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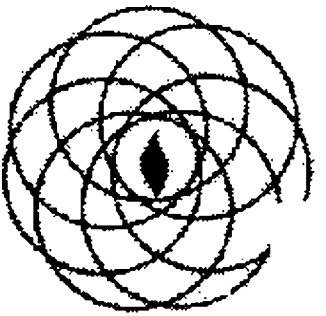

Modernity and Religion

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Editorial

The genial atheist philosopher Daniel Dennett once talked of Darwin's idea of evolution as a universal acid so corrosive that it would eat through anything, including the container in which it is kept.[1] What he did not say is that if acid is a chemical compound, Darwin's idea is merely one of the components that go into the making of that compound; the real acid is the ideology that goes into the making of the modern outlook. Both these factors –that modernity is a compound and that it has a corrosive influence on traditions—are important for understanding the nature of this universal acid.

The following could be considered some of the factors that go into the making of this compound: the scientific revolution and the technological power it gave for the control of nature, the Protestant revolution and the breakup of Western Christendom coinciding with the birth of nation states, European renaissance with its insistence on returning to the pre-Christian humanistic traditions of the ancient Greece and Rome, the French revolution with its slogan of liberty, equality, and fraternity that would be the harbinger to many other revolutions challenging feudalistic, hierarchical societies to dream of egalitarian social structures, loosening of social and familial bonds in rural settings to free-floating atomistic and faceless individuals in urban settings where each is free to follows one's own star, the change from sustenance based agrarian economies to market oriented capitalist economies. Together they brought about the drastic changes that go under the name of modernity.

With the faster and faster means of travel and communication made possible by science and technology, the turbulent winds of modernity began to blow from one place to another and this explains the second feature of modernity, i.e., its universal corrosive features. Such globalization implies that no culture or tradition can remain unaffected by, or indifferent to, it. It has affected our understanding of practically everything: of who we are, our place in the world, our

understanding of God, the nature of the world, how we relate to other persons, etc.

That modernity is a compound of different elements implies that they could be combined in different ways to yield a variety of modernities rather than modernity in the singular. Thus, there is an Indian modernity, a Chinese modernity, an American modernity, a European modernity, and so on, each of which is different from the others, giving to each a unique character. Charles Taylor compares this process to the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity or the conversion of Indonesia to Islam. The first implicated Roman Christianity inextricably with Greek philosophy whereas the second gave to Indonesian Islam its unique features.[2]

Precisely because of the pluriform character of modernity, its impact has been varied too. "Varied" is perhaps too mild a term for the manifold inner contradictions engendered by it. While it has created a secular culture that seeks to confine religion to the privacy of one's home, it has also contributed to the making of contemporary religious fundamentalisms.[3] On the one hand it extols human dignity and on the other hand, it commodifies the poor and the helpless; while the modern world is the most prosperous in history in economic terms, it is also the world where millions die of starvation; the modern world longs for world peace and wages the most horrendous wars known to our race.

This volume of *Jnanadeepa* was planned as an exercise in understanding the present state of affairs, especially with regard to religion, Christian theology, and contemporary India. But due to unforeseen circumstances, the Indian component has turned out to be much less than was planned. The article by Behura and Kar on Gandhi's critique of modernity is the only one that focuses explicitly on India. Ponniah's "Religion Meets Modernity," though not exclusively focussed on India, has enough reference to the Indian situation. In talking about the influence of modernity on India, it is to be kept in mind that the influence has not been a one way process, as Taylor's analogy of the religious conversions of Rome and Indonesia makes clear. This is all the more significant for understanding contemporary India. Moreover, we must be cautious in speaking about India as one monolith. While India has very long history, the

idea of India as a single nation state is itself a product of modernity. While it boasts of an egalitarian constitution and democratic governance, large parts of it are still governed by feudal norms that can even put people to death, for no crime other than falling in love with someone of another caste. While it boasts of its secularism, political mobilization along religious lines is rampant. One can go on and on with the underlying contradictions of contemporary India, but it is not hard to see that these are only a local reflection of the inherent contradictions of modernity pointed out earlier.

As far as understanding the impact of modernity on religion is concerned, it must be kept in mind that if "modernity" is pluriform by its very nature, the term "religion" is ambivalent to the extreme. This is understandable when we consider that the word "religion" applies to some of the most diverse phenomena, from the impersonal, mechanical rituals to control cosmic forces and/or to curry favour with deities (as in Purva Mimamsa) to the most personal and passionate outpourings of the spirit found in the mysticism of Mirabai. It goes without saying that these Indian examples have their counterparts all over the world. The implication is that it leaves more than adequate room interpreting religion in the way one chooses, as the modern thinkers did.

