgment transmitted by convention is now challenged and changed, or at least assimilated, so as to become one's personal conviction.

(4) Icons may be interpreted in various ways. Especially pertinent criteria are: the story in Scripture or the historical saint they portray; the way in which personages are represented in their true colours; and the intricate mathematical designs inviting us into the world of peace of mind and heart which is the world suffused by God's glory.

(5) Spiritual progress is described in Scripture in terms of moving "from glory to glory" (2 Cor 3,18) — the ever increasing sublimity into which spiritual persons who are imbued by God are transformed.

(6) From what has been said, it is clear that hearing and seeing must needs belong together in an intrinsic unity, like theology and spirituality itself.

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**ERRATA CORRIGE**

The following corrections are to be made to the article by Edward Farrugia, "The Re-Current Crisis of Iconoclasm", *Melita Theologica* Vol. XLIII, No.2 (1992):

pg 13, 1st par.: *have lost the large extent* should be *have become to a large extent*.

pg 16, 2nd par.: (527-567) should be (527-565).

pg 17, 2nd par.: *common iconoclastic tradition* should be *common icon tradition*.

pg 19, 2nd par.: 1806 should be 1306.

# PHILOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ARABIC ROOT “JNN”

Edmund Teuma

In the not so distant past *Melita Theologica*\* published five articles of mine treating about the Jinn in the Qur’ân and in Muslim tradition. The *jinn* are spiritual intelligent beings, non-angelic and non-human. Since these beings are mentioned in the Qur’ân and are widely present in Muslim Tradition, they constitute a theological problem, which, if studied and treated with due scientific severity, will surely shed more light on Christian-Muslim dialogue and mutual understanding.

The present philological survey is meant to complement these five articles.

We shall first look into the meaning of *janna - yajunnu* (1st form), *junna* (1st form passive), the derived forms of the verb, and the meaning of nouns coming from the same root which are likely to raise our interest, i.e. *jinn, jinnî - jinniyya, jinna, junûn, junûnî, majanna, majnûn, jânn, janan, and janûn*.

## *First form active*

The verb in the active mood 1st form (*janna - yajunnu*; verbal noun: *jann*)

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- \* (1) Vol. XXXI (1980/2) “The Nature of “Iblîs” in the Qur’ân as interpreted by the Commentators”;
- (2) Vol. XXXII (1981/1-2) “On Qur’ânic Jinn”;
- (3) Vol. XXXV (1984/1-2) “More on Qur’ânic Jinn”;
- (4) Vol. XXXVIII (1987/1) “Some Qur’ânic Exegesis: Prophet Solomon and the Jinn”;
- (5) Vol. XXXIX (1987/2) “The Solomon Legend in Muslim Tradition”.

and *janûn*) has attached to it the general meaning implied by the root. Almost all authors consulted agree in putting “to cover, hide, conceal, veil” as being the first meaning of the verb, followed by “to descend, fall, be or become dark (night)”, and by other nuances deriving from the same idea, such as: “to protect, and to be enveloped by a rich vegetation” (Kazimirski).

The early meaning reported by Bercher, with verbal noun *junûn* is “être pris d’un accès de folie, s’emporter.” Cuhe distinguishes between “*janna* - *yajinnu*, verbal noun: *jann*, meaning: couvrir, envelopper, cacher”, and “*janna* - *yajunnu*, verbal noun: *junûn*, meaning: être fou, être possédé du démon...” Beaussier gives first preference to “entrer, être en fureur” and last preference to “couvrir, envelopper”. While in his sixth preference Kazimirski says: “rendre fou, démoniaque, s’emparer de quelqu’un (se dit d’un démon).” But perhaps the solution to the problem of preferences which should indicate the primitive meaning of verb *janna* may be deduced from Dozy who explains: “Dans le sens de devenir fou, est chez le vulgaire, non pas *junna*, comme dans la langue classique, mais *janna*...” Therefore, remaining within the limits of the classical language, one would prefer to retain “to cover, conceal, etc.” to be the primitive meaning of the verb. This would be in accordance with Lane’s lexicon, and what is more, with the classical dictionaries of the Arabic language such as *Lisân al-‘Arab* and *Tâj al-‘Arûs*, which prefer to speak of “possession and madness” when they explain the derived forms of the verb, while they give a very eminent position to “covering and concealing” in the case of *janna* - *yajunnu*.<sup>1</sup>

### *First form passive*

Regarding the passive voice of *janna*, which is *junna*, Kazimirski still persists in giving first preference to the “covering - concealing” nuance, naturally in its passive form: “être couvert et dérobé aux regards”. He gives fourth place to “être possédé, fou”. In doing so he agrees with *Lisân al-‘Arab* which explains: “*wa-kullu shay<sup>in</sup> sutira ‘anka*” with “*fa-qad junna ‘anka*”;<sup>2</sup> and with *Tâj al-‘Arûs* which says: “*wa-kullu mâ sutira ‘anka fa-qad junna ‘anka*”.<sup>3</sup>

1. Cfr. AL-ZABÎDÎ, SAYYID MUHAMMAD MURTADÂ, *Tâj al-‘Arûs*, vol. 9 (Misr 1306/1889) 163-167; IBN MANZÛR, MUHAMMAD B. MUKARRAM B. ‘ALÎ B. AHMAD AL-ANSÂRÎ AL-IFRÎQÎ AL-MISRÎ JAMAL AL-DÛN ABÛ AL-FADL, *Lisân al-‘Arab*, vol. 15 (Misr 1300-1307/1883-1890) 244-253.
2. Cfr. *Lisân*, 244.
3. Cfr. *Tâj*, 163.

The more recent dictionaries insist on the "possession - madness" idea, e.g. Freytag: "Daemone obsessus et insanus fuit ac furiosus"; Wehr: "to be or become possessed, insane, mad, crazy..." Hava prefers to give his particular graduation starting with "madness - possession", passing on to "grass-covering" and the "buzzing of insects", back again to "madness", this time provoked by joy or anger, and last preference he gives to "concealing".

### *Derived forms of janna*

*Jannana* (2nd form) means "to craze, drive mad, enrage, infuriate..." The "Vocabolario Arabo-Italiano" published by l'Istituto per l'Oriente of Rome in 1966 together with Belot add to this meaning the one given under the 4th form, "to cover", placing it before the above-mentioned nuance of "madness".

Opinions differ when the 4th form of the verb is discussed. Wehr, *Vocabolario Arabo-Italiano*, Cuhe, and Hava give first preference to "craziness" and second to "concealing". Belot and Ben Sedira prefer "to cover" only. Freytag's sole insertion is: "Insanum reddidit aliquam Deus", and completes his insertion by the expression: "mâ 'ajannahu, meaning : quam insanus est!" Kazimirski gives his first six preferences to six different shades of meaning implying the idea of "covering and concealing", he then gives seventh preference to "rendre fou, rendre furieux", reporting the same expression as Freytag. Lane holds that there are instances where the 4th form is equal in meaning to the 1st and to the 8th, "to be or become concealed". He then goes on to "possession by jinn and madness". When explaining the expression "mâ 'ajannahu", Lane agrees with the classical Arabic dictionaries when he says that the expression "is anomalous being formed from a verb of the passive form, namely *junna*; for of the *madrûb* one should not say, *mâ 'adrabahu...*" Again in accordance with the classical dictionaries Lane holds that 'ajanna "also signifies *waqa'a fi majannat*"<sup>4</sup>, i.e. "he came to a place haunted by jinn".<sup>4</sup>

The fifth form, "*tajannana*" according to the more recent dictionaries has the meaning of "to go mad, become crazy" (Wehr, *Vocabolario Arabo-Italiano*, Freytag), or "to show symptoms of madness" (Belot, Hava, Freytag), or else "to play the insane", a nuance which is also implied in the 6th form (Ben Sedira, Hava). Kazimirski puts "to be covered by a rich vegetation (said of the soil)" in the first place, "to be possessed or mad" in the second place, while he gives third preference to "il donne des symptômes de folie..."

Explaining the 6th form, *tajâna* or *tajânana*, Kazimirski limits himself to

4. Cfr. *Lisân*, 248-249.

the nuance of “*madness*”, but he does not give the special nuance attached to this form, that of feigning madness. Lane recalls what he said under the 5th form: “he feigned himself *majnûn*...” Generally speaking all other dictionaries agree with Lane, and this, as usual, is in accordance with the classical lexica.<sup>5</sup>

Few are those dictionaries that report *ijtanna* (8th form): only three of those that have been consulted. They all agree with Lane who says that according to the Qur’ân *ijtanna* means “he was, or became, veiled, concealed, hidden...”

First meaning attached to the 10th form, “*istajanna*”, is that of “*veiling and concealing*”. For this purpose Lane and Belot recall what was said for the 1st and 8th forms. The *Vocabolario Arabo-Italiano*, basing itself on Wehr, reports in the first place: “*essere coperto, nascosto*”, and then it moves on to “*considerare qualcuno pazzo*”. Kazimirski dedicates his first four preferences to the “*concealing*” nuance, accompanied by the special characteristics of the 10th form, such as: “*chercher asile, protection...*” He confines to the fifth place the meaning “*être gai*” a nuance reported also by Lane: “He excited him to mirth, joy, gladness, or sport”, and in *Tâj al-‘Arûs*.<sup>6</sup> Both Kazimirski and Freytag speak about the passive of the 10th form, both agreeing that it means “*Daemone obsessus fuit*” (Freytag).

### *Nouns derived from root JNN*

The first noun deriving from root JNN to raise our interest is *jinn*. Lane, Kazimirski, and Freytag prefer to remain within the realms of classicism when they start explaining this word as “the darkness of night” (Lane) or as “*voile de la nuit, obscurité...*” (Kazimirski). Only later on do they speak of “the genii” (Lane) or of “*daemones, genii, spiritus, angeli*” (Freytag). All other dictionaries speak directly of *jinn* as spiritual beings. *Jinn* (masculine) and *jinna* (feminine) are both collective nouns, the latter is sometimes used as plural of the former. To express the singulative one has to use relative *jinnî* for the masculine or *jinniyya* for the feminine. But in many dictionaries the plural of the noun is not given. Ben Sedira gives *jinna* and *janûn* both as plural of *jinn*, Beaussier gives *janûn* only, while Kazimirski retains that *janûn* is another collective term like *jinn*. *Lisân al-‘Arab*, which is much more authoritative, gives *jinân* for plural both of *jinn* and of *jinna*.<sup>7</sup>

5. Cfr. *Lisân*, 248.

6. Cfr. *Tâj*, 166.

7. Cfr. *Lisân*, 247.

It is interesting to report some definitions of "jinn" which are to be found in the dictionaries consulted. Wehr: *jinn* are "invisible beings, either harmful or helpful, that interfere with the lives of the mortals." The *Vocabolario Arabo-Italiano*: *jinn* are "esseri intermedi fra gli uomini e gli angeli; spiriti folletti." Kazimirski: *jinn* are "démons (bons au mauvais)." *Lisân al-'Arab*: *jinn* are "a type of created beings; they are given this name because of their being concealed from sight and because they hide themselves from people and they are not seen".<sup>8</sup> Lane is more complete in his definitions; he reports various opinions taken from the classical commentaries on the Qur'ân which discusses whether the angels and the devils should be considered as *jinn*, they being invisible.<sup>9</sup>

As we have said, to express the singulative of *jinn* the relative *jinnî* or *jinniyya* is described as a female demon, or a fairy: Dozy gives also "déesse ... nymphe, sirène." But grammatically speaking the primitive meaning of *jinnî* must be "ad daemones pertinens (Freytag).

A word very near to *jinn* is *jânn* which has two meanings. It might be "serpens albus, nigris oculis praeditus, innoxius et frequens in domibus" (Freytag), or it might also be "the father of the *jinn* who was created from fire and from whom his descendants were created".<sup>10</sup> *Lisân al-'Arab* reports an interesting story about the origin of the *jânn* narrated by *Abû Ishâq*: "Creatures called *jânn* lived on earth but they caused mischief in it and shed blood, so God sent his angels who drove them away from the earth; and it is said that these angels became the inhabitants of the earth after the *jânn*."<sup>11</sup>

A noun of place which might be of some interest is "*majanna*". The first meaning of *majanna* would be a "country haunted by demons". Freytag, Hava, Kazimirski, Cuhe, and Belot all agree with this. All these authors, except Cuhe, give madness as secondary meaning. While Wehr and *Vocabolario Arabo-Italiano* limit themselves to "madness and insanity" only.

Other words that have a link with what has been said up till now are the following:

8. Cfr. *Lisân*, 247.

9. Cfr. Edmund Teuma, O.F.M. Conv., "The Nature of *Jblîs* in the Qur'ân as interpreted by the Commentators", *Melita Theologica* XXXI(1980/2) 10-21; "More on Qur'anic *Jinn*", *Melita Theologica* XXXV(1984/1-2) 37-45.

10. Cfr. *Lisân*, 249.

11. Cfr. *Lisân*, 249.

- junûn* — possession, obsession, mania, madness, diabolical fury... Kazimirski still persists upon “obscurité de la nuit”, but second in preference to “folie, fureur”. It may also mean “passion (Hava). Dozy gives three different kinds of uses implying the word *janûn*: “1. les folies de la jeunesse; 2. végétation abondante; 3. l’épilepsie.” Both Hava and Kazimirski report a shortened version of *junûn*, viz. *junun*, which means the same thing. Wehr draws out the relative form of the noun, viz. *junûnî* to mean “crazy, insane, mad, frantic, frenzied.”
- majnûn* — possessed, obsessed, insane, mad... “Possessed by a jinnî, or by jinn, or by a devil, or demon; a demoniac... and hence meaning bereft of reason; or mad, insane, unsound in mind or intellect, or wanting therein...” (Lane).
- janan* — tomb, corpse, shroud. Kazimirski’s second preference after “tombeau” and before “mort, cadavre” is “suaire dans lequel on enveloppe le cadavre.”

Evidently there are other derivations from root JNN, such as: *janna* (garden, Paradise), *junna* (protection, shield), etc., words which in some way or another all imply the primitive meaning of the root, but which are not of direct interest for our purpose. What one should make clear, however, is the way one is to justify the fairly abundant elements within the semantic range of the root. Once it is established that “to conceal, hide...” is the primitive meaning of the root, it is from this concept that one has to start in trying to explain the presence of words like “*jinn*, *junûn*, *janna*, *janan*,” etc. within the semantic area of the root.

We have already seen in what way does *Lisân al-‘Arab* justify the presence of the word “*jinn*” among the realms of root JNN. The dictionary says that the *jinn* are thus called because they are invisible beings and as such they escape human perception. We have also seen that a “*majnûn*” is first and foremost a person possessed by *jinn*, invisible spirits. It was only later on, and by association of ideas, that the word *majnûn* began to signify a mad person. This would also point out to the fact perhaps in primitive times madness was considered to be a sort of possession by evil spirits. Hence the association of ideas between “madness” and “concealing”. *Janna* (garden) too comes from the same root. But even here the idea of “concealing” is to be found at the base of the acquired idea. A garden is a green area covered with grass or leaves. In fact Kazimirski explains *junna* (1st form passive) and *tajannana* (5th form) by “to be covered by a rich vegetation (said of the soil).” Another idea is that of night, when the sun is absent, which is expressed by the 1st form of the verb

in the active (*janna al-Ilayl*). On the other hand, *janan*, is also linked to root JNN. When *janan* means tomb, one should not forget that the tomb is man's access to the underworld where darkness prevails, hence the idea of "concealing". When it means corpse, it is attached to something which does not pertain anymore to the world of the living, but something to be deposited in a tomb and not to be seen anymore, hence again the idea of "concealing". Finally, when it means shroud, it approaches to the idea of veil (*junna, janân, jinn*) in which the idea of "concealing" is much more in evidence.

From what has been said, one must recollect that the ideas of *janna* "to conceal", *jinn* "good or evil spirits", *junûn* "madness", and *janan* "tomb, corpse" are closely linked together. This brings us very close to *Baydâwî*'s opinion reported in Lane's lexicon that the *jinn* might be taken to be "human souls separate from their bodies".<sup>12</sup> In modern English we would call such human souls "ghosts", a very common element in the folk tales of Western Europe.

### *Root JNN in other Semitic languages*

In Hebrew we find the verb *gânan*, meaning "to cover, surround, defend", corresponding to Arabic *janna* and to Aramaic *aggên*. It is only used in the *qal* and the *hiphil* forms. Whence two nouns denoting "enclosure, garden": *gan* (masculine) and *gannâh* (feminine). They are said to be equivalent to Arabic *janna*, Assyrian *gannu* or *gannatu* (word of uncertain meaning), and to Aramaic *ginnâ*'. In Hebrew we also find the word *mâgên* (masculine), meaning "shield", equivalent to Arabic *mijann*, and to Aramaic *m'ginnâ*'. Then, again in Hebrew there is *m'ginnâh* (feminine), meaning "covering", which in the construct state with *lêb* (*m'ginnat-lêb*) means "covering of the heart", an expression which recalls that in Qur'ân 6,25: "and We lay veils upon their hearts — *wa-ja'alnâ 'alâ qulûbihim akinnat'*." One would object that *akinna* (plural of *kann*, meaning "cover, shelter...") is not of the root JNN. Perhaps this is a case where the Hebrew letter "*gimel*", owing to its guttural sound, developed into Arabic "*kâf*" instead of to "*jîm*" as it usually does. One wonders whether Arabic root KNN, meaning also "to hide, conceal, cover..." is a repeated version of JNN carrying in it the phonetic evolution from "*kâf*" to "*jîm*" or vice versa. Or else one might think that both KNN and JNN are two Arabic versions of the same primitive root GNN, where the protosemitic sound "*gimel*" is represented by "*kâf*" in the case of KNN, and by "*jîm*" in the case of JNN.