Understanding the impact of modernity on Christian theology in particular, we see that besides the already mentioned Protestant revolution and the accompanying changes, modernity drastically changed the Christian understanding of God, world, and the human person. While traditional Christianity saw God as a creator who is present and active in the whole creation (immanent) without being identical with it (transcendent), the typical modern God is a deistic one, rationally required to explain the origins of the world, but otherwise absent in its workings. As the place of divine presence and activity, Christians saw the footprints of God everywhere whereas the moderns saw the world as a machine functioning on its mechanical laws. Similarly human persons were no longer the crown of creation stamped with the image of God upon them, but a product of blind natural processes, to be manipulated like the rest of this mechanical nature. Human life was no longer a journey to God as Christian spirituality understood it, or a "being-in-becoming" as the classical

Greek philosophers held, but merely a being with no *telos*.[4] And the essence of this being was up for grabs.

Given such drastic change in outlook, it is not surprising that Christians were a confused lot in their response to modernity. Modernity was opposed tooth and nail, but it could not remain unaffected by it, sometimes contrary to Christianity's own self-understanding. Just to take one example, the Neo-Thomism that emerged in response to modernity unwittingly bought into the deistic view of the world when it imagined a pure nature on which the supernatural was superimposed as a gift from the outside.[5] It took the heroic efforts of Henri de Lubac to affirm that pure nature is only imaginary and the real world is suffused with grace. This, among other things, prepares for the way for Vatican II. One could give other examples, but an editorial is hardly the place for details.

Perhaps the best gain of modernity for the believers is the emerging realization that theological truths and scriptural descriptions are not to be treated on a par with scientific theories and empirical descriptions. This is pointed out in Tanner's article. But this lesson is yet to be digested as can be seen from those who seek to place creationism on a par with evolution, the attempts to hand over Christ of faith to Jesus of history, and so on. If such confusions are to be avoided much work remains to be done to explore the differences between scientific and theological truths before they can be integrated into a coherent worldview within which scientifically informed theological investigations can be conducted without falling prey to scientism.[6]

The Papers

The first two papers are brief and introductory. Norman Tanner's article provides a unique, panoramic view of Church history. His comparison of Vatican II with earlier councils is enlightening. John Karuvelil's introductory article, originally a part of his article on the developments in moral theology included in this volume, is presented separately in the beginning (with the author's permission) for the clarity it provides on the idea of modernity and the four different stages of responses of the Catholic Church to modernity. The

foregoing considerations should help us to understand why this relationship has been as ambivalent as it has been.

After these two articles that introduce modernity and its impact on Catholic faith, Nishant's article continues the historical narrative. He narrates the factors leading to the emergence of postmodernism, seeking to benefit from it and wondering how its inconsistencies might be kept at bay. Ponniah narrates the multiple interests and ideological compulsions that have shaped the interaction between modernity and religion, with a special eye on India. He shows that religious reasoning enters into how we negotiate social and cultural changes. Padinjarekuttu provides a comprehensive view of modernity and how it offers an opportunity for Christian faith. He points out some of the intellectual challenges that need to be met if Christianity is to re-invent itself. The other articles tell the stories of individual modern developments. Paramthottu presents a Taylorian perspective on the development of modern self. As one of the best known philosophers of modernity, Charles Taylor has a lot to teach us about the cultural influence in the making of modernity, and the emergence of modern self. His magnum opus on the emergence of the secular age is not covered for lack of space. John Karuvelil presents a picture of the flourishing of moral theology in the Catholic Church in the wake of modernity and Vatican II. Karl Rahner is perhaps the foremost among Catholic theologians who has struggled the most to reconcile modernity and Catholic faith. D'Lima narrates some of his struggles. Gandhi remains one of the best known critics of modernity before the emergence of the postmodern critics. Behura and Kar provide a brief look into his critique and his motivation for doing so. The last article by Malipurathu is comparable to Karuvelil's article inasmuch as both provide panoramic overview of their respective fields. No one, except specialists in bibilical studies, can fail to benefit from the wealth of information found in this article on how the study of the Bible has been affected by the modern changes.

George Karuvelil, SJ
Chief Editor

Notes :

1. Daniel Dennet, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meaning of Life* (London/New York: Penguin, 1996), 63.

2. Charles Taylor, "Two Theories of Modernity" in Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, *Alternative Modernities*, A Millennial Quartet Book (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 172-196.

3. Karen Armstrong has called this trend as "embattled forms of spirituality". See, Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2000), 6.

4. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

5. Gerard Loughlin, "*Nouvelle Théologie:* A Return to Modernism?," in *Ressourcement : A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology*, ed. Gabriel Flynn and P. D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 46.

6. An initial exploration of their differences can be seen in George Karuvelil, "Science of Religion and Theology: An Existential Approach," *Zygon: Journal of Religion & Science* 47, no. 2 (2012), 415-37.

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Modernity: Repercussions for Religion and Theology

Norman Tanner SJ

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Abstract: after a brief overview of the usual division of the history of the Church into three periods, this article provides a bird's eyeview of the quantitative and qualitative changes that occurred in the Church during the modern period. How the modern inventions like radio and television changed an institution like the Papacy is discussed and the comparative study of Vatican II with the early Church shows that modern does not necessarily mean better.

Keywords: history, modernity, Vatican II, Earlier councils.

What is the meaning of modernity? For a long time the history of the Church was divided by westerners into three periods, the latest being modernity.

First came the early Church, which went from Pentecost, the birth-day of the Church, or even earlier with the birth of Christ, until the beginning of the schism (still unresolved) between the eastern and western churches - between Rome and Constantinople - in 1054. The second or middle period was appropriately named the Middle Ages. It went from 1054 - or from around 400 for some who preferred to see the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West as the decisive break - until 1517.

That year saw the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, with Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the castle-gate at Wittenberg in Germany. It also coincided approximately with many other events that were seen as crucial - from a western viewpoint - to the birth of the modern world. There were the voyages of discovery to America, Africa and Asia, and later to Australasia, as well as the founding of missionary churches - both Catholic and Protestant (the description "Protestant" is used hereafter for convenience, while recognizing its inadequacy as a simplification) - which accompanied the colonial expansion. There were also major cultural innovations which affected Christianity greatly: the invention

of printing; cultural and artistic innovations which are associated with the Renaissance. Later, beginning in the eighteenth century, there occurred revolutions which greatly affected the West and subsequently the whole world: the industrial revolution; social and political revolution marked most famously by the French Revolution of 1789; many technological revolutions from the mid nineteenth century onwards; and profound cultural changes. This third period has for long been labelled the modern period or modernity.

This modern period has sometimes been divided into two or three sub-periods. Thus there is the modern period (proper), running to around 1750; after it, contemporary history and maybe the third sub-division of post-modernity, beginning sometime between 1960 and 1980. However, for the purposes of this essay, at least most of the time, I shall take modernity as a whole, for two reasons. First, because the important "repercussions for religion and theology" (as in the article's title) occurred at different times within the five centuries of this (long) modernity from around 1500 to today. It would be a mistake and unbalanced to consider in this essay only some of these repercussions. Secondly, the sub-divisions within modernity are largely based on events within the European church. Within the Catholic Church worldwide-including India - they are much less significant.

1. Quantitative Changes and Presentation

During these five centuries of modernity there occurred a number of major quantitative changes within Christianity and the Catholic Church. Like most changes in quantity, these developments also had qualitative repercussions.

Increase in population

One major change during this period was the ten-fold increase in both the Catholic and the overall Christian population. We may estimate (very approximately, in the absence of precise censuses) that by the early fourth century - when Christianity passed from suffering frequent persecutions to favoured status within the Roman Empire, principally due to the conversion to Christianity of the emperor Constantine - the Christian population had reached some twenty million. By 1300, when the European population peaked (to be followed by the Black Death plagues and other difficulties in the fourteenth century), we may estimate that the Catholic population had reached some 60 million with another 20 million members of

various other Christian churches and communities, principally the Orthodox church.

The French bishops at the first Vatican Council (1869-70), in a revealing comment, reckoned the world's population then stood at around 1,200 million. Of this total, they estimated, some 70 million were Orthodox, 90 million were Protestant and 200 million were Catholics.[1] Today Catholics number over a billion: 1,166 million or 17.4 percent of the world's population according to recent official Vatican statistics[2], with the total Christian population estimated at somewhat more than two billion (over 30 %) of the world's population of some 7 billion. So there has been a six-fold increase in the Catholic and Christian populations in the last one and a half centuries. But, significantly, due to the rapid increase in the world's population during this time, the proportion of Catholics and Christians within the global population has remained quite static, leaving plenty of scope for further evangelization.