12. Cfr. Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon in eight parts...*, Part 2 (Librairie du Liban, Beirut 1968) 462.

Finally one has to note that the same root is also present in Ugaritic. In one instance it is presented in the sequence *GN*, meaning "garden" and as such it is equivalent to Hebrew "*gan*" and to Arabic "*janna*", or it might also represent the name of a month. In another instance we find the sequel *mGNm* (plural), meaning "shields" corresponding to Hebrew *mâgên* and obviously to Arabic *mijann*.

Jeffery reports the word *janna* among his own list of foreign vocabulary employed in the Qur'ân.<sup>13</sup> He says that the more primitive meaning of the root whence *janna* is got is "enclosure". Mentioning the widespread presence of the word in Semitic languages, Jeffery records Akkadian *gannatu*; the above-mentioned Hebrew and Aramaic equivalents; the Syriac and Ethiopic equivalents; and Phoenician '*GNN* (also *GN*). According to Jeffery the connotation of "Paradise" acquired later on by *janna* is a borrowing from Aramaic through Syriac. Its origin is therefore Christian. Although the word is largely used in the *Jâhiliyya* poetry, only those verses influenced by the Qur'ân make it don the nuance of "Paradise", otherwise it signifies "garden, vines and grapes". This would point to the fact that most probably Muhammed adopted the sense of "Paradise" attached to *janna* directly from Christian, or at least from Jewish, sources.<sup>14</sup>

### *Other fantastic figures relative to jinn*

Apart from the *jinn* there are also other mythological figures which one encounters in Arabian folk tales. The stories of "A Thousand and One Nights" abound with these fantastic monsters. What is more, each region from Morocco to Persia has its own particular tales which project the intense popular belief in such spiritual beings. Some countries have their own theories about the existential qualities of such creatures. For example, people in Yemen believe in two classes of *jinn*: the '*udrût* and the *dubb*. Here we are going to examine briefly three kinds of fantastic figures, which, although non-Qur'ânic, nevertheless complement what is said about the *jinn*.

(a) *Ghûl* (plural *ghîlân* and *aghwâl*) from *ghâla* - *yaghûlu*, meaning "to destroy". According to *The Encyclopaedia of Islâm* two are the primitive ideas behind root *GHWL*: (1) the ability to assume different forms; (2) the treacherous attack. Lane defines *ghûl* thus: "a kind of goblin, demon, devil, or

13. In his list of foreign vocabulary the author does not enlist other forms deriving from root JNN.

14. For root JNN in the Qur'ân cfr. Teuma, *More on Qur'ânic Jinn*".

jinnee, which, the Arabs assert, appears to men in the desert, assuming various forms, causing them to wander from the way, and destroying them." Essentially the same is the definition given in *The Encyclopaedia of Islâm*: "fabulous being believed by the ancient Arabs to inhabit desert places and, assuming different forms, to lead travellers astray... to fall upon them unawares and devour them..."

In a *hadîth* the Prophet is made to deny the *aghwâl* saying: "*lâ ghûla*" (there is absolutely no such thing as *ghûl*). Some authors, however, discuss whether by his expression Muhammed actually denies the total existence of such beings or whether he denies the assertion of the Arabs respecting their assuming various forms and their being able to cause one to go astray.

Another discussion regarding the *aghwâl* refers to their sexual qualities. Authors do not seem to agree whether a *ghûl* is a male or a female. However, the feminine form of the word, *ghûla* is often used, and what is more, a female *ghûl* is usually called *si'lât*.

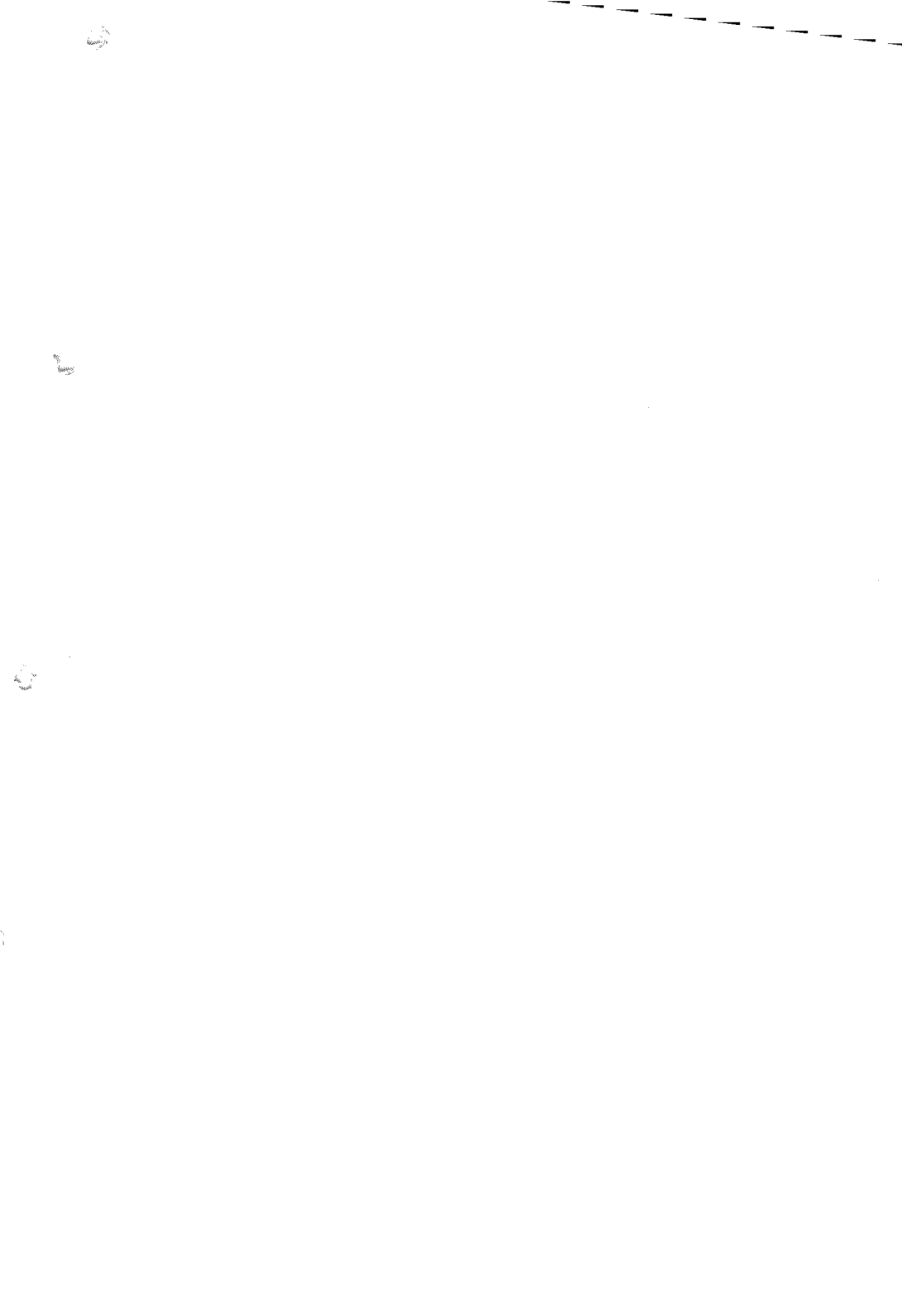
(b) *Si'lât*, or *si'lâ'*, or *si'lâ*, from *sa'ala - yas'ilu*, meaning "to cough", i.e. "having a motion whereby nature expels somewhat hurtful emissions from the lungs and the organs therewith..." (Lane). As has been stated above *si'lât* is the female counterpart of the kind of goblin designated by *ghûl*. There is an opinion that this kind of vampire would be the most wicked and the most guileful of the *aghwâl*. Metaphorically the same word is also applied to a very clamorous, foul-tongued woman, or to a woman "foul in face, evil in disposition" (Lane).

(c) *Iffît* (plural *'afârît*) from *'afara*, meaning "to rub with dust, to roll someone in the dust", and by extension: "to bring someone low" (*Encyclopaedia of Islâm*), i.e. to insult, to offend someone. Strictly speaking this is not a particular category of spiritual being as is the *ghûl*, but is a quality applied to a being be it man or spirit. Lane defines *'iffît* any person "insolent and audacious in pride and in acts of rebellion or disobedience, who rolls his adversary in the dust". So like the word *shaytân*, *iffît* is metaphorically applied to man. But more properly it is applied to a *jinnî* and signifies the evil and wicked disposition in the spirit as in the case of Qur'ân 27,39: "An *efreet* of the *jinnns* said, 'I will bring it to thee...'", which, by the way, is the only time the word is used in the Book. In this case authors agree that the expression "an *efreet* of the *jinnns*" simply means "a wicked *jinnî*".

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# PILGRIMAGE ACCORDING TO A PHILOSOPHER: A TRIBUTE TO MICHEL MESLIN

Peter Serracino Inglott

In the preface to the study on *L'Homme Romain*, M. Meslin has declared that through the analysis of the cultural and religious values underlying the action of the Romans from their origins to the beginning of the Christian era, he sought above all to help us understand the attraction mixed with horror, the fascination laced with distaste, that Rome has continued to exercise for two thousand years, right up to our own day.

In fact, M. Meslin has utilized the vast historical knowledge that he developed over many years of scientific study of all the vestiges of the past with which the Mediterranean world is so heavily laden in order to build over very solid empirical foundations a systematic and original anthropology of religion of the greatest contemporary interest.

I can perhaps most easily bring out this contemporary interest in the local context by referring to just one chapter of the major work by M. Meslin on Religious Experience — the chapter which deals with pilgrimages. The major economic thrust of our island state has been in the quarter century since independence in the area of tourism and, moreover, that there has occurred over this period a growing realisation that this development can only be sustainable if it is nourished not only by the search for sea and sun, with which nature has also abundantly graced many other parts of the world, but by the quest for a cultural uniqueness which yet responds to the deepest desires of all men.

Archaeologists and prehistorians have surmised that the great megalithic civilisation which so astonishingly flourished on our island five thousand years

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He is the author of a number of books [including *Beginning Philosophy* (1987)] and numerous articles mainly in the border areas between philosophy and the human sciences.

ago is only explicable because of an attraction it exercised over visitors from abroad. Likewise, the second golden age of Maltese culture, from the late sixteenth to the eighteenth century, is indissolubly linked to the cosmopolitanism of the Knights of St John, which resulted in the symbolic complex which gives its identity to Maltese Baroque — namely, that in a very small space the visitor can experience the whole gamut of a style — from its Germanic to its Portuguese variants, from its inception to its demise — with the imported features in a constant dialectic with the local, South-European, vernacular, living elements of an Arabic medieval heritage. The visitor from abroad can find a trace of his own place of origin lodged here in a setting at once markedly individual and universally hospitable. Thus, the destiny of Malta is in a way bound up with the phenomenon of a special kind of human travel — the journeying and voyaging which is animated by the deep thirst in the heart of man for a meaningful existence.

There are perhaps no other twenty pages in print which give a more thorough and illuminating analysis of the phenomenon than M. Meslin's. M. Meslin begins by giving a quantitative idea of the sociological importance of the phenomenon, but quickly points out that his interest is rather in its central universal feature: the personal existential character of a quest most often carried out collectively, and according to the rubrics of a tradition. His concern is to depict Man, the Pilgrim.

The etymology of the word associates it first with exile, political exile in a foreign land distant from home, but towards the end of the fourth century of the Christian era, *peregrinatio* comes to signify a symbolic action expressive of man's sense of exile from his heavenly home. The pilgrim face of man shows him, like Abraham leaving Ur, feeling the need of conversion, and driven by a faith in the existence of somewhere on earth where the Holy has made a therapeutic irruption, where one can still experience with one's senses the physical reminders of that irruption, and perhaps carry away with him some recollecting sign. Usually, such a place is conceived as symbolically central.

M. Meslin underlines first the freedom that is essential to the pilgrim's act, his hope of a physical cure or of peace of soul, of a different style of life; then, the succour expected of mediators between the earthly and the heavenly spheres, whether these are conceived as Ancestral figures as in the Maltese megalithic culture, or as eschatological icons, as in the Baroque image of the Assumption of Mary. The pilgrim shows the sense of his search by the changed style of clothing and other behavioural traits including ritual acts.

The highly personal act is, accordingly, usually carried out in groups, because as essential a part of pilgrimage, and it is not easy to sharply

distinguish the pilgrim from the tourist as the breakaway from routine and the dull greyness of mediocrity, is the provisional abolition of social hierarchies and the destructuring of habits and conventions. The inner journey accomplished in the course of travel is aimed at the rediscovery of the simplicity and creativity of childhood. Victor Turner has compared the modern pilgrimage to the liminal rites of primitive tribes. They aim at a co-nativity, and a transformation of the old into a new humanity, as if by an individuating alchemy. For this reason, also, the mystics have often likened their spiritual adventure to a pilgrimage, with dark nights and resting-places en route to the Beloved and the Absolute.

I have cited at some length Professor Meslin's analysis of the significance of pilgrimage because I think it is a clear case where deep scholarship shows itself to be of great practical relevance.

Malta, at the geographical centre of the Mediterranean world, is caught up with the rest of the region, in the destiny of being a global centre of human travel, of a kind of human mobility that is ever on the increase. This human phenomenon brings certain evident benefits, but we already know from experience that it spells out equally certain dangers.

It has been established by the social scientists who have analysed the phenomenon of mass tourism — undoubtedly one of the “signs” of our times — that it can ultimately lead to the destruction of those very qualities which initially were the reason for its rise.

In Malta, for instance, we are already worried about the “carrying capacity” of our island, and in particular of certain special areas like Venice, we have to impose restrictions on numbers. Our cry has become “quality”, not “quantity”. But I think it is important that we should not mistake “quality” for “money”. The wealth of the tourist is not to be calculated in purely pecuniary terms. Students, for instance, and often even scholars, do not have their pockets overflowing with dollars or marks or yen. But they do not usually seek to just spend a few days or weeks in a bubble which merely transposes them with their old habits and rules of life to a different physical space. They are usually in search of meaning, of alternative styles of life. They are often in quest of a graal, like the Knights of the Round Table, and to a certain extent the Knights of Malta. They are not perhaps what Rahner called “anonymous Christians”; but they are all perhaps what one might call pseudonymous pilgrims.

The pilgrim, even if he does not describe himself by that name, is, as Professor Meslin has shown, engaged in an existential search for symbols

which serve communication.

I have noticed a clear pattern of development in practically all of M. Meslin's analysis of the different phenomena studied in his book on the *Human Experience of the Divine*, a pattern indeed visible overall throughout his oeuvre. He begins by focusing attention on a behavioural trait — such as groups travelling to a particular place. It then emerges that the physical action and the physical place have a symbolic dimension which men seek to interpret and express. So that, as a third step, M. Meslin is led to the analysis of the language in which they express it — of the peculiar language which humans resort to in their always strained attempts at expressing their experience of the transcendent, of mystical language.

I think it is this three-step method — the movement from physical reality to concrete symbol to interpretative language — which has enabled M. Meslin to solidly establish the anthropology of religion as a science. I have stressed its practical interest to us in our present, local context, but I would like now also to emphasize its great relevance to the development of theology itself.

Five years ago, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, the late Père Chénu was asked what he now saw as defective in the first great conciliar text, the Constitution on the Liturgy. Père Chénu unhesitatingly answered that they had given inadequate attention to the findings of the anthropologists — to that miscellaneous, vast and often chaotic work which ethnographers and historians of comparative religion have produced over the last century — an inadequate attention partly due to the then confused condition of the results, affected as it was by all sorts of prejudices and biases, but which has begun to emerge in a fairly systematic and orderly way in Professor Meslin's work, as it has grown and is still growing progressively. Père Chénu pointed out that theologians had for the most part, in modern times, passed over and ignored the fact that St Thomas Aquinas had devoted a very great part of his study of the sacraments to, for him, who is usually so concise and who claims brevity of treatment as the great merit of his *summa*, very lengthy treatment of ancient Hebrew ritual and of whatever pagan rites he found described in the Bible, in the book of Leviticus and the other so-called sacerdotal texts, which most modern theologians found boring and even failed to read. Père Chénu remarked that these texts were the only anthropological material Aquinas had available, and the importance he gives to them is a clear indication of the importance which he attached to what today we would call anthropology.