This quantitative growth has many qualitative implications. Thus, the Christian community today has quite a different outlook compared with the first two-thirds of its history. Sixty million Catholics in 1300 is roughly the same number as the population of Italy today, 80 million Christians is similar to that of Germany, considerably less than several states in India. Or, if you enjoy playing with statistics, there are probably more Catholics alive today than the total number of Christians who lived throughout the entire first half of the Church's history - during the first millennium AD.

Worldwide expansion

Accompanying this increase in population during the modern period, Christianity moved from a predominantly European religion to one that was truly worldwide. The core of early Christianity, during the first six centuries AD, was formed by the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea; though there were some significant Christian communities beyond - in Ethiopia and Nubia in Africa, in Persia and in India, in China principally due to Nestorian missionaries, and even as far as Baros in Sumatra (modern Indonesia) by the early seventh century. During the Middle Ages, Christianity became more identified with Europe. That is to say, North Africa and western Asia were largely lost to Christianity due to the expansion of Islam, while there was notable expansion for Christianity in central and northern Europe.

The change for Christianity from being predominantly western or European to a truly worldwide religion coincided rather precisely with the modern period. Christopher Columbus reached America in 1492, as European schoolchildren learn. Christianity and the Catholic Church followed. Soon afterwards the coast of Africa was rounded by European sailors, bringing Christianity to the coastal regions of Africa and, subsequently, to many parts of Asia. The best known missionary was Francis Xavier, who died within sight of China in 1552. By this time the Reformation divide was fixed and for long thereafter Protestant missionaries, and the various Protestant churches, worked largely separately from their Catholic counterparts. Australia was reached by English ships under Captain Cook in 1770 and Christianity - through both Protestant and Catholic missionaries - gradually permeated the vast continent of Australasia.

Only recently, principally after Vatican II, during what is sometimes called the post-modern era, has there been serious and widespread cooperation between Catholic and Protestant churches in these newer lands of Christianity. Paradoxically, such cooperation was often better in mission territories, due to the exigencies of the situation and distance from the motherlands, than in Europe. However, Catholicism became inculturated in these regions only recently. For long it remained largely a European export. The establishment of a native clergy also took a long time and was often discouraged.

Modern inventions

Various inventions during the last one and a half centuries have had profound effects upon the presentation of Christianity. Many of them have been in the realm of communications. Photography, radio, television, and an explosion of innovations recently, are specially notable. It may be tempting to think they have influenced only the presentation of Christianity and not its content. But the distinction is not that easy.

The papacy is a revealing case in point. The line of bishops of Rome going right back to Peter has been maintained. But various modern inventions have affected the papacy quite radically since the late nineteenth century. In a nutshell, they have focused much more attention on the person - or personality - of the pope almost at the expense of his office. Until around 1850 few people would have a visual image of the pope or known much about his personality; many

Catholics probably would not have known the name of the pope. In some ways this was healthy: there was respect for the holder of the office, at least among Catholics, without overmuch concern about his personality.

The situation altered radically with the development of photography during the long reign of pope Pius IX (1846-78). Quite suddenly the pope's personality and public image became a major concern for Catholics, accentuated in the case of Pius IX by the drama of his loss of Rome and the Papal States. To photography was added in the early twentieth century the invention of radio and, later in the century, television. The papacy was quick and skilful to exploit the opportunities. Vatican Radio (Radio Vaticana) was inaugurated by Pope Pius XI in 1931 and the development of television worldwide from the 1950s onwards coincided with several favourable opportunities for the papacy in this regard: the sympathetic personality of Pope John XXIII, the worldwide gathering at Vatican II, the extensive papal visits of Paul VI and his successors. On the whole these developments have been received favourably by both Catholics and the wider public. But public opinion can be fickle. There is the danger that more weight is placed on presentation than on content.

These developments in the mass media have affected bishops, clergy and religious (members of religious orders both male and female). Their personalities and presentation may be scrutinized closely. As well as this horizontal dimension, there is a vertical dimension. That is to say, the speed with which directives can be passed (down) from Rome to bishops and superiors of religious orders, and from them to their clergy and religious, has increased dramatically. In a sense this rapid communication is good, but there is the danger that it becomes expected, so that decisions can be rushed. Once again more attention may be given to procedure than to wise and evangelical content.