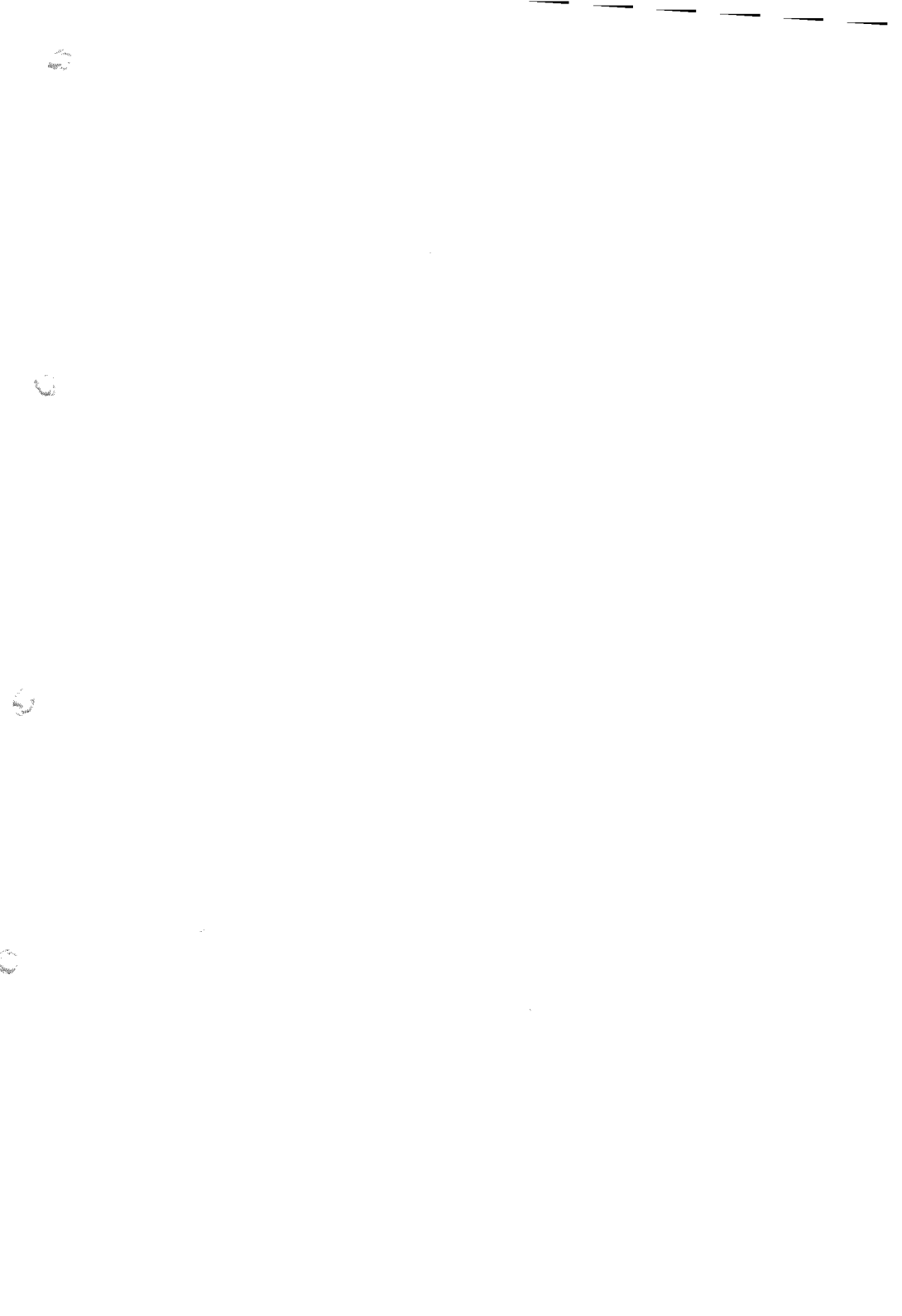
Of course, it is well known that perhaps the most famous Catholic theologian of our times, Karl Rahner, has spoken of an anthropological turn

that had to be given to theology. But, unfortunately in my opinion, as I have tried to show in an essay included as an appendix in my book *Beginning Philosophy*, Rahner understood this anthropological turn in a Kantian sense — that is in the delineation of a set of necessary a priori conditions for the human receptivity of revelation. On the contrary, the anthropology which M. Meslin sets out is the methodical ordering of empirical and historical facts, and I believe it provides the acceptable basis on which theological reflection can flourish as the method of transcendental deduction does not.

If I may be allowed to conclude on a personal note, in a reflective context which is inevitably existential if it is taken at all seriously, after the small book on St Benedict, it was M. Meslin's great scholarly work on the feast of the January Calends in the Roman Empire, his study of the rituals of the New Year, which produced a lasting impression on me, well after its publication in 1970. I have alluded to my little book *Beginning Philosophy*, which was meant to introduce to Philosophy through a reflection on the very idea of Beginning. I began the book by alluding to the theory of Louis Barthes that beginning is always a ritual act, but, of course, since my field is philosophy, I did not follow it up by any deep or detailed investigation of the rituals of beginning. Nevertheless, at the end, since I wished to show the relevance of the philosophical analysis of the concept of beginning to Theology, I dedicated a short epilogue to the subject, indicating that philosophy could only give an account of relative beginnings, and absolute beginnings could only be understood in a religious context. I believe that the elaboration of a Theology of beginnings could hardly do better than take as its beginning M. Meslin's studies on the Rites of the beginning of the New Year.

M. Meslin has shown that religion is essentially connected with the definition of the human identity of each one of us. I have chosen to focus, by way of example, on two illustrations of it: the movement in space we call pilgrimage, and the looking back in time towards beginnings. I chose these two examples because they seemed to be particularly relevant to the here-and-now of Malta. But they are that because they are perennially and universally significant in human life. It is because M. Meslin has illuminated the most visible feature of our economic and social situation and the identifying origins of the civilisation which is our heritage in a manner which shows them as our mode of participation in an inseparable humanity that we wish to honour him today.

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# POST-SECULARISATION: The Social Significance of Religious Values in Four Catholic European Countries.<sup>1</sup>

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Since the beginning of sociology variants of the secularisation model have been employed to explain religious and social change. Depending on their understanding of religion and secularisation, sociologists have advanced divergent positions concerning the social significance of religion. Still others have questioned the significance of the sociological study of religion itself. In current sociology secularisation has become a multi-dimensional concept not easily verified or disproved by scientific investigation.

At a time when many voices are heard about the return of the sacred and the impact of religion on society the need is felt for an approach that goes beyond the theory of secularisation. While we acknowledge secularisation as concomitant to modernisation, we observe the persistence of the traditional and the emergence of new forms of religion in post-modern society. Accordingly, a post-secularisation perspective is required in order to examine the social significance of the sacred and the secular in society. To enquire about the social significance of religion in today's world is to ask whether people find it meaningful to hold religious values and beliefs. Do they search for purpose and meaning in life? What are their religious values and beliefs? How does traditional religious practice and belief differ from new forms of religion? Are religious values related to social and political options? Do religious values orient people's decisions and action in society? The task of a post-secularisation approach is to account for the socially significant dimensions of religion in a secularised world.

This article investigates whether and if so how religious values and beliefs possess any social significance to a representative sample of individuals living in four European countries at a particular point in time, as they are rooted in

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1. The data for Italy, France and Spain was made available from the ESRC Data Archive, University of Essex; the data for Malta from GALLUP through the EVSSG representative in London.

the same Catholic religious tradition. Our analysis relies on the data sets derived through the collaboration of the *European Values Systems Study Group* (EVSSG, 1981/4), and is thus subject to the limitations of any comparable cross-national survey. We apply factor analysis in order to identify a number of distinct religious factors for all our respondents taken together, which in turn are first differentiated according to socio-demographic characteristics and then inter-related with a number of social values. We enquire whether religious factors are sociologically significant for the understanding of contemporary society. Before giving empirical evidence to support our theory of post-secularisation we shall present a brief overview of the principal contributions to the sociological study of religion in the English speaking world where secularisation remains the dominant model and elaborate on the European Values studies where religious values occupy a place alongside social and political ones.

### *Secularisation and Beyond*

The British contribution to the sociology of religion has been articulated on the foundations of the classical sociologists where it was assumed that in modern industrial society religion was on the decline. Religion's ability to provide a commonly held social order was thought to be fatally eroded by the emergence of a plurality of life experience within a mass market economy and a universalistic conception of citizenship (Wallis and Bruce, 1989). Secularisation was defined in terms of the declining social significance of religion (Wilson 1966, 1976, 1982, 1985). It was believed to be coterminous with *societalisation*, the process by which life comes to be lived less in the context of a closely knit community. Personal bonds and collective faith were believed to be replaced by impersonal connections of the market, the mass media, bureaucracy and the anonymity of urban life. Thus conceived, secularisation assumed that a higher degree of religiosity, however useful it was for the integration of society in an unspecified remote past, was continuously being dissolved in the present. Such a process was evaluated as an irreversible loss of the social significance of religion.

Later, David Martin (1978) analyzed the historical variants of secularisation and clearly distinguished between countries of Catholic and Protestant traditions. Secularisation was seen in terms of conflict between groups, where the outcome was not everywhere the same. For example, in some Catholic states like Poland, Ireland and to a certain extent Malta, where internal divisions were subordinated in the face of opposition to threats from outside, religion — understood as the social influence of the Church — was

found to have remained vigorous. Despite these findings and the subsequent research carried out on the new religious movements that have emerged in a post-industrial world, some British sociologists of religion remain unyielding in their position that the secularisation thesis has been firmly established. Needless to say, such a position cannot be understood outside of its historical and social context. As Bruce and Willis (1989) remarked the sociology of religion has remained marginal because, in their view, British sociology has been dominated by a Marxist agenda. Religion is only acceptable to the dominant orthodoxy if it is explained away by reference to the more substantial economy and social organisations. Whatever the case, the sociology of religion in Britain has since moved away from the original normative functionalism and has applied phenomenological methods to understand religion's resistance to secularisation, the relation between belief and action, and how knowledge, innovation and change are socially and, we might add, religiously constructed. Thus contemporary sociologists of religion analyzed the various manifestations of religion in a secularized world. Without having to falsify the theory of secularisation they moved beyond it.

Beckford (1989) has remarked that the sociology of religion had become self-contained and estranged from other fields of sociology. In his view, the sub-discipline has remained uncritically bound to the legacy of modernisation theory of classical sociology. Variants of the secularisation model previously adopted to explain the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society have become a hindrance to understand religion in the post-industrial world.

In a review of the international contribution to the sociology of religion Beckford (1990) called for a renewed conceptualisation of the social significance of religion. He observed cross-national differences but also an international division of labour and transnational influences in the discipline. Given the rootedness of most religious phenomena in separate countries sociologists have tended to develop their work in different and distinctive ways. He gives as examples the Italians for their sensitivity to the political implications of Catholicism, the French for the history of theoretical ideas and the Americans for studies of the functional relations between religion and the social system. The empirical approach of the 1960s in the United States identified various *dimensions* of religion but tended to overlook collective phenomena. Then the newly found interest in diffuse, popular and unofficial religion has documented the importance of shared values and beliefs, a basis for collective meaning and action (Cipriani, 1988). In this movement a shift is observed away from institutionalized religion. There is a growing awareness that the social significance of religion extends beyond the confines of formal religious organisations. Beckford (1990) concluded his review of thirty-five

years (1945-1989) of the discipline by suggesting that as the social function of religion continue to decline, the social significance of religion, conceptualized in a new form, may be on the increase.

### *Values and Religion*

The scientific study of values initiated by the *European Value Systems Study Group* (EVSSG) in the beginning of the eighties — now extended to a number of non-Western and non-European countries — has opened the way for comparative studies, and in particular, has set the ground for a new conceptualisation of the social significance of religion. In these studies, religion and its related values no longer remain the exclusive domain of the sociology of religion, nor is the latter any longer restricted to the micro-level phenomenological analysis of individual researchers. Religious values are examined alongside and in relation to social and political values, work, leisure and family life for randomly chosen representatives of entire populations. The administration of a standard questionnaire in different countries, made possible through the collaboration of a number of sociologists from different countries and orientations, allows for a re-examination of the secularisation thesis in a cross-national perspective. Then, when the successive waves of the survey will be available the main tenets of the secularisation thesis concerning the *decline* of the significance of religion could also be tested over intervals of time. At this point, with the data at hand we are able to investigate the significance of religious values for a representative sample of individuals in different societies, and how these values relate with other social realities.

Studies on the values of ten Western European countries taken together reported on the occurrence of religion in connection with other social realities. Social and religious options were found to constitute complex network of relations. Inter-related values formed coherent wholes both on the individual and the collective level (Stoetzel, 1983). Allowing a margin for individuals' freedom of choice, it was possible to infer the social and political orientation of respondents from their respective adherence to religious values (Stoetzel, 1983:15, 87, 106; Harding *et al*, 1986:84, 216). Although local conditions and historical development of every country have the greatest influence on people's adherence to religious values and institutions, there emerged a number of sociological constants across Western Europe. Stoetzel discovered that generally Western Europeans tend to be more religious and moral than is often assumed to be the case. Religiosity is found to vary by occupation, place of residence, education and is subject to an age effect. Catholics, however, stand out for their reported higher religious practice and belief and for their

satisfaction with their religion and the moral teachings of the Church. Stoetzel (1983:95) observed that as Catholics are more attached to their religious beliefs they seem to resist change better.

Harding *et al* did not only notice the varied influence of religion among Protestant and Catholic countries in Europe, but also the wide diversity of practice among people nominally affiliated to the same Church. Catholic countries show very diverse patterns of practice and belief and seem to sustain a greater commitment among young people. Observing the continued widespread religious belief and the high personal acceptance of the ten commandments they caution against premature conclusions concerning the state of contemporary religion and the prevalence of Christian values. They point out that any assumed secularisation does not seem to have taken place to the degree suggested by some authors, nor was it found to be homogenous across countries and for all the dimensions of religion (Harding *et al*, 1986:69). In their conclusion, however, Harding *et al* (1986: 224) argued that although the data from the survey at one point in time was not sufficient evidence of social or religious change, the marked age differences over values could not be explained away simply as a life-cycle effect.

The contribution of the values survey to international research stands in its capacity to situate countries, groups of people and individuals on a number of comparable scales. In the initial report for Western European values Stoetzel has already observed that instead of dichotomies there emerged a *continuum* ranging from the religious to the secular, the politically conservative to the liberal. Later, the application of factor analyses to distinct batteries of values extracted a traditional and a post-traditional continuum (Harding *et al*, 1986; Abela, 1991) and a materialist and a post-materialist value orientation (Inglehart, 1990). Such an approach made possible the comparison of religious and social factors and the analyses of variance according to socio-demographic characteristics. The distinct religious dimensions that have been identified for Western Europe were in need of confirmation in country-specific analyses (Harding *et al*, 1986:69).

### ***Religious Values in four Catholic Countries***

In what follows we undertake a scientific analysis of the religious values in four Catholic European countries taken together, namely for our respondents from Italy, Spain, France and Malta, in order to establish the social significance of religious value in the upper Mediterranean region. We have seen how in earlier comparative research for ten Western European countries the religious qualities of Catholics were found to differ from those of the Protestants.

Although Stoetzel (1983:91) placed France alongside Belgium and Holland in what he termed *lay religion*, its proper place, judging from the respondents' religious affiliation, the country's geographical position and language, stand with its neighbouring Latin Mediterranean countries: Italy, Spain and Malta.

The separate studies on values in Italy, Spain and Malta have variously reported on religion in their respective countries. Thus Calvaruso et Abbruzzese (1985) distinguished between the declining influence of Church-religiosity, the persistence of a diffused Catholic religion and the new dimensions of belief in Italian society. Orizo (1983) reported on the religious factor in Spain and Abela (1991) investigated the transmission of traditional and post-traditional values and the meanings they assume in religious organisations in Malta. Here we examine the religious values of these four countries whose populations were found to be predominantly of a Catholic matrix, even though they differ with respect to the degree of religious practice and adherence to values and belief.

In their majority (84 percent) our respondents [Table 1] identified themselves as Roman Catholics: 99 percent in Malta, 90 percent in Spain, 93 percent in Italy and 71 percent in France. Few others (2 percent) belonged to another Christian denomination or religion while 13 percent did not identify themselves with any religion. Regular Church attendance, however, was much lower. Apart from social occasions such as baptisms, marriages and funerals, 29 percent went to Church once a week or more often but 35 percent never attended any religious service. The rest went to Church once a month (11 percent), on Christmas or Easter day (7 percent), on other specific holidays (5 percent), once a year (5 percent) or less often (6 percent). The Maltese had the highest weekly Church attendance (90 percent), followed by the Spaniards (41 percent), the Italians (36 percent) and least of all the French (12 percent). Still, independently of whether they went to church or not, 67 percent of our respondents considered themselves religious, 22 percent non-religious and only 6 percent convinced atheists. Again, the highest religious identity was found in Malta (94 percent), followed by Italy (84 percent), Spain (63 percent) and France (51 percent). The French have the highest percentage of convinced atheists (10 percent) but an equal percentage of non-religious as the Spaniards (30 percent). Although the relatively high religious consciousness in Latin Europe is not supported by as frequent an attendance at religious services as required by the Church, 61 percent of our respondents spend some time in prayer and 53 percent claim to derive comfort and strength from religion. Besides, 77 percent believe in God even though their understanding of God varies from a personal Supreme Being (33 percent), some sort of spirit or life force (35 percent), or just do not really know what to think about God (15

percent). Similarly, our respondents score an average of 6.06 on a 10-point scale for the importance of God in their life. All this suggests that religion has a personal if not a social significance for most of our respondents in Latin Europe.

Our respondents are divided on the social importance of religion. For example, when asked about the future importance of religion for people in their country, 17 percent think that religion will be more important, 34 percent that it will be equally important, 37 percent that it will be less important while 12 percent did not now what to say. 55 percent hold that the sharing of religious beliefs between spouses has an importance for the success of a marriage, and 18 percent give a priority to religious faith — from a list of 17 other social values — in the education of their children. People tend to trust the Church more than is often presumed: 23 percent of our respondents expressed great confidence, 32 percent a certain degree of confidence, 23 percent were rather diffident but only 19 percent were completely disaffected. A positive attitude towards the teaching of the Church was observed on spiritual matters (45 percent), the moral problems and needs of the individual (40 percent), but less for its teaching on family life (36 percent).

The EVSSG survey also enquired about a number of post-traditional dimensions of religion. For example, with regard to para-spiritual experiences, 33 percent of our respondents had been in touch with someone from afar, 27 percent to have seen events happening at a distance, 23 percent to have been in touch with a dead person and 11 percent to have felt an uplifting spiritual force, of which 17 percent claimed that such an experience had greatly changed their outlook on life. Generally, our respondents were also found to be concerned about the meaning and purpose in life. Thus, 32 percent often thought about the meaning of life, 23 percent about death, 12 percent often had regrets after doing something wrong while 42 percent never felt that life was meaningless. Only a select few, however, expressed a heroic readiness to sacrifice everything, even to risk their life in order to save another person (21 percent), safeguard freedom (8 percent), peace (6 percent), their country (6 percent), justice (5 percent), religious beliefs or God (4 percent).

### *Religious Factor*

A large-scale factor analysis of all the items on religion from the EVSSG (1981) questionnaire extracted eleven distinct factors [Table 2]. The first factor stands for the traditional religious belief on eschatology, or belief in the last things (F1). It has high factor loadings for belief in hell (.86), the devil (.83), heaven (.80), sin (.64), a soul (.62), life after death (.62) and a lower factor

loading for the non-Christian belief in reincarnation (.55). The second factor stands for a positive attitude toward the teachings of the Church (F2) and has very high loading for the Church teaching on moral problems and the needs of the individual (.95), on problems of family life (.95) and on man's spiritual need (.94). The third, called the religiosity factor (F3) has high loadings for attendance at religious services (.81), belief in God (.73), importance of God in life (.73), Church affiliation (.73), religious identity (.72) and belief in a personal God (.59). The fourth is the spirituality factor (F4) and brings together a number of para-psychological experiences: feeling close to a powerful spiritual life force that seemed to uplift the person out of itself (.81), contact with a person at a distance (.73), seeing events as they were happening at a great distance (.73), feeling in touch with someone who had died (.72), and that such an experience had changed one's outlook on life (.59).

The fifth factor is the option for justice and faith (F5), and displays a person's readiness to sacrifice everything even risking one's life for the post-traditional value of justice (.76), freedom (.74), peace (.73), and to a lesser degree one's religious beliefs, God in particular (.41). The sixth factor consists of the items concerned with the meaning and purpose in life (F6): feeling that life has a meaning (.74), thinking about the meaning and purpose of life (.74), thinking about death (.68) and regret for having done something wrong (.53). Factor seven has to do with everyday implicit religion, or life of the spirit (F7) and has high loadings for deriving comfort and strength from religion (.75) and giving some time to prayer, meditation or some other spiritual exercises (.75). Factor eight displays an uncertain future or incertitude (F8) as it has high loadings for the likelihood of a war in the near future (.64), the declining importance of religion in the future (.56), the belief that in the long run technology harms mankind (.48) and that none of the great religions has any truth to offer (.41). Factor nine (F9) represents patriotism, bravery or altruism as it displays a willingness to fight for one's country in the case of war (.71), a person's readiness to sacrifice everything even risking one's life for one's country (.52) or to save the life of another person (.33).

The last two factors consist of the morality of the Ten Commandments. Factor ten (F10) stands for how the ten commandments apply to oneself: do not have other gods before me (.87), do not take the name of your God in vain (.81), keep the Sabbath holy (.85), honour thy father and mother (.85), do not kill (.87), do not commit adultery (.81), do not steal (.87), do not bear false witness against your neighbour (.87), do not covet thy neighbour's wife (.82), and do not covet thy neighbour's goods (.86). Factor eleven (F11) stands for how the same ten commandments are seen to apply to others.

The eleven factors which have been extracted by factor analysis correspond to the various dimensions of religion. The first three factors, namely belief in eschatology (F1), adherence to the teaching of the Church (F2) and explicit religiosity (F3) have a traditional quality. Then the factors for spiritual experience (F4), the option for justice and faith (F5), concerned with the meaning and purpose in life (F6), everyday implicit religion (F7) and to a certain extent, the observed sense of incertitude about the future (F8) have a marked post-traditional character. The factors for altruism (F9), the relevance of the ten commandments to oneself (F10) and to others (F11) represent the moral dimensions of religion, ranging from a traditional patriotism and a personal adherence to the ten commandments to the evaluation of contemporary behaviour in a post-traditional presumed secular environment.

The traditional and post-traditional dimensions of religion correspond to the movement that has taken place in the Catholic Church over the past few decades. The Second Vatican Council (1963-1965) has initiated a process of renewal in the various dimensions of the Church's religious activity. Alongside the traditional religiosity there arose new expressions of belief, renewed liturgies, new movements of spirituality which encouraged new forms of personal prayer and community-building. Within certain sections of the Church there also emerged a renewed social consciousness for solidarity with the poor, linking religious faith to the promotion of justice and peace.<sup>2</sup> But what is the social significance of the traditional and post-traditional dimensions of religion in the four Catholic countries under examination? How do the religious dimensions vary by socio-demographic characteristics, and how do they relate to other social values?

### *Socio-demographic variations*

An analysis of variance is applied to establish whether there are any significant differences between the religious values supported by separate groups of our respondents. Table 3 represents the results obtained on a one-way analysis of variance for the mean factor scores of the previously extracted religious factors according to age, social class, sex, education, place of residence and country of our respondents. The mean score for every socio-demographic category can vary from a maximum value of 1 to a

2. Reviewing the state of the Catholic Church 20 years after the Council an Extraordinary Synod of Bishops (Origins, 19 Dec, 1985: 444-450) reaffirmed the teaching of Vatican II on spirituality, evangelisation, ecumenism, the integral relation between justice and faith and the autonomy of secular realities. A correct *aggiornamento* far from secularising the Church was seen as an openness to the world.

minimum value of minus 1, where the mean factor score for all our respondents taken together is zero. Variance from the mean is measured by the F-ratio, which represents the ratio between the mean square between groups and the mean square within groups. Depending of the strength of the F-ratio and its level of significance,<sup>3</sup> we are able to accept or reject the null-hypothesis for the association between any of the religious factors and the socio-demographic characteristics under consideration.

The greatest variance is to be observed for the traditional factor of religiosity. Visible and explicit religion varies mostly by country, age, gender and level of education, and to a lower extent by place of residence and social class. Traditional religiosity is highest in Malta (.61) and lowest in France (-.68). The young (-.27) tend to participate less in formal religious activities than their elders (.26). Housewives (.30) but not so much working women are more religious than men (-.20). This suggests that religiosity rather than being gender-specific varies with a person's occupation. And as might be expected the least religious are the higher educated (-.26), those living in urban areas (-.17) and the upper social classes (-.19). Traditional belief and a person's attitude towards the teachings of Church are also a matter of variation by country of origin and age. Again Malta (.85) manifests stronger traditional belief than Spain, Italy or France. However, despite its low traditional religiosity and belief, France (.25), is more favourable to the teachings of the Church than any of the other countries. Whereas the young have the lowest sympathy towards the teaching of the church (-.10), they hold similar levels of traditional belief as their elders (.11). And as might be expected the teaching of the Church is less welcomed in urban areas (-.14) than in rural societies (.05), whereas traditional belief is strongest amongst housewives. No significant difference over traditional belief could be observed by level of education, social class or place of residence.

Differences over the post-traditional factors are less marked than over traditional religion. In particular, the post-traditional religion of everyday life seems to have become a universal and diffused phenomenon. There is no significant difference amongst our respondents' life in the spirit, that is to say with respect to the widespread prayer life, consolation and strength derived from religion. Minor variations, however, are to be observed for the post-traditional factors concerning para-spiritual experiences, the meaning and purpose in life and most significantly over the justice and faith option and a consciousness of insecurity about the future.

3. The level of significance is acceptable at .05 or lower.

Para-spiritual experiences are slightly more frequent for the lower educated (.18), women, and for our Italian (.29) respondents. Except for a slightly higher degree for unemployed women (.10) and the Maltese (.22) concern over the meaning and purpose of life is equally universal.

The option for justice and faith (F5) is significantly higher in Spain (.19) and Malta (.02) than in Italy (-.10) or France (-.25). It is favoured more by men and women who work outside the house, by urban dwellers and most importantly by the higher educated (.16). A sense of insecurity over the future is mostly felt by the advanced in age (.28), the lower social class (.21) and the lower educated (.13), housewives and people living in rural areas. Our respondents from Malta (.30) and Spain (.18) are also more concerned about security than the French (-.17) or the Italians (-.25).

The personal morality of the ten commandments is significantly weakest with suburban dwellers (-.17), men (-.17) and the French (-.25) but strongest with our Maltese respondents (.46). There is no significant difference in the evaluation of how the ten commandments are seen to apply to others, except that the French (.15), and the higher educated (.08) seem to have a more positive appraisal of social morality than the rest of our respondents.

In sum whereas traditional religion differs mostly by country and age and to a certain extent by gender, education and place of residence, post-traditional religion seems to be more universal. Apparently, in the modern society of our four Catholic countries alongside traditional religion there exists a diffused post-traditional and secularised religion that finds expression in a multiplicity of forms ranging from a widespread but implicit life of the spirit, concern over the meaning and purpose of life, the occurrence of para-psychological experiences and the not so common option for justice and faith.

### *Religion and Social Values*

How is religion related to society? Do any of our religious factors have an impact on social and political life? In order to investigate whether the traditional and post-traditional dimensions of religion have any social significance in our four Catholic countries we now examine how the distinct factors of religion relate with a set of social and political values that were included in the EVSSG (1981) survey.

On 10-point left-right political scale our respondents displayed a left political orientation (average of 4.80), 20 percent were politically left, 8 percent politically right and 44 percent identified themselves with the centre. Asked about their basic social attitudes, the majority (70 percent) were of the

opinion that their society must be gradually improved by reforms, some (16 percent) held that it must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces and only a tiny minority (7 percent) were of the opinion that the entire organisation of their society has to be radically changed by revolutionary action. Having to choose between freedom and equality, 45 percent would opt for personal freedom, that is, a situation where everyone can live in freedom and develop without hindrance, whereas 39 percent would prefer a situation of equality where nobody is underprivileged and where the social class differences are not strong. 16 percent, however, were unable to decide for either freedom or equality.

Then in reply to Inglehart's battery of questions concerning the aims of the country for the next ten years, the majority of our respondents gave top priority to the materialist values of maintaining order in the nation (43 percent) and fighting rising prices (26 percent), and only a few chose the post-materialist values giving people more say in important decisions (16 percent) and protecting freedom of speech (12 percent). In sum, our respondents from Latin Europe were generally of a politically left orientation but paradoxically favoured freedom over and above equality. They sought a gradual social reform rather than either a radical change or the upkeep of the status quo. They had a predominantly materialist value orientation. But how do religious factors relate to and influence social and political values?

Table 4 represents the results from the one-way analysis of variance of the mean scores of religious factors in four Latin European countries according to our respondents' political orientation, their priorities for society and their respective social commitment to voluntary work or religious organisations. The greatest variance in social and political values is to be observed for the factor of traditional religiosity. Those who abide by a traditional religiosity were politically more on the right (.38) than on the left (-.57), favoured more the defence of the status quo (.11) than a gradual reform and were contrary to any suggestion of a radical change (-.76). Their top political priority for the near future was the upkeep of social order in their country (.26). At the same time they expressed less concern over people's participation in important government decisions (-.34) or the protection of freedom of speech (-.48).

Generally the politically left were also low on the other factors of traditional religion such as belief in the last things (-.22), adherence to the teachings of the Church (-.22) and to the ten Commandments (-.19). Yet, they were more favourable to the post-traditional religion of justice and faith (.12) and were more positive about social morality (.04) than the politically right (-.14). The quest for a radical social change went contrary to traditional religion

but was favoured by the factors of post-traditional religion such as para-spiritual experiences (.15) and the option for justice and faith (.19). Those who advocated a radical social change, however, were low on personal morality (-.30). By contrast, those who were for the defence of their country against all subversive forces held strong to the ten Commandments (.15).

Generally materialist values were favoured by a traditional religiosity, belief and adherence to the teaching of the Church, but not the post-traditional option for justice and faith. On the contrary, post-materialist values were supported by the factors of post-traditional religion such as the option for justice and faith, para-spiritual experiences, concern with the meaning and purpose in life and a sense of certitude about the future. However, post-materialists were less likely to adhere to the morality of the ten Commandments than materialists.

Significantly both the traditional and post-traditional modalities of religion were found to support membership in a number of organisations, and to generate a plurality of voluntary activity in society. Thus the pluri-dimensionality of religion inspired membership in various types of Church groups but also in other secular organisations which were often accompanied by involvement in voluntary work. As might be expected membership in religious organisations was found to be sustained by a strong traditional religiosity (.56), an adherence to traditional belief (.35) and the morality of the ten Commandments (.28) but a weaker satisfaction with the teaching of the Church (.19). Post-traditional religion, especially the option for justice and faith (.23) and implicit religion (.20) also favoured membership in religious organisations. A social commitment in voluntary work, however, was strongest with our respondents opting for justice and faith (.24) than the traditionally religious (.15) or an implicit religion (.08) and much less with people who cherished para-spiritual experiences (-.12).

Overall, the socio-political orientation of our respondents was found to be related to their religious orientation. The social values commonly associated with the politically right, such as resistance to change and the priority of social order over participation and economic control, correspond to traditional religiosity, adherence to religious belief, the teaching of the Church and the morality of the ten Commandments. By contrast, the social values of change, participation and freedom of speech of the politically left correspond to the post-traditional dimensions of religion, the option for justice and faith, in particular.

### *Conclusion*

The foregoing analysis has brought to light the relation that exists between religion and society in four Catholic European countries of the upper-Mediterranean region. A post-secularisation approach to religion enabled us to differentiate between traditional and post-traditional dimensions of religious values and to examine their respective social significance in a secularised world. Thus when religious values from the EVSSG survey were organised into factors we obtained a picture of religion in a secular world. It emerged that in contemporary Latin European society the secular is not exclusive of the religious. Religious values have not only a place alongside social and political values but that the latter were found to vary with the former.

Traditional religiosity was found to vary greatly between countries of the same Catholic faith. Such a finding supports the view that secularisation is not a universal phenomenon and that it depends on the historical and cultural situation of each particular country. By contrast, post-traditional religiosity in a post-secular world was found to be more universal. Yet it assumes a diversity of forms, ranging from the widespread concern with the purpose and meaning of life and implicit everyday religion to the less common para-spiritual experiences, uncertainty about the future and an option for justice and faith. It remains to be seen whether the post-traditional dimensions of religion, the option of justice and faith in particular, will, in the long term, contribute towards peace and justice in the world.

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### Tables mentioned in the article

TABLE 1  
Religious Values in four Latin European Countries  
(percentages)

Religious Values	ALL	France	Italy	Spain	Malta
Roman Catholic	84	71	93	90	99
No Church Affiliation	13	24	6	9	0
Religious Person	67	51	83	63	94
Atheist	6	10	4	4	0
Derive comfort from religion	53	37	63	57	94
Spend time in prayer, etc.	61	44	72	69	90
Importance of God in life: (10 point scale)	6.03	4.72	6.96	6.39	9.58
Attend Church Weekly or more	29	12	36	41	90
Never	35	57	21	25	4
<i>Church teaching adequate on:</i>					
Moral problems	40	42	40	39	70
Family life	36	34	39	34	79
Spiritual needs	45	48	43	45	84
Confidence in the Church	55	54	60	50	83
<i>Religion in the future</i> more/equally important	51	49	57	44	70
<i>Shared religious beliefs</i> very/rather important in marriage:	55	46	53	66	86
Priority of religious faith in child education at home:	18	11	22	22	43
Member of a religious group	8	4	7	15	15
N	5318	1200	1348	2303	467

Source: EVSGG 1981/4

TABLE 2

Large-Scale Factor Analysis of Religious Values  
in four Latin European Countries.