The Laity - the vast majority of the Christian community, the people of God - are influenced by these developments affecting the clergy. More directly, they are influenced in their beliefs and practice by various modern developments, especially advances in the mass media. Television, mobile phones, emails and other media occupy a considerable part of the waking hours of many people today. They come to form part of the staple diet of their lives. Qualitatively too, ways of thinking and behaviour are affected. In some ways these

developments are very positive. There is an ease of communicating with many people that was unknown before. But the level of contact can be at one remove from reality, through electronic rather than personal contact. Many people may be glimpsed but few known.

There are also vast new possibilities for knowing about the Christian faith, its place among other religions and its context within the modern world. This too is very positive and welcome. On the other hand, there are the dangers that superficiality rather than profundity reigns; that sound-bites become the order of the day; that information focuses on what is news-worthy, or presentable in the form of news bulletins, rather than on the more deeply significant.

Modernity is not a prophet of doom for Christians. It offers them many new opportunities. But it also requires them to think through and act upon their faith in ways that are new and challenging and that were little known to their ancestors.

2. Qualitative Changes?

For the Christian message, the changes outlined above were primarily changes in presentation and communication even though they involved some changes in content. Other alterations more obviously involved changes-or developments or what might appear to be changes-in the content of doctrine.

Galileo provided the most famous case of apparent change in doctrine in the early modern period. Many people, including church authorities, thought his teaching that the earth circled the sun contradicted passages in Scripture which indicate the opposite: Joshua 10.12-13; Psalm 103/104.5; Ecclesiastes 1.5. Eventually and fortunately, as Galileo proved to be right, the Church came to a better understanding of the kind of teaching that is to be found in Scripture: primarily the Bible contains the truths that are necessary for our salvation, therefore its scientific statements may be better interpreted in a figurative rather than a literal sense.

Charles Darwin provided a similar conundrum in the nineteenth century. His teaching on evolution, as expressed principally in his work *Origin of Species* (1857), seemed to many to conflict with the doctrine of creation to be found in the book of Genesis. But Darwin was gradually acknowledged to be substantially correct and the Catholic Church came further in recognizing the kind of revelation

that is to be found in the Bible: truths that are pertinent to our salvation rather than literal expressions of scientific propositions.

The cases of Galileo and Darwin helped the Catholic Church towards a better appreciation of Scripture and divine revelation, though the process was long and difficult. Notable in the twentieth century have been the challenges posed by psychology. In this field, moreover, the way and extent to which the Church needed to changeor refine its teaching was less clear. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who is widely regarded as the founder of psychoanalysis, has exercised great influence upon the development of psychiatry and psychology as well as upon the social sciences more generally. He explored areas that are profoundly important for Catholic teaching and pastoral practice. Counselling, spiritual direction, the religious formation of laity and clergy as well as many other features of Catholic life have been greatly influenced by Freud's insights and those of later practitioners in this field, especially Carl Jung (1875-1961). Unsurprisingly, inasmuch as depths of the psyche are less verifiable than movements of the sun or animal and human genes, acceptance of Freud has not been a simple "either/or" option for Christians. [Editor's note: This is also due to the fact that in spite of the enormous influence Freud has exercised, the scientific character of many of his theories has been called into question. One author has gone to the extent of saying that Freud set back the scientific study of psychology by "something like fifty years or more".[3]]

Many other intellectuals and personalities could bementioned who have challenged Christian thought and practice quite radically during the last two centuries. Mahatma Ghandi and Karl Marx, or Ludwig Wittgenstein in philosophy, come to mind straightaway. For many centuries western Christianity had been largely in control of its own intellectual destiny, at least western Christians felt that way. Then quite suddenly, with the French Revolution of 1789 and otherhallenges from within, as well as in-depth exposure to the great civilizations that lay beyond its frontiers, western Christians, who still dominated the Catholic Church, were exposed to a wide range of intellectual and other challenges. To their credit they faced up to these challenges and responded to them - at least as a community, however reluctant many individuals may have been - rather than burying their heads in thesand.

So, Christians have kept in mind the Scriptural passages

regarding the fullness of truth in Jesus Christ: "For in him (Jesus Christ) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Colossians 1.19); "For in him (Jesus Christ) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossians 2.9). But how can these assertions be reconciled with learning from non-Christians? Is it too facile to resolve the conundrum by claiming that the fullness of truth lies in Jesus Christ, but non-Christians have a role in bringing to light what still lies partly hidden in Him: in making explicit what was implicit?