%	Belief in:	F1	%	Justice and Faith	F5
26	Hell	.86		<i>Readiness to sacrifice everything, risk life for:</i>	
26	The devil	.83			
38	Heaven	.80	5	Justice	.76
54	Sin	.64	8	Freedom	.74
57	A soul	.62	6	Peace	.73
45	Life after death	.62	4	Religion, God	.41
22	Re-incarnation	.55			
<hr/>			<hr/>		
%	Church Teaching	F2	%	Meaning and Purpose	F6
40	Moral problems and individual needs	.95	42	Never felt that life is meaningless	.74
36	Family life	.95	32	Often think on the meaning of life	.74
45	Spiritual needs	.94	23	Often think about death	.68
			12	Often regret doing wrong	.53
<hr/>			<hr/>		
%	Religiosity	F3	<b>Implicit Religion: life of the spirit</b>		
29	Church Attendance	.81			
77	Belief in God	.73			
6.03*	Importance of God*	.73			
84	Church Affiliation	.73	53	Religion gives comfort and strength	.75
67	Religious person	.72			
33	Personal God	.59	61	Give time to prayer, meditation, etc.	.75
<hr/>			<hr/>		
%	Para-Spiritual Experience	F4	<b>Uncertain future, incertitude</b>		
11	Felt uplifting spiritual force	.81			
33	Contact person at a distance	.73	3.93*	Likelihood of war in the near future	.64
27	Seen events happening at a distance	.73	37	Religion less important in the future	-.56
23	Contact with a dead person	.72			
17	Experience changed outlook on life	.59	20	Technology harms mankind	.48
			15	No great religion has any truths	.41

\* average on a 10-point scale

<b>%</b>	<b>Patriotism, bravery, altruism</b>	<b>F9</b>
39	Readiness to fight for country in war	.71
6	Sacrifice/risk life for country	.52
21	Sacrifice/risk life to save another person	.33

<b>(percent)</b> <b>Apply fully to:</b>			<b>Factors</b>	
<b>SELF</b>	<b>MOST PEOPLE</b>	<b>Commandments</b>	<b>F10</b>	<b>F11</b>
50	18	Do not have other gods before me	.78	.84
48	13	Do not take the name of God in vain	.81	.86
37	12	Keep the Sabbath holy	.85	.89
79	42	Honour thy mother and thy father	.85	.90
87	47	Do not kill	.87	.90
56	19	Do not commit adultery	.81	.88
81	31	Do not steal	.87	.91
73	26	Do not bear false witness against thy neighbour	.87	.91
60	17	Do not covet thy neighbour's wife	.82	.89
66	19	Do not covet thy neighbour's goods	.86	.90

F10 = factor for how the ten commandments apply to oneself; F11 = factor for how the ten commandments apply to most people.

Source: EVSSG (1981/4). N = 5318. .

TABLE 3

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Factor Scores of Religious values by Education, Age, Social class, Sex, place of Residence and Country.

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	N
<b>AGE:</b>												
under 34 years	.11	-.10	-.27	-.01	.01	.07	-.04	-.16	-.01	-.12	.04	2096
35-54 years	.03	.05	.16	.03	.02	-.02	-.01	-.01	.02	.03	-.01	1523
over 55 years	.15	.10	.26	.05	-.04	-.09	.07	.28	-.02	-.10	.08	1260
F ratio	28.56	19.94	149.22	2.28	.96	10.68	5.04	78.35	.78	29.15	5.72	
p	.000	.000	.000	.103	.385	.000	.007	.000	.460	.000	.003	
<b>SOCIAL CLASS:</b>												
upper: AB	-.05	.11	-.19	-.05	.06	.06	.06	-.19	-.03	-.09	.12	807
upper middle: C1	-.04	-.09	.10	.07	.04	.04	.02	-.13	.02	.02	-.01	1518
lower middle: C2	.00	.01	.01	-.05	-.01	-.01	-.04	.08	-.01	-.01	-.01	1558
lower: DE	.01	.03	.01	.01	-.09	-.09	-.01	.21	.02	.04	-.05	1003
F ratio	1.59	8.25	15.35	4.29	4.79	5.12	2.21	37.74	.739	3.15	5.02	
p	.189	.000	.000	.005	.003	.006	.084	.000	.529	.024	.002	
<b>SEX:</b>												
Man	-.12	-.02	-.20	-.07	.05	-.04	-.08	-.11	-.12	-.17	.02	2361
Housewife	.19	.05	.30	.03	-.10	.00	.10	.19	.14	.13	-.03	1510
Non-Housewife	-.05	-.05	-.01	.06	.01	.07	.05	-.04	.11	-.01	.01	976
F ratio	45.35	3.69	121.22	7.80	11.10	4.44	17.40	45.20	38.38	40.86	1.11	
p	.000	.025	.000	.000	.000	.010	.000	.000	.000	.000	.328	
<b>Age left</b>												
<b>SCHOOL:</b>												
under 15 years	.02	-.05	.18	.07	-.07	-.10	-.00	.13	.03	.06	-.06	2389
15-17 years	-.01	.05	-.06	-.06	-.08	.03	-.02	-.05	-.06	-.00	.05	992
over 18 years	-.02	.05	-.26	-.06	.16	.14	.02	-.18	-.00	-.01	.08	1497
F ratio	.86	5.94	94.61	10.28	29.42	25.33	.44	49.09	2.92	12.39	11.12	
p	.420	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000	.645	.000	.050	.000	.000	
<b>PLACE OF RESIDENCE:</b>												
Rural	.00	.05	.13	-.02	-.07	-.07	-.02	.07	.02	.00	.06	2024
Sub-urban	-.03	.07	-.01	.01	.01	.01	-.02	-.04	-.05	-.17	.02	1919
Urban	.03	-.14	-.17	.02	.08	.09	.06	-.05	.03	-.02	.04	1309
F ratio	1.39	22.46	33.29	.641	7.96	8.61	3.24	7.56	3.52	.14	5.49	
p	.249	.000	.000	.527	.000	.000	.039	.001	.030	.872	.000	
<b>COUNTRY:</b>												
France	-.11	.25	-.68	-.03	-.25	-.07	.02	-.17	.01	-.25	.15	1200
Italy	-.15	-.41	.23	.29	-.10	.22	.02	-.25	.05	.16	.04	1348
Spain	.00	.08	.11	.17	.19	-.10	-.06	.18	-.03	.05	.09	2303
Malta	.85	.16	.61	.09	.02	.09	.22	.30	-.06	.46	.02	467
F ratio	119.28	116.25	324.32	61.67	58.28	33.48	9.56	79.76	2.28	75.12	16.62	
p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.077	.000	.000	

Source: EVSGG 1981/4; N = 5318. *Traditional Religion*: F1 = Belief in eschatology; F2 = Church Teachings; F3 = Religiosity; F9 = Patriotism, bravery or altruism; F10 = Personal morality; *Post-traditional Religion*: F4 = Spirituality; F5 = Justice and faith; F6 = Meaning and purpose in life; F7 = Everyday implicit religion, or Life of the Spirit; F8 = Uncertain future, incertitude; F11 = how the ten Commandments are seen to apply to others. NA = Not Applicable/No Answer.

TABLE 4

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Factor Scores of Religious values  
in four Latin European Countries.

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	N
<b>Political orientation:</b>												
Left	-.22	-.22	-.57	-.03	.12	.02	.07	-.20	.00	-.19	.04	1037
Centre	.00	.01	.08	-.02	-.03	.07	.01	-.15	-.02	-.03	.10	2325
Right	.43	.08	.38	-.07	-.04	.08	.11	-.09	-.14	.12	-.14	472
NA	.03	-.02	.16	.04	-.02	-.15	-.10	.42	.16	.01	-.23	1479
F ratio	48.30	26.57	167.82	2.17	6.00	15.76	9.59	125.36	5.33	23.34	39.06	
p	.000	.000	.000	.090	.001	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	
<b>Society needs:</b>												
- radical change	-.10	-.28	-.76	.15	.19	.06	.01	-.11	.07	-.30	.02	367
- to be reformed	.00	.04	.06	-.04	-.01	.04	.02	-.05	-.03	.03	.02	3723
- to be defended	.06	.08	.11	.12	-.07	-.01	.08	-.09	-.03	.15	.01	773
F ratio	3.39	19.07	124.9	12.81	8.41	.92	1.25	1.00	1.81	31.05	.02	
p	.034	.000	.000	.000	.000	.399	.286	.367	.164	.000	.977	
<b>Social priority:</b>												
Freedom	.01	.05	-.02	.01	-.01	.06	.04	-.15	-.05	.03	.03	2088
Equality	-.01	-.04	-.01	-.03	-.04	.04	.05	-.09	.00	.03	.04	1907
Neither	.00	.03	-.04	-.01	.20	.09	-.09	.20	.01	-.11	.01	473
F ratio	.33	5.1	.28	.90	10.81	.82	4.51	27.67	1.67	6.25	.22	
p	.718	.006	.752	.405	.000	.441	.011	.000	.188	.002	.802	
<b>Materialist (M)/Post-materialist values (P):</b>												
M) Social Order	.07	.07	.26	-.04	.02	.01	.00	.04	-.05	.12	-.05	2296
M) Price Control	-.03	.01	-.07	.01	-.15	-.05	.01	.05	.00	-.01	.07	186
P) Participation	-.11	-.19	-.34	-.03	.08	.15	.03	-.20	.09	-.18	.07	821
P) Free Speech	-.07	-.01	-.48	.12	.05	.04	.04	-.19	-.01	-.16	.06	511
F ratio	8.69	13.97	138.37	3.73	10.54	7.89	.248	20.53	3.98	28.93	6.75	
p	.000	.000	.000	.011	.000	.000	.863	.000	.008	.000	.000	
<b>Voluntary workers</b>												
of which in	.15	.11	.15	-.12	.24	.08	.07	-.10	-.05	.15	.13	1097
Church Group	.35	.19	.56	-.05	.23	.06	.20	-.20	-.06	.28	.08	515
No Voluntary Work	-.04	-.03	-.04	.02	-.06	-.02	-.02	.03	.01	-.04	.03	4216
F ratio	34.58	16.34	29.25	17.72	79.17	10.34	7.72	14.26	3.37	29.69	24.33	
p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.006	.000	.067	.000	.000	

Source: EVSGG 1981/4; N = 5318. *Traditional Religion*: F1 = Belief in eschatology; F2 = Church Teachings; F3 = Religiosity; F9 = Patriotism, bravery or altruism; F10 = Personal morality; *Post-traditional Religion*: F4 = Spirituality; F5 = Justice and faith; F6 = Meaning and purpose in life; F7 = Everyday implicit religion, or Life of the Spirit; F8 = Uncertain future, incertitude; F11 = how the ten Commandments are seen to apply to others. NA = Not Applicable/No Answer.

# GADAMER AND SCHOPENHAUER: A COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF THEIR AESTHETIC THEORIES.

Claude Mangion

## 1.0 Introduction

Both Schopenhauer and Gadamer are in their own ways reactions to Kant. It is therefore useful to open this paper by contextualizing them vis-à-vis their relationship to him, pointing out briefly what they inherit and how they respond to the Kantian legacy.

Kant's two critiques had explored the nature of theoretical and practical reason, but the end result was a seemingly unbridgeable gap between the two realms. On the one hand, the *Critique of Pure Reason* dealt with the limits of our understanding of the world of nature, whilst the *Critique of Practical Reason* dealt with the moral domain. The former domain of unfree, determined objects was antithetical to the latter where freedom was a prerequisite for moral behaviour. The irreconcilable world of subject and object — itself a major concern to subsequent German Idealists — was mediated by an aesthetic realm. Thus with the *Critique of Judgement* Kant can also be considered as proposing a system-building philosophy within which aesthetics played an important role. And although Kant denied adding a third autonomous, aesthetic realm<sup>1</sup> this was how he was subsequently read.

Even though Schopenhauer admired Kant's first two critiques, he had little to say about the last. In fact, in his review of Kant's works, the *Critique of Judgement* is virtually dismissed. He accuses Kant of having missed the point in focusing upon the conditions enabling one to pass a judgment on the beautiful rather than the beautiful object of perception itself. Kant focussed on judgements of taste for he was primarily interested in what occurred in the

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1. I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, (Clarendon Press; Oxford 1952) 12.

subject. By starting with the subject, Schopenhauer accuses Kant of learning about the beautiful from the statements of others.

Despite dismissing Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, the other works remain seminal in Schopenhauer's eyes. Although he accepts the Kantian distinction of the phenomenal and noumenal world, he realizes that the way Kant formulates this distinction is not tenable, for Kant illegitimately postulates the noumenon as a kind of invisible object 'behind' the phenomenal world. On Kant's own premises only the objects of experience i.e. the phenomena are knowable, and hence the noumena is unknowable.

However Schopenhauer did not eliminate altogether the Kantian thing-in-itself. He argued that it was in fact knowable. Direct acquaintance of the thing-in-itself was achieved in the act of self-consciousness. In looking at our inner world, Schopenhauer argues that the motivational force of behaviour is the will.<sup>2</sup> The thing-in-itself is identified as the will, which in turn expressed itself in phenomena. However, Schopenhauer did not maintain a dualistic world view. The body was the expression of the will, but the latter was not the causal producer of the former. Rather, the body and other phenomena in the world were external objectifications of the world subject to conditions of ordinary perception. From this standpoint the body is an object amongst other objects. Whilst Hegel considered the Absolute to be the ultimate reality, the culmination of reason, Schopenhauer's will<sup>3</sup> also constituted the ultimate reality, but as a nonrational force, without any teleological designs. It is the will's nature that makes Schopenhauer look upon life as a miserable affair. The will strives to fulfill its desires, but for every desire fulfilled another ten take its place, prompting the will into further activity. This cycle of desires is temporarily satiated, but constantly renewed. As a result life becomes an arena of interminable suffering. Temporary liberation from the striving of the will is possible through the experience of the beautiful, whether natural or artistic. In this experience the subject comes into contact with the Platonic Ideas or the will itself, depending on the artform. Acquaintance of these is what constitutes knowledge and truth.

2. B. Magee describes the will in terms of 'energy': "it is nonhuman and impersonal, without consciousness, without aims and perhaps the most important of all — without life," *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, (Clarendon Press; Oxford 1983) 144.
3. Bowie points out that Schopenhauer's introduction of the will is not as original as is widely believed. Schelling for example, had already claimed, "as the object is never absolute then something per se non-objective must be posited in nature: this absolutely non-objective postulate is precisely the original productivity of nature." Cited from A. Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche*, (Manchester University Press; Manchester 1990) 206.

Gadamer also has his starting point rooted in Kant. It is he whom Gadamer holds responsible for the situation where one no longer speaks of truth and knowledge in art. With Kant, aesthetics became subjective for considerations of aesthetic judgments were based not on the nature of the object, but on the subject who synthesized the plurality of impressions confronting him, either as a creator or as a beholder.

In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant attempts to resolve a difficult situation. Judgements of taste and beauty are subjective for they are related to the individual's delight. Pleasure in the beautiful is not acquired through conceptualization or reflection. If this were the case, then it would be merely a question of learning the correct rules of procedure for solving questions of taste and beauty. The subjective element excluded the possibility of aesthetics becoming part of Kant's critical philosophy.

The other problem Kant needed to resolve was how agreement was possible on questions of taste. This couldn't be established by induction i.e., by seeing how many people agree on a particular object as beautiful. What Kant wanted was to show that a judgement of the beautiful was such that it commanded the agreement of others. Thus Kant needed to establish a position where both the subjective and the universal aspects were fulfilled.

Kant's paradigm for the beautiful is nature. It presents itself immediately, unmediated by concepts, whose beauty is in-itself without reference to our purposes. Artistic beauty supplements natural beauty in that the latter is invigorated by the genius's free play of his mental faculties i.e., the imagination and the understanding. However, although his source is nature, the genius presents an idealized version of nature, so that his added contribution becomes a reflection on man himself. This talent cannot be learnt by following rules, so that in the artistic depiction of natural beauty man recognizes similarities between himself and nature, since nature too is devoid of rules, concepts and deliberate purposes.

As a result of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, aesthetic discourse became subjective, claiming an area independent of considerations on knowledge and truth, focussing on 'taste' and 'feeling'. This is the point Gadamer is stressing. In delineating truth and knowledge within the framework of the natural sciences, Kant closed the doors of truth and knowledge to art.

Thus, both for Gadamer and Schopenhauer, the experience of art is a source of knowledge and truth. However, whilst their claims seem to be similar, the content of their claims differs. It is this difference which this paper sets out to explore.

## 2.0 *Truth and knowledge in art*

In the following sections I shall be considering points of contact between Schopenhauer and Gadamer, namely the claims to truth and knowledge in art, the aesthetic experience and their preoccupations with genius. That I have focussed on these particular issues is not an arbitrary choice, but was imposed upon me by the authors themselves who formulate their positions around these themes.

The interesting aspect of Schopenhauerian aesthetics is its ambivalent position when contrasted to Gadamer's aesthetics. Like Gadamer, (and unlike Kant) he talks about truth and knowledge in the experience of art, so that it is on questions of what kind of truth and knowledge that they differ. Yet Schopenhauer also makes the additional claim as to the eternal nature of artistic and natural beauty. Gadamer makes no such claims, but on the contrary argues in *Truth and Method* that 'raising' beauty to an eternal standpoint leads to the dislocation of the work of art from the double world of its and the viewer's context.

Gadamer's historical survey points to Schiller as being responsible for producing what he calls the aesthetic consciousness of differentiation. With Schiller, the word aesthetic changed its meaning from that used by Kant for his transcendental aesthetics. Kant's transcendental justification enabling one to pass a judgement of taste was transformed from a methodological condition to one of content, to the imperative of adopting an aesthetic attitude to things.

Despite the influence of Kant, Schiller's proclamation of art as freedom ultimately drew its resources from Fichte. Schiller was not referring to the Kantian free-play of cognitive faculties, but rather drawing upon Fichte's theory of instinct. The Schillerian play-impulse involved the harmony of the form impulse and the matter impulse; whilst the form impulse strives for unity and persistence, the matter impulse strives for change. These drives are controlled and harmonized by the play impulse. It is with art that the play impulse was brought out. Aesthetic education aimed at developing this instinct. An important consequence ensued: art claimed its own standpoint and established its supremacy. The art of the beautiful appearance was contrasted with reality. Nature and art no longer complemented each other, but were contrasted, leaving art as an autonomous sphere. The laws of beauty as the criterion of art, permit "nature" and "reality" to be transcended. Schiller's defence of the "ideal kingdom" of art against all limitation — both political and moral — led to the culture of an "aesthetic state" where an educated

society was interested in art. Thus, the reality which Schiller opposed art to, is no longer the same concept of reality used by Kant.

According to Schiller the aesthetic world was defined in terms of imitation, irreality, illusion, magic or dream. It was opposed to the 'real' world. The ontological definition of aesthetic appearance was formulated at that moment when the scientific-epistemological model excluded any other form of knowledge outside its own method. Aesthetic consciousness became alienated from reality. It was a consciousness characterizing the educated society, for in such a community its members shared the same features, namely an ability to raise oneself to the universal, by negating those criteria of taste which mark a particular community.

Furthermore, there was a second mode of being of this aesthetic consciousness: the divorce of the work from its original context — its world. Schiller's aesthetic consciousness no longer recognizes the importance of content or the relation of the work of art with its world. Anything which has particular qualities determined as aesthetic belong to the aesthetic consciousness. It has become the centre towards which works are measured as art. The Schillerian notion of aesthetic consciousness is called by Gadamer aesthetic differentiation. It is a process where everything in which a work is rooted — original context of life, religious or secular function — is disregarded.

Differentiation is that abstractive process which selects in relation to the aesthetic quality. Extra-aesthetic elements, such as purpose, function, the meaning of its content, are excluded from considerations of the artistic nature of the work. By force of its exclusions, the viewer is prevented from taking any moral or religious attitudes with him towards the work i.e., he supposedly approached the work without any preconceptions and prejudices. Furthermore, when the aesthetic consciousness is applied to the performative arts, for example music and drama, a difference is made between the original as opposed to its reproduction. Both — providing they fulfill aesthetic criteria — are deemed independent of each other. Their interpretation is no longer related to the original: each is contemplated aesthetically.

The implication of this view is described by Gadamer as having "the character of simultaneity."<sup>4</sup> The double differentiation — of work from its world and beholder from his attitudes — simultaneously raises works of art of all times to a co-present in the mind of the beholder. Rather than a localization

4. H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (Sheen and Ward; London 1975) 77.

of taste, determined by the criteria upheld by the beholder's world, art becomes eternal with aesthetic differentiation. The art of all ages is integrated into the co-presentness of aesthetic differentiation. Its embodiment has taken place in the form of the library or the museum: the art of all ages is lumped together in one building, with the consequence that the aesthetic consciousness adopts a tasteless attitude. Even architecture, which might be considered as resistant to aesthetic differentiation, succumbs to aesthetic consciousness with buildings re-produced as pictures.

Aesthetic differentiation is that attempt to raise art to the standpoint of eternity; but it is a standpoint which is opposed to the Kantian delineation of reality, and consequently excludes ascribing questions of truth and knowledge to art. Schopenhauer in turn considers the experience of art to be an experience of the eternal: "[art] stops the wheel of time."<sup>5</sup> With his contemporaries he looked upon art as transhistorical. Yet unlike them, he also looked upon art as the source of truth and knowledge.

It is in this context that Platonic Ideas — the objective aspect of the aesthetic experience — are introduced.<sup>6</sup> At first sight he seems to be introducing a piece of alien ontology into his world-view for he claimed that reality is an indivisible will which however manifests itself in the world of phenomenon. It has been pointed out<sup>7</sup> that Schopenhauer does not explain why the will needs to objectify itself in space and time at all, given that the will is all that there is i.e., ultimate reality. But I think that even without involving ourselves too deeply in his metaphysics, one could argue that the will's inexhaustible desire for life leads to it manifesting itself in whatever form possible. It is its own striving nature that makes it enter into the phenomenal world, subject to the limitations of space, time and causality.

When Schopenhauer writes that the will objectifies itself into the world, this self-manifestation is graded into four categories: inorganic matter, vegetal life, animal, and human life. Man is at the top of this hierarchy on the grounds that through him knowledge of the will is most easily acquired. The phenomenal world is for Schopenhauer the "indirect objectification of the

5. A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, (Dover Publications; New York 1969) 185.
6. Schopenhauer uses 'aesthetic contemplation' and the 'aesthetic experience' synonymously.
7. D.W. Hamlyn, *Schopenhauer*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul; London 1980) 110.115; F. Copelston, *Schopenhauer: Philosopher of pessimism*, (Burns Oates and Washbourne; London 1946) 105.

will.”<sup>8</sup> And yet, despite the plentitude of objects found in the world, Schopenhauer is adamant that the will is not divided into each such that the result is the complete will. Rather the will is present in each of them. It is indivisible such that “if per impossible, a single being, even the most insignificant, were entirely annihilated, the whole world would inevitably be destroyed with it.”<sup>9</sup>

And here we have the crux of the problem which Schopenhauer is faced with, namely how to reconcile an indivisible atemporal will with a plurality of objects in space and time. In this, I will try to show how he is successful, although his recourse to the Platonic Ideas seems to be located in a desire to include aesthetics within his system, a procedure not uncommon in his days, as exemplified in the metaphysics of Hegel, Fichte and Schelling.

The Platonic Ideas are meant to have a mediatory role between the different realms of the will and the world. The uneasiness which accompanies us into thinking of the Platonic Ideas as constituting a separate set of beings is partly due to Schopenhauer’s insistence upon calling them Platonic Ideas: “these grades of the objectification of the will are nothing but Plato’s Ideas.”<sup>10</sup> Perhaps Schopenhauer’s insistence upon calling them the Platonic Ideas is to help avoid confusing them with the world as representation. All knowledge of the world is mediated by the senses and the intellect. What we know of the world in ordinary consciousness is its representation. The Platonic Ideas differ from the world as representation in that the latter is expressed through the forms of space, time and causality. The Platonic Ideas, though numerous are atemporal. This is what they have in common with the will.

The similarity between Plato’s and Schopenhauer’s Ideas lies in their structural nature: both are the essential features of things. The things themselves, precisely because they are subject to those conditions constitutive of the world, appear as a plurality of phenomena in their inessential features:

to the brook which rolls downwards over the stones, the eddies, waves and foam-forms are exhibited by it are indifferent and inessential; but that it follows gravity, and behaves as an inelastic, perfectly mobile,

8. A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, (Dover Publications; New York 1969) 175.

9. *Ibid.*, 128-129.

10. *Ibid.*, 129.

formless and transparent fluid, this is its essential nature, this, if known through perception, is the Idea<sup>11</sup>

Yet despite this point of contact between Plato and Schopenhauer, there remain two fundamental differences. Firstly, whilst Plato's Ideas are the ultimate reality, for Schopenhauer this reality is the will. Secondly, Plato's Ideas are abstract, Schopenhauer's Ideas are apprehended in perception.<sup>12</sup>

It is the relationship between the Platonic Ideas and the world that still needs to be examined. In one respect, they are like the concept: "both unities represent a plurality of things."<sup>13</sup> But in other respects, the analogy fails, for the concept is abstract, the product of reason, exhausted in its definition,<sup>14</sup> so too the concept is figuratively speaking "a dead receptacle", the Platonic Idea a living organism.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Schopenhauer indicates the difference between concept and Platonic Idea in terms of their direction: the Idea is the unity that has fallen into plurality by virtue of the temporal and spatial form of our intuitive apprehension. The concept, on the other hand, is the unity once more produced out of plurality by means of abstraction through our faculty of reason.<sup>16</sup>

This I think provides a good indicator of how the will manifests itself in the world via the Platonic Ideas. It explains why Schopenhauer considers the world as the indirect manifestation of the will, given that the Platonic Ideas are its direct manifestation.

On the other hand, when he writes that phenomenon 'fall' through the Platonic Ideas, it is not as though the Platonic Ideas are wholly segregated from things. They differ in being atemporal, outside the forms of space, time and causality. But they are perceived — as Schopenhauer will show in his examination of the arts — via the phenomenal objects. This leads back to the different grades of objectifications of the will. Not all the Platonic Ideas are the same, for those with the more complex life forms appear with "increasing

11. Ibid., 182.

12. As T.J. Diffey writes, "whatever Plato's forms are, they could not be objects of perception," "Schopenhauer's Account of Aesthetic Experience," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 30(April 1990/2)135.

13. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 233.

14. Ibid., 234.

15. Ibid., 235.

16. Ibid., 234-235.

distinctness and completeness.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Schopenhauer makes a distinction between the Platonic Ideas of man and the Platonic Ideas of the animal and vegetal worlds: "the farther down we go, the more completely is every trace of individual character lost in the general character of the species and only the physiognomy of the species remains."<sup>18</sup>

Whilst with animals and plants there is no difference between the species and their character, each man instantiates his own Idea on account of his unique character: "the character of each individual man, in so far as it is thoroughly individual and not entirely included in that of the species can be regarded as a special Idea, corresponding to a particular act of objectification of the will."<sup>19</sup>

This point is important for it shows that D.H. Hamlyn is wrong in claiming that there is an individual Idea for every particular object.<sup>20</sup> It is only in the case of man that the Platonic Idea is both token and type. This should not be confused with the further claim Schopenhauer makes when he writes that every object can be perceived as an Idea, "whether it be a landscape, a tree, a rock, a crag, a building, or anything else."<sup>21</sup> This is not a claim about the nature of the relationship between the Platonic Ideas and particulars. It is a claim about what is eligible to become the object of aesthetic contemplation. Schopenhauer is arguing that every object which manifests itself as a Platonic Idea can be called beautiful.

Even in the inorganic world and in manufactured products, the will is still manifesting itself, and hence contemplation of the Idea of their beauty remains possible. In the case Schopenhauer cites i.e., of manufactured products, he argues against Plato's refusal to ascribe Ideas to manufactured articles. Thus, whereas for Plato there was no Idea of table, Schopenhauer conceded the Idea of table but only as an expression of its matter. There could be no perception of matter as an Idea, for pure, unformed matter would be an exercise in abstraction. Yet despite the fact that all objects can be potentially classified as beautiful, some are more beautiful than others. The more beautiful ones are those which facilitate the transition from object to Idea. Human beauty

17. Ibid., 169.

18. Ibid., 131.

19. Ibid., 158.

20. Hamlyn writes: "it [the Platonic Idea of the oak tree] is an ideal entity, something that is both token and type", *Schopenhauer* 106.

21. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 166.

facilitates this transition "man is (the) more beautiful than all other objects and the revelation of his more inner nature is the highest aim of art."<sup>22</sup>

Art is the medium through which the various Platonic Ideas are perceived. Schopenhauer has successfully bridged the noumenal and phenomenal world without creating a new realm. Like the will, the Platonic Ideas are atemporal;<sup>23</sup> like the phenomenal world, these Ideas are objects of representation i.e., they require a subject for their perception. Since they are atemporal, our ordinary mode of cognition cannot apprehend them. It is in the aesthetic experience that the perception of these Ideas is possible, for this experience necessitates a change in the subject where his condition as a willing subject is temporally eliminated.

Knowledge of the Ideas is knowledge about the true nature of reality i.e., the will, for the Platonic are the "immediate and adequate objectivity of the thing-in-itself, of the will."<sup>24</sup> Artistic beauty is preferred to natural beauty for in art the knowledge of the Ideas is communicated. However, in claiming that the experience of the beautiful is the perception of the Idea, Schopenhauer has raised works of art to an eternal standpoint.<sup>25</sup> Art becomes the medium through which we transcend both its original world and our world. This is the view Gadamer argues against in his critique of aesthetic differentiation. Schopenhauer's position is precisely the position Gadamer attacks in his critique of the notion of aesthetic consciousness. He takes as his starting point the work of R. Hamaan. In the *Aesthetic*, Hamaan takes aesthetic differentiation to its extreme, abstracting it from art itself. By starting with an analysis of perception without any relation to something else, pure aesthetic experience has been transformed into pure perception. But Gadamer argues against the idea of pure perception, drawing upon Aristotle's point that all sense perception tends to a universal. Whatever is perceived is so in relation to something universal: a white phenomenon is seen as man, the noise we hear of a car hooting is its horn, not pure sound.<sup>26</sup> The importance this brings out is

22. Ibid., 210.

23. This is why Magee is wrong when he writes "if plural, [the Platonic Ideas] must be within the the phenomenal world not outside it", *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, (Clarendon Press; Oxford 1983) 148.

24. Schopenhauer *The World as Will and Representation*, 148.

25. On Schopenhauer's account the Idea perceived in natural beauty is also eternal; however, it differs from works of art in that the latter are produced by genius and can therefore make a claim to eternity in the sense of timelessness i.e., irrespective of context.

26. So too a further argument against the idea of pure perception is that the form of life from

that perception can never be a mirror image; the idea of pure perception is impossible because perception is always meaningful. It is the understanding of something as something: "all understanding as...is an articulation of what is there."<sup>27</sup> The criticism of the idea of pure perception is also a criticism of aesthetic consciousness, for given that there is no such thing as pure perception, i.e., no abstraction from meaningful contexts, then the notion of pure art collapses.

Objects looked at aesthetically are not looked at as a simple case of what there is but are dwelt upon and assimilated. In the case of works of plastic art (excluding non-representational and abstract art), recognizing what is represented enables us to understand the picture. "Seeing," Gadamer notes, "means differentiation."<sup>28</sup> There is no perception without meaning. The interpretation of a work of art is the perception of it as something. Interpretation belongs to the work of art. It is not some thing that can be separated from the work: thus, for Gadamer, the aesthetic experience becomes a hermeneutical one. Consequently, the interpretation of art is a way out of the view of aesthetic consciousness, for it shows how a work of art is always linked to meaning and this is in turn determined by context.

The question of how a work of art should be interpreted can be traced back to Kant's adoption of the concept of genius as the creator of art. The formalism which Kant upheld in the *Critique of Judgement* was not that of a pure perception; it was not of form without meaningful content, but of form as the unity of meaning. Form is here opposed to the purely sensuous attraction of the material in the work of art. Kant's examples of the arabesque are purely methodological, but not the aesthetic ideal. In order to achieve this ideal Kant relied upon the concept of genius. This concept has had far reaching implications for even when it declined in the eighteenth century, its influence continued through to the nineteenth century, although instead of being conceived of by the artist, it was then confirmed by the observer. The critical observer saw the work as miraculous, as a product inspired by genius. And though artists acclaimed this view, they were more down to earth, considering questions of technique and of success.

Yet even if the Romantic concept of genius as an unconscious producer is eliminated, the problem remains: how — if genius is excluded as defining the

which we come, i.e., our linguistic background influences our way of perceiving the world.

27. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 81.

28. *Ibid.*, 82.

work of art — is the difference to be enacted between art and craft? A work becomes a work when it is able to fulfill its purpose. Its use determines whether it has been completed. But this criterion is inapplicable to the artwork. Use does not answer the question of what the work of art is. Lack of purpose (end) is perhaps indicative of the condition of art: in itself, it is not completable i.e., endlessly interpretable. The consequences of such a position — adopted by Valery — Gadamer claims is that the recipient is the ultimate authority for the criterion of correct reaction and understanding: “one way of understanding a work of art is then no less legitimate than another.”<sup>29</sup>

Such a relativist position, Gadamer argues leaves the recipient as the absolute authority, as the genius of understanding instead of the genius of creation. What takes place is a transference of the concept of genius from artist to beholder. And this solves nothing for even if the beholder is an ordinary person, the work of art as fragment offers no appropriate reaction, leading to the view that each interpretation of the same work is an interpretation of a new work.