3. Conclusion

To consider this issue of the explicit and implicit, of growth in our knowledge of the Christian message, and to reflect on the repercussions for religion and theology that modernity has introduced, please allow me to conclude this article by considering two topics: Vatican II and the early Church.

Vatican II (1962-5)

For Modernity and its repercussions for Religion and Theology today (the topic of this article), the second Vatican council forms a crucial episode. As the most significant event of the Catholic Church during the last half-century, the council came at the start of what is sometimes called the post-modern era. It helped the Catholic Church - also the wider Christian community - to keep abreast of this post-modern world and to remain a potent and relevant presence within it.

The timing of the council was providential. Western Europe, which was still the centre of theology and of much else in the Catholic Church, was moving into a period of relative peace and harmony after the horrors of World War II (1939-45). Energy and creativity characterized many of the European bishops who participated in the council-both those with sees in Europe and many who were missionary bishops in other continents-as well as the theologians who were assigned to help with writing the conciliar documents. Bishops and theologians from Western Europe dominated the early stages of the council.

But the world beyond Western Europe was in movement too. Its bishops and theologians came to play an increasingly important role as the council matured. India and Pakistan had achieved independence in 1947, Indonesia in 1949. Most countries in Africa

had achieved independence by the time the council ended in 1965. Already independent countries in other continents were growing in self-assurance. Eastern Europe still lay largely under Soviet domination, but those of its bishops who were able to attend the council - notably those from Poland - provided an important prophetic witness which balanced the experience of their western colleagues. Their witness was reinforced by the few bishops from Asian countries under Chinese control who were able to attend the council.

Among the bishops from these countries whosecontributions were specially notable, the following may be singled out: Gracias from India; Rugambwa, Hurley, Zoa and Malula from Africa; Djajasepoetra and Darmojuwono from Indonesia; Wojtyla from Poland. Active, too, were bishops and theologians from the continent of America and from various countries of western Asia.

Number-wise and geographically the council was unprecedented: the first truly worldwide council of the Church. There had been perhaps 300 bishops at the first ecumenical council, Nicea I in 325; some 450 at Chalcedon in 451; a maximum of 230 at any given time at Trent; some 700 at Vatican I, but over 2,400 at Vatican II. At Vatican II, moreover, there were, for the first time, indigenous bishops in significant numbers from all five continents. The number of Catholics whom they represented worldwide had also reached a new peak: midway between the 200 million in 1869/70 and 1.2 billion today.

The range and comprehensiveness of the council's sixteen decrees was unprecedented, at least among the councils of the second millennium AD. Trent had covered a wide range of topics but mostly theological issues in dispute between Catholics and Protestants and reform within the Catholic church. Some of the medieval councils, too, had been quite wide-ranging in their legislation but largely within the orbit of Church reform. Vatican II tackled issues internal to the Catholic church as well as relations with other Christian churches and communities, but it also looked much further afield. Most notable in this respect were the decrees *Nostra Aetate* on non-Christian religions and *Gaudium et Spes* on the church in the modern world; this wider perspective was to be found in many other decrees. *Gaudium et Spes*, moreover, was addressed "to people everywhere" (*GS* no. 2) as well as to Catholics and other Christians - the first time that an ecumenical council had reached out so directly to all people.

The reception of Vatican II has been quite difficult. However, this should not surprise us. Its decrees are lengthy and - partly as a result –open to varying interpretations and emphases. Altogether the sixteen decrees run to over 100,000 words: some 30% of the words in all the decrees of the Church's twenty-one ecumenical councils and twice the length of the first seven councils taken together! Most of the major ecumenical councils, moreover, met with difficult receptions. Certainly this is certainly true of Nicea I and Chalcedon among the early councils. A difficult reception, indeed, may be interpreted as a compliment to a council; it indicates that the council was making important and relevant statements, which almost inevitably would not be easy to digest.

Despite these difficulties of reception - indeed in many ways on account of them - Vatican II has retained its interest and fascination. The remarkable number of conferences and publications honouring the Golden Jubilee of the council witness to this vivacity: in India, for example, this issue of Jnanadeepa as well as the International Conference "Revisiting Vatican II: 50 Years of Renewal" which took place at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram in early 2013. These celebrations and remembrances reveal, too, the council's continuing fascination and relevance for a younger generation who were born after it. Their fresh reflections are important inasmuch as they reveal new ways of understanding and interpreting the council's treasures.