In rejecting Valery’s argument, Gadamer does not opt for the Lukacsian concept of aesthetic experience: it too is unhelpful. The problem with this view is that in emphasizing aesthetic experience, the work of art is considered as an empty form, filled in by a succession of experiences, with the following consequences: the loss of the identity of the artwork, artist and recipient through time. The continuity between each interpretation is broken.

To refute the Lukacsian position, Gadamer invokes Kierkegaard’s criticism of the aesthetic stage. Here, I don’t think Gadamer’s move is legitimate for Kierkegaard’s focus was directed towards an aesthetic existence i.e., towards a sensual way of life where one was not committed to any particular belief except one’s own stance, which serves to show the inherent contradictoriness of the aesthetic stage of existence. But what Gadamer needs to show with the Lukacsian position is that the work of art as an empty form filled with meaning by a subject is untenable. The flaw with Lukacs’s position is that it is object oriented with the object devoid of meaning, whilst Kierkegaard’s critique is subject oriented so that Gadamer’s use of Kierkegaard is misplaced.

That Gadamer needs the Kierkegaardian critique is shown by the consequences of this critique. The Kierkegaardian aesthete despairs of his own life and feels the need to go beyond this stage, to the ethical sphere. It is from

29. *Ibid.*, 85.

the ethical stage that one is able to see the contradictions inherent in the previous stage. Gadamer argues that Kierkegaard's point here shows how even if the aesthetic stance is untenable "the phenomenon of art imposes a task on existence; namely (that) ... of achieving that continuity of self-understanding which alone can support human existence."<sup>30</sup>

This quotation illustrates the kind of knowledge Gadamer expects of art. It is a knowledge which throws light upon man himself. The presupposition he assumes is that both art and man are the product of historical and cultural contexts. Because man is the product of history, he is not immediately present to himself, and cannot therefore know himself. Art is the medium, the 'other' through which man learns about himself. In interpreting art, man interprets himself.<sup>31</sup> The mediation through art is the transportation of oneself to a past world. But this is not the timeless world of the aesthetic consciousness. It is the leaving of one's home to return home. Any interpretation of a work of art needs to consider the background from which the interpreter comes. The past engages the present. The differences which the past reveals produces knowledge of the present. The present can only be known mediated by the past. The value of interpreting art is that "art is knowledge and that the experience of the work of art is a sharing of this knowledge."<sup>32</sup>

Obviously, this view entails rejecting the Kantian conception of what constitutes knowledge and what constitutes reality. On Kant's account it would not be possible to make any claims of knowledge in art. But aesthetics should be precisely that which gives access to a kind of knowledge which differs from scientific knowledge. The truth of art is the truth of self-knowledge.

However whilst I sympathize with Gadamer's view that we learn about ourselves from the past, the way Gadamer talks about history and tradition raises a few questions. In the first case, Gadamer seems to read history in Enlightenment terms as a movement towards progress. He does not seem to consider that history is frequently the story of much suffering, which repeats itself rather than eliminate it. In this case it is debatable as to what the value of such knowledge is towards man's self-understanding. Merely to say that we learn about ourselves from the past is not saying very much. So too, there is

30. Ibid., 86

31. J. Weinsheimer writes, "hermeneutics is what makes continuity out of discontinuity," *Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of 'Truth and Method'*, (Yale University Press; New Haven 1985) 97.

32. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 87.

the question of history itself. My claim is that history is never a neutral narrative. What is perceived as historical data is motivated by ideological interests. The history we read today is only a particular perspective which was of interest to the historiographers of the time. The claim to objectivity is unwarranted since they would have been the product of their own context. Since Gadamer considers the past as the only possible way of learning about ourselves, it seems that this knowledge would necessarily be distorted. One consequence of this view is that historiography becomes an exercise in fictional revision. As the collective of *The Empire Writes Back* point out: "Hayden White (1973) has noted how a long line of European thinkers from Valery and Heidegger to Sartre, Levi-Strauss and Foucault have cast doubts on the claims of an objective historical consciousness and stressed the fictive nature of historical reconstruction."<sup>33</sup>

Hegel is considered by Gadamer as having a more thorough understanding of the experience of art than Kant. Art and history are inter-related and together result in truth. The truth which art reveals is the truth of history, of world views. Unlike history however, art does not resolve itself into "true art". It is superceded by world history and the history of philosophy. Still, this should not undermine the value of Hegel's contribution, which is precisely that of eliminating subjectivity from art. Truth in art is achieved, but superceded by the concept i.e., philosophy.

The defect with Hegelian aesthetics is that it adopts the standpoint of infinite knowledge, which sees art as a movement leading to philosophy. Gadamer accepts the elimination of Kantian subjectivism from Hegelian aesthetics, but on the other hand rejects Hegel by accepting the Kantian view that the language of concepts and ends is inapplicable to art. His concern ultimately is to show the ontological status of the work of art and its truth-value. Here the work of Heidegger influences Gadamer. In *The Origins of the Work of Art*, Heidegger claims that a great work of art 'speaks' to us, putting us in touch with a truth which we cannot obtain otherwise than through art. The experience of a work of art is the revelation of truth. It is the work that speaks to us, not the artist.

Likewise Gadamer maintains that the experience of art is the revelation of truth. In the experience, he who undergoes it does not leave the work unchanged. Something has happened to him. The mode of being of the genuine work of art is truth. It is a truth the subject does not possess because it alters

33. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul; London 1989) 161.

him. The truth of art is different to the truth which science acquires at the end of methodological inquiry. Rather the subject belongs to the art work such that in its experience he understands the truth of his own being.

### 3.0 *The experience of art.*

When it comes to the experience of art, Schopenhauer and Gadamer have more in common than is ever pointed out. Both have as their central thesis the loss of the subject-object divide. Indeed, considering that Gadamer does not belong to the German Idealist tradition, his concerns on this aspect are remarkably similar to the concerns of that tradition. Thus, the unity of subject-object in the aesthetic experience is for him a central consideration to the nature of art and pivotal to his treatment of all the arts.

Likewise, Schopenhauer — albeit for different reasons — is also concerned to relinquish the dichotomy between the subject and object in the aesthetic experience. It is, in fact, one of the two ways of achieving temporary respite from the trammels of the will. But more than liberation, the aesthetic experience constitutes another form of knowledge, one superior to the knowledge obtained through science. The procedures and aims of science serve to highlight — by contrast — how knowledge is acquired in the arts. In its scientific endeavours the intellect is subjected to the rule of the will. The purpose of scientific knowledge is to get to know and manipulate objects. In this relationship practical purposes determine the relation between intellect and will.

Artistic knowledge differs radically. For a start it is not concerned with the things it encounters, but with the universal aspects of these things — the Platonic Ideas. Yet the perception of these Ideas require a correlative in the individual's mode of being. The individual is no longer interested in the object for his own uses. The relation between the intellect and the will is severed: "thus it considers things without interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively; it is entirely given up to them in so far as they are merely representations and not motives."<sup>34</sup>

The Platonic Idea is a representation requiring a subject. In the perception of the Idea, the subject becomes one with the object i.e., the Idea. The absence of interest towards the object is reminiscent of, and derived from Kant. In the *Critique of Judgement*, he wrote that an aesthetic judgement consists of a

34. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 196.

“delight or aversion immediately with the bare contemplation of the object irrespective of its use or of any end.”<sup>35</sup>

Schopenhauer adopts the notion of aesthetic disinterestedness, although he differed from Kant in that the latter was concerned with the harmonious interplay of the faculty of the understanding together with the imagination and the universality of aesthetic judgements. He did not admit that the aesthetic experience was a source of knowledge at all. Indeed, Kant’s concern was to establish the conditions which enable one to pass an aesthetic judgement. It is this point that Heidegger stresses and uses to claim that Schopenhauer misunderstood Kant. It is Heidegger’s contention that Kant’s search for the grounds and definition of the beautiful in terms of disinterestedness is a negative aspect. The positive aspect is — having excluded questions of interests, purposes, and practical ends — the encounter with the object “in its own stature and worth.”<sup>36</sup> Whilst Schopenhauer reads disinterestedness as the release from the will in its relation to the object, Heidegger claims that disinterestedness is the establishment of an essential relation to the object itself: “for the first time the object comes to the fore as pure object and that such coming forward into appearance is the beautiful.”<sup>37</sup>

Heidegger’s critique still leaves the Schopenhauerian position intact. What Heidegger considers as the appearance of the object in its full worth, is to Schopenhauer the revelation of the Idea. And Schopenhauer can still maintain that the revelation of the Idea requires a corresponding change in the subject of the experience namely, from that of an individual willing a particular object, to that of a “pure will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge.”<sup>38</sup>

The question we return to is that of establishing in what sense the experience of art produces a unity of subject and object. The dissolution of this dichotomy is heralded with the advent of the Platonic Ideas, for they include within them both subject and object:

when the Idea appears, subject and object can no longer be distinguished in it, because the Idea, the adequate objectivity of the will,

35. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 43.

36. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will To Power As Art*, (Harper and Row Publishers; New York 1971) 109.

37. *Ibid.*, 110

38. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 179.

the real world as representation arises only when subject and object reciprocally fill and penetrate each other completely.<sup>39</sup>

Knox suggests that on Schopenhauer's own grounds the unity of the aesthetic experience is untenable. Each Idea has a different meaning according to the place it is accorded in the hierarchy of the arts. Thus, the Idea of man is the highest expression of meaning, the lowest being exhibited in architecture. Consequently, the aesthetic experience is "judged only according to the intensity and clarity with which it apprehends that quality [Idea]."<sup>40</sup> The error with Knox's view is that he equates 'oneness' with 'sameness'. He wants the aesthetic experience of each and every object to be qualitatively the same. However, in itself this objection does nothing to invalidate the unity of the aesthetic experience.

Whilst Schopenhauer's contention remains valid, he does seem to weaken his own position when he discusses the question of aesthetic pleasure. In the *Essays and Aphorisms*, he argues that this pleasure is precisely the loss of one's individual will, of all desiring "when all desire disappears from consciousness there still remains the condition of pleasure."<sup>41</sup> But when talking about pleasure in *The World as Will and Representation*, he differentiates as to whether this pleasure is more pronounced on the will-less subject or on the Platonic Idea: "the pleasure...[arises]...sometimes more from the one than from the other, according to what the object of aesthetic contemplation may be."<sup>42</sup> If the object of aesthetic contemplation is a low graded Idea, such as those manifested in architecture, then the pleasure arises from the condition of will-lessness; if on the other hand, it is the contemplation of the Idea of man, the pleasure is derived from the Idea. This distinction weakens his claim to the unity of the aesthetic experience, for to be able to differentiate and locate the pleasure either in the subject or object means that in effect they are not united in the aesthetic experience. If they are undifferentiated in the aesthetic experience then presumably one cannot distinguish between them.

Gadamer's way of eliminating the subject-object divide is radically different from Schopenhauer. Unlike the latter, he does not have any ultimate

39. Ibid., 180.

40. I. Knox, *The Aesthetic Theories of Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer*, (The Humanities Press; New York 1958) 134.

41. A. Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, (Penguin Classics; Middlesex 1970) 155.

42. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 196.

reality from which to escape. Rather his concern is to unify the spectator with the object of his experience such that his own being will be revealed. His strategy involves adopting the theme of art as play, a theme frequently adopted in the history of aesthetics. The view he wants to explicate is different from the Kantian or Schillerian positions. Indeed, one can say he is arguing against their subjectivist considerations of play in art i.e., art as free play of mental faculties. In Kant's case, art as the free-play of the imagination with the understanding, in Schiller's case, art as the harmonizing play of the form and matter impulse. Gadamer's analysis shifts the mode of being of the work of art from the subject to the work itself. What he wants to show is how the work takes over the subject. To do this he will draw a parallel between the mode of being of the work of art and of play. However, it is play that becomes his starting point, for Gadamer will show how the mode of being of play is only a narrower conception of that of the work of art.

Gadamer's primary concern is to show features of play that cannot be classified as subjective. In this way he will shed light on the mode of being of play. As a methodological starting point, Gadamer examines the way play is used in ordinary language: the play of light, the play of forces etc. From its actual use, we can note an emphasis on a movement which does not tend towards an end. The to-and-fro sway of play is what defines a game. In this respect, it is irrelevant to consider whether it is a subject who plays: "hence the mode of being of play is not such that there must be a subject who takes up a playing attitude in order that the game may be played."<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, the primacy of the game over the subject is brought out by another factor: risk. Playing a game involves taking a number of decisions, options for certain possibilities. There is therefore a sense of freedom of choice which accompanies the game. But the choice entails risking, and this risk is what exerts control over the player. It makes the game attractive, and it shows that the player is subjected to the game, and not vice-versa. This view is further substantiated by what Gadamer calls the "proper spirit" of the game. Each game is different and their difference lies precisely in the respective spirit. When a particular game is played, a corresponding mental attitude is adopted. But what must be recalled is that it is the primacy of the game whose spirit induces the respective attitude. It is not the mental attitude which is the cause of the difference in games. Each game is determined by a particular attitude which differentiates it from other attitudes.

43. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 93.

Gadamer has so far provided us with features of play that show its independent status: the swaying movement, the proper spirit and risk. It is the next point which however underlies the most fundamental feature of playing a game: seriousness. When one customarily talks of play, the immediate reaction is to equate it — as Aristotle does — with recreation. But this equation is not exhaustive. The active participation of play is not one of idleness but of seriousness. Not playing seriously is tantamount to not playing. When a game is played seriously “the player loses himself in his play.”<sup>44</sup> The loss of self serves to show how the game takes over the player. To ask about the player’s subjectivity is fruitless, for the mode of being of play has an essence independent of the subject who plays, and which takes over the subject, “the real subject of the game is not the player...but instead the game itself.”<sup>45</sup> What he means is that the subject does not stand over and above the object but loses himself in it.

Is Gadamer’s critique of subjectivism successful? I would argue that Gadamer has established his case against the subjectivist thesis. For a subjectivist to be successful, he must defend the claim that the subject is always in control, manipulating the game to his own ends. But Gadamer has precisely shown the opposite. The characteristic features of play cannot be explained by reducing them to a subject. Rather the mode of being of play is such that it controls the subject.

The essence of a game and that of a work of art are not identical. The difference lies in their mode of representation. With the game, Gadamer argues, that of its nature every game has its own particular space, although he focuses in particular on those games — children’s games — which as such do not require an audience. The space which delineates the field of play is separated from other areas of human behaviour. It constitutes a self-enclosed world. Within the world of the game, no purpose extrinsic to the game itself is pursued. Its nature is autotelic. One plays to fulfill the goals of the game. These goals are fulfilled by the role or task the game gives to each player: “every game presents the man who plays it with a task.”<sup>46</sup> Its being played is its own representation. Having established the nature of play as self-representation, Gadamer goes on to argue that the work of art, like play, also has the mode of being of self-representation, but with the fundamental

44. *Ibid.*, 92.

45. *Ibid.*, 95-96.

46. *Ibid.*, 96.

difference that it is a representation directed towards an audience. What seems dubious about Gadamer's analysis is that it seems to characterize games in too narrow a fashion so that it allows him to make the further claim that art is a representation-for. Due to his opinion of games, sports are not directed towards an audience. What would he say of those games which combine entertainment with them — say wrestling and boxing. Would it not be legitimate to hold that they are also a representation-for an audience? If this were the case, what is the difference between games and works of art?

Gadamer's paradigm for the representational structure of the work of art is likened to the religious rite where a god is represented. Here the players in the rite represent a "meaningful whole" for the audience. The audience is required to complement the game. The religious or profane drama is an open world, in the sense of an openness towards the spectator. The representation of the game is the representation for someone, although the game is itself a closed world. A fundamental shift occurs now, for the players involved as they are with their roles, perform for the audience. It is not they who become totally absorbed, but the audience. The play is not performed for the player's personal delight but for the spectator. This is not to say that the player does not experience its significance. It is just — Gadamer maintains — that the audience has methodological precedence. The work of art is essentially a representation-for someone, who is neither the playwright and neither the actor. The correlate of representation-for is meaning. We do not ask of a game what it means, but we do ask it of a performance. The openness of the work of art is the openness to the audience of meaning.

The Gadamerian position is therefore remarkably similar to the Schopenhauerian one. Both display an explicit desire to relocate the aesthetic experience within the space of a unity, involving the breakdown of the subject-object dichotomy. For Gadamer, collapsing this dichotomy ensures the truth of art, reuniting the subject and object in the interpretation. The work of art is experienced as its interpretation. The Gadamerian critique is not concerned with the subject's loss of individuality. Indeed the way he talks about the game despite it controlling the player or the work of art as existing only in its interpretation, still leaves room for the subject's individuality. The question of individuality is not problematic for Gadamer, since he does not have the same premise as Schopenhauer i.e., that the will dominates the individual's life ceaselessly seeking to satisfy its desires. In his case it is precisely the loss of individuality which enables art to make a positive contribution to human life.

#### 4.0 Genius

The concept of genius is discussed by both Schopenhauer and Gadamer. Their views on this concept are radically opposed, for on the one hand, Schopenhauer eulogizes the genius as he who is in contact with the Platonic Ideas translating them into art, whilst on the other hand, Gadamer condemns the aesthetics of genius as the root problem — originating in Kant — of denouncing claims of truth and knowledge in art.

Schopenhauer's artistic genius has extraordinary talents which ordinary people share in, but to a lesser degree. This talent consists in the ability of losing oneself in pure perception i.e., abandoning all subjective interests and willing: "the gift of genius is nothing but the most complete objectively i.e., the objective tendency of the mind, as opposed to the subjective directed to our own person, i.e., the will."<sup>47</sup> This point serves to show that contrary to what many critics claim, Schopenhauer was not a Romanticist for rather than glorifying the self in art and life — one of the assumptions of Romanticism — he considered the value of artistic genius only insofar as his individuality was eliminated.

With the genius's loss of self, a different kind of knowledge is attained: that of the Ideas. It is superior to scientific knowledge on two counts: firstly, scientific knowledge works for the will i.e., it seeks to know relations between objects for the will's procurement. This is not the sort of knowledge which helps the individual achieve peace of mind; secondly the knowledge of the Ideas is 'true' knowledge for it is "the true content of its phenomena, that which is subject to no change and is therefore known with equal truth for all time."<sup>48</sup>

The value of the genius in artistic production was supreme. It was the genius who perceived the Ideas for the necessary duration which allowed him to depict them in art. Thus, the purpose genius serves towards the rest of humanity is that of communicating the Ideas. Yet in my view the fact that Schopenhauer devotes considerable attention to the work of genius as the creator of art rather than the glorification of nature shows that the Romanticist label frequently attached to Schopenhauer is unfounded. This is why, when considering the work of art and natural beauty, though both reveal the Idea, the work of art has an edge over natural beauty in that the labour required to

47. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 185.

48. *Ibid.*, 184.

perceive the Idea has been done by the genius: "the work of art is merely a means of facilitating that knowledge in which [aesthetic] pleasure consists."<sup>49</sup>

Even Schopenhauer's use of the concept of the imagination did not conform to its Romantic associations. Whereas for the Romantics, the imagination was a special gift of the artist, providing him with an immediate insight into truth, Schopenhauer considered the imagination a necessary but not sufficient condition in the artist's mental framework. The value of the imagination was that it helped the artist go beyond the objects of sense perception and "extend his horizon far beyond the reality of his personal experience, and enable him to construct all the rest out of the little that has come into his own actual apperception."<sup>50</sup> This is Schopenhauer's way of saying that the imagination helps the artist see his experience in universal terms. The second benefit of the imagination is that it helps the artist perfect what imperfect nature produces. The insight behind this is to show that in art, the artist does not passively reproduce the objects of his experience, but anticipates what they would look like had there been no conflict of the will's forms.

Yet despite Schopenhauer's approval of the imagination, he argues that it is not the imagination itself that is a mark of genius: "strength of the imagination is not evidence of genius...even men with little or no touch of genius may have much imagination."<sup>51</sup> His criticism is that the ordinary man's imagination is not employed in the perception of the Ideas but misused and confused with his daydreaming, an escapist ploy, manipulated as a way out of his solitude. Only people of a like disposition can approve of these daydreams, written and published as novels.

When discussing the genius's inspiration, Schopenhauer does seem to be pronouncing two incompatible positions on the nature of this inspiration. In certain passages<sup>52</sup> he emphasizes that in his work the genius is consciously reflecting and intentionally reproducing what he perceives. But when talking about melody he writes that "the work of genius...is far removed from all reflection and conscious intention, and might be called an inspiration."<sup>53</sup> I

49. *Ibid.*, 195.

50. *Ibid.*, 185.

51. *Ibid.*, 187.

52. *Ibid.*, 186.195.

53. *Ibid.*, 260.

would suggest that the latter view is more in keeping with what Schopenhauer says elsewhere in connection with the nature of concepts. The fake artist is he who starts with the concept and proceeds to depict it. This sort of artist works consciously and deliberately, without any inspiration. So too, since he starts from concepts he tends to imitate the works in vogue at the time. What ultimately happens is that within a few years when a new trend is set, nobody would recall his work. The genius, although acknowledging the debt of his predecessor, uses as his material life and the world, so that the cultural context does not determine the originality of his work. The thesis of the timeless quality of the work of art is substantiated with the concept of genius.

Gadamer's interest in the concept of genius stems from the way Kant differentiates between natural and artistic beauty. In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant maintains a priority of natural beauty over artistic beauty. He justifies this priority on the grounds that natural beauty is an expression of a pure unintellectualized judgement of taste and hence not related to concepts which define their purposes. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the beauty of nature is such that it arouses the interest of those persons who are morally good; that someone is capable of passing an aesthetic judgment on natural beauty is indicative of his moral worth.

Art also provokes man into facing the moral nature of his existence, but the difference between artistic beauty and natural beauty is that the former exists specifically to confront man with this aspect of his existence, whilst the latter is there speaking to him without intending to do so. That the beautiful forms of nature display a purposefulness without being purposeful indicate to man his position in creation, calling him to his moral being. It is because it is not nature's purpose to be beautiful that man's place in the world is confirmed.

Artistic beauty remains seconded to nature for it is "the beautiful representation of a thing"<sup>54</sup> and is therefore a representation which follows established rules. But Kant realized that just following rules does not account for creativity. To show how art can present something beyond all concepts, Kant introduced the concept of genius. The irrationality of genius brings out the productive creativity of both creator and recipient. Genius corresponds to the playful faculty of one's mental powers, which goes beyond rigid adherence to rules in the process of creating new models.

Yet despite the introduction of the concept of genius, natural beauty remained superior to art. The second part of the *Critique of Judgement* deals

54. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 166.

exclusively with nature. And even though art is defined by reference to genius, this only serves to bring art back to natural beauty “through genius, nature gives the rule to art.”<sup>55</sup> Gadamer maintains that until Kant there was no opening for philosophy of art. But after him, art rather than natural beauty attained prominence. The relationship between the ideas of taste and genius changed, so that genius predominated. Questions of taste in relation to art lose their significance for taste is a levelling process, unconcerned with the unusual or original in art. The creativity of genius, on the other hand, with its capacity for innovation contributes to art. Kant’s notions of the perfect taste in art resembled the concept of genius. Perfect taste was the attempt to achieve a definite unchangeable form, in so doing becoming eternal. It was particularly inapplicable to natural beauty, for nothing was privileged within nature: “Is there anything ugly in nature?”<sup>56</sup> Gadamer points out that even in art, the idea of perfect taste is troubling:

one does violence to the concept of taste if one does not include it in its variability. If it is anything, taste is testimony to the changeableness of all human things and the relativity of all human values.<sup>57</sup>

Genius is more appropriate to the understanding of art, for it allows the work of art to remain changeless through time. Taste becomes that quality which artistic genius possesses, so that Kant opens the way for the glorification of art at the expense of nature. Fichte and Schelling adopted this perspective of art as the unconscious production of genius, embracing within itself even nature. The natural world was translated into art so that — Hegel maintained — the encounter with a work of art was the encounter with another human spirit. The eternal nature of art was transmitted throughout time through the medium of genius.

Subsequent reactions to Hegel led to a return to Kant, but by now art and genius became firmly entrenched, whilst taste became peripheral. Under the Romantic movement, the concept of genius as the unconscious producer was no longer restricted to the artist, but became a universal concept of value.

The results of Gadamer’s investigation show an important consideration: the standpoint of eternity in relation to art attained this position as a consequence of Kant’s adoption of genius as the creator of art. It is the

55. *Ibid.*, 166-168.

56. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 53.

57. *Ibid.*, 53.

aesthetics of genius which have led to the movement where the creator and beholder were distanced from the work of art.

### *5.0 Conclusions*

The central argument of this paper has been to show that despite the apparent similarity of their claims, Schopenhauer and Gadamer differ with regards to the content of these claims.

Thus, both agree that it is legitimate to discuss the question of truth and knowledge in art. But whilst for Schopenhauer, it is the truth and knowledge of the Ideas, which in turn manifest the will and therefore reality, Gadamer's considerations on art show how it is the medium through which man learns about the truth of his historical nature. It is therefore an essential part of Gadamer's concern to repudiate the thesis of the timelessness of art, for this would invalidate the historical grounding upon which his thesis rests.

Schopenhauer's support for the timelessness of art is constructed around the metaphysic of the will. The world as representation, subject to space, time and causality, is one of endless suffering. Art is timeless precisely because it enables the viewer to seek temporary peace in its experience. This is what constitutes the unity of subject and object in aesthetic contemplation. Becoming one with the Idea liberates the subject. Gadamer is also concerned with uniting the subject and object, but uses the concept of play to indicate how the subject forgets himself in his playing. His further contention is that when the play of art takes over the spectator, this becomes a revelation of truth. The work of art is of its nature a representation-for-an-audience.

So too, the concept of genius reflects the different concerns of both philosophers. To Schopenhauer, the genius is he who makes the Platonic Ideas accessible to the rest of humanity. In his inspiration, the genius loses his individuality, and produces the timeless work of art. Gadamer's historical analysis of the development of the aesthetics of genius after Kant, is a strategic manoeuvre which serves as a pivot for his critique of the subjectivization of art. Gadamer shows how Kant's notion of perfect taste was inapplicable to art, for taste was relative to its context. Works of art were previously those which were not context dependent. The achievement of an unchangeable form was only made possible by the genius. It was he who made art eternal. Thus, the post-Kantian philosophers of art adopted the Kantian concept of genius, at the expense of taste. With the concept of genius, art became subjective. When one examines the specific artforms differences recur, for Schopenhauer ranks each artform according to the Ideas it depicts, the sole exception to the rule is the

artform of music, through which one is acquainted with the will itself. Gadamer's concern is to show how with each artform, the being of each work of art reveals truth. It is as such not a theory of what it is that makes a work into a work of art, but rather an explanation of how a work of art reveals something to the audience.

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Moshe WEINFELD, *Deuteronomy I-II* (Anchor Bible 5, Doubleday; New York 1991) xiv, 458 pp.

This is the first part of a two-volume Commentary. The author is an Israeli scholar, Professor of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an acknowledged expert on the Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomistic School.

He has published numerous studies on Deuteronomy and related subjects. The bibliographical list has 56 entries under his name. Most of them are short studies in English, four are books, two are book-reviews; eighteen entries are in Hebrew. The Commentary continuously cites these entries. See for example pp. 2. 5 (2x). 6. 7 (2x). 8. 9 (2x). 10. 11. 13. 17. 20. 27. 34. 35. 37 (2x). 38. 40. 45. 46. 47. 49 (2x). 51. 53 (2x). 55. 56. 57. 58. 59 (2x). 60 (2x). 62 (2x). 63. 64 (3x). 68. 69 (2x). 70. 74 (3x). 75 (2x). 76. 78. 80. 82 (2x). 134 (5x). 138 (4x). 266 (4x). 327 (5x). It also cites some of his studies not mentioned in the bibliographical list. See for example p.6 note 4 and p.61 note 26.

The Commentary has been divided into two volumes basically because of its length. This first volume contains an introduction to the whole work and a commentary on chapters 1-11. It ends with a list of sources (Sigla, Ancient Near Eastern documents, Rabbinic literature, Commentators, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha). The second volume will contain a shorter introduction to

the whole work, a commentary on chapters 12-36 and an index to the whole work. The dividing line between chapters 11 and 12 is justified by the fact that the first section stands out by itself as narrative, while chapter 12 begins a predominantly legal and legislative text.

The introduction provides the usual information about literary-critical, legal, historical and theological matters. The information about text and versions will be given in the shorter introduction to the second volume since the research on the Qumran texts of Deuteronomy is still in progress. However, all available studies on Qumran have been taken into consideration during the preparation of this volume.

The commentary itself has four constant elements (Translation, Textual Notes, Notes, Comment), and two occasional ones (Introductory Remarks, Excursus).

The Translation of Deuteronomy is the author's own. So is the translation of some other biblical texts quoted in the volume.

The Textual Notes justify the translation. See 1,1 where *mōl* is accepted as a variant of *mūl* to justify the English translation "near" instead of the masoretic "facing". The masoretic reading is kept by AV, RSV, BJ, etc.

The Notes explain the text. See 1,1 where the possible geographic locations of 'Arabah are mentioned and the particular location of the name in this context is pointed out.

The Comment serves various purposes. It may discuss some problems besetting a whole section or an important part of a text (see 1,1-5), it may deal with the tradition underlying a biblical story (see 1,9-18); quite often it compares a text with parallel narratives (see 1,19-28), etc. In some cases no Comment is added after the Notes (see pp. 133. 235. 319. 327).

An occasional Introductory Remark (see p. 130; sometimes simply called Introduction, see p. 233) indicates the various elements or sections of a longish literary unit.

A single Excursus appended to a Comment studies the Judiciary in the Ancient Near East (see p. 140).

And six pictures, together with two rudimental maps, inserted between pp. 272 and 273 add a concrete and realistic touch to the literary composition.

The author makes a significant contribution to the biblical research by the great amount of pertinent information offered in the volume. He has tapped all possible sources. Starting with the biblical and extra-biblical parallels, and making use of the learned commentaries of all periods and tendencies (especially the most recent exegetical studies), he has cradled the Deuteronomic text in its literary and historical context.

Sometimes he aligns himself with the commonly accepted views and strengthens them with his own observations. Thus he places the origins of Deuteronomy in the North-

ern Kingdom, and confirms this common view with a lengthy comparison between the Deuteronomic purification of the cult and the polemic of Hosea against Israel's cultic practices (see pp. 44-50). In this context he mentions that the Deuteronomic description of the settlement of Judah (Jos 15) reflects the time of Josiah (see p.54). This is partly true with reference to the list of Judean cities (Jos 15,21-63; some of them were not taken before the monarchic period; actually Gaza was taken only at the time of Herod the Great), but hardly applies to the description of the tribal boundary (Jos 15,1-12; it includes the coastal region which was not under Judean control in the monarchic period). One could add that perhaps the northern connection was more a paradigm than a source of the Deuteronomic tradition. The Northern Kingdom was the first to feel the impact of the alien cults, and reacted accordingly. The Southern Kingdom felt the same impact at a later date and adopted the same measures.

At times he volunteers some precious insights of his own, as when he points out that the decalogue is more a creed than an epitome of Israel's morality (see p. 250), and technically contains words more than commands (see pp. 249. 287). In fact, the divine clauses are motivated more by God's intervention in Israel's history (especially the liberation from the Egyptian bondage, Ex 20,2; Dt 5,6) than by his supreme sovereignty.

It is common form to compare

the biblical covenants with the apparently bilateral Hittite treaties by which the overlord ensures the loyalty of the vassal kings and dictates his stipulations. The author extends the comparison to the Assyrian treaties. He detects a special similarity between the treaties (actually fealty oaths) by which the retiring Esarhaddon imposes Ashurbanipal, his successor, on the vassal kings and the biblical covenant in the land of Moab where Moses nominates Joshua as his successor (Dt 3,23-29; 31,1-8). He feels that the old biblical covenants depend on the Hittite model, while the Deuteronomic tradition depends at the same time on the Hittite and the Assyrian models (pp. 6-9). The similarities are certainly striking, but dependence is not necessarily called for. A simple parallelism may adequately explain the

contact between the various patterns.

The relative chronology of the priestly and Deuteronomic schools is discussed at great length and the precedence of the former is upheld (see pp. 25-37): a common and well-founded view. The classic problem of the four Pentateuchal sources or traditions is not addressed as such. Deuteronomy is studied as an autonomous whole.

Surprisingly (in view of Dt 32,8) one reads that "the Urim and Tummim are not mentioned at all in Deuteronomy" (pp. 45-46). Maybe an explanation is forthcoming in the second volume.

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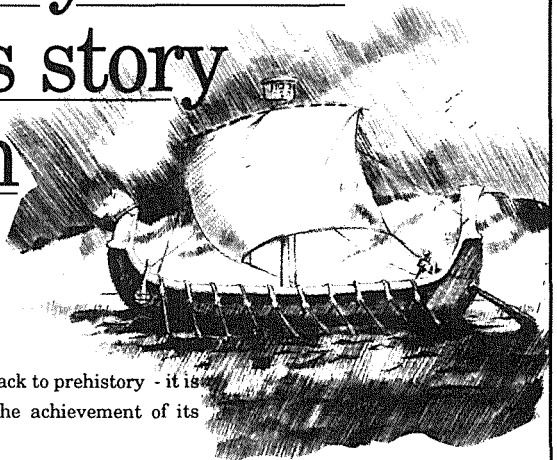
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