Early Church

"At least among the councils of the second millennium AD" was the qualification which I added when saying "the range and comprehensiveness" of Vatican II's decrees was "unprecedented". It was added because "modernity" for the Church does not necessarily mean improvements upon the early period: "more recently" does not necessarily mean "better". Accordingly, I would like to finish this article with some reflections on the first seven ecumenical councils of the Church, Nicea I in 325 to Nicea II in 787, focusing mainly on the first of them. The comprehensiveness of Vatican II's sixteen decrees was remarkable; yet the range of topics and the attention given to the world beyond Christianity may be considered even more remarkable in these early councils.

Language is a good starting-point. Vatican II kept almost exclusively to Latin for its debates and for the texts of all its sixteen

decrees, even though Latin was already dead as a widely spoken language. Contrastingly, Nicea I, followed by all the other early councils, opted for the best and most widely used popular language of the time, Greek. In this respect they were following the example of the authors of the new Testament and of the earliest Church authorities, who in their desire to communicate the Gospel to as many people as possible were ready to move out of Aramaic and Hebrew, the languages with which these early Christians were probably most familiar, into the *lingua-franca* of the eastern Mediterranean world.

Here we may note two other advantages of the Greek language. First, it was eastward-looking as much as western. Western scholars have tended to put it in the camp of western languages but in reality the Greek-speaking world, and its language, looked more eastwards than westwards: towards Persia and India - where Alexander the Great had campaigned and with which countries there was much trade - more than towards Paris or London. Secondly, Greek was a remarkably flexible and imaginative language yet with a fine intellectual tradition to enrich it - here we think of Plato and Aristotle and others - thereby making it specially suitable for the new theological and devotional vocabulary of Christianity. There is some parallel with English today which - in good measure thanks to India - has become the predominant global language.

The timing of these early councils was also providential. Christianity was enjoying relative peace and the possibilities of open debate after three centuries of persecution. Both this peace and the earlier horrors of persecution helped the Church to proclaim and to deepen its message. In this respect we may see parallels with Vatican II, which occurred as Europe was emerging from the horrors of World War II into the relative prosperity of the 1960s.

Vatican II is applauded for responding positively to modernity, for accepting its challenges and thereby enabling the Church to grow. But in many ways such openness is even more remarkable in the early councils, although less obvious. It is less obvious partly because Christianity had for long been a small church, surrounded by much larger civilizations in the Mediterranean world, and so felt a special need to preserve its identity. Such discretion towards the positive values of other civilizations is paralleled by similar silence, for the most part, in the old and new Testaments: both Jews and early

Christians felt they had to protect their threatened worlds and couldn't afford to be over generous towards outside influences. By the time of Vatican II the situation had changed radically. Christianity, with the Catholic faithful as its majority, was the largest world religion; so the Catholic church could be more openly sympathetic - condescending at times - towards other religions and civilizations.

Careful reading of the early councils reveals, however, an appreciation of the wider world or at least an indebtedness to it. The courage of these councils in embracing the Greek language has been mentioned. Appreciation or indebtedness can be discerned, too, in the creeds and other doctrinal statements of these early councils as well as in their disciplinary canons. The influence of Egyptian and Indian civilizations upon them has been less studied but is surely there. Too close association with Egyptian fertility cults was one reason why Nestorius criticized the church of Alexandria's proclamation of Mary as mother of God, Theotokos. Nevertheless the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon defended the title. Egypt, and the eastern Mediterranean world more generally, was in close contact with India. Surely there was some borrowing from the great Indian civilizations even though explicit references in Christian sources are rare. Clement of Alexandria's mention of the Buddha is a rare example (*Stromata*, i.15).

Let me finish with three more examples of the courage and balance of the early Church: women, indigenous ordinations, and readiness to consider both doctrine and lifestyle.

Membership of the three ecumenical councils of modernity - Trent, Vatican I and II - has been the almost exclusive preserve of men, though women played some role at Vatican II as "observers / *auditores*". By contrast women presided with distinction at two of the most important early councils: empress Pulcheria at Chalcedon, which formulated the Church's classic definition regarding Christ's divinity and humanity: empress Irene at Nicea II, which proved foundational for the Church's defence of religious art. We can find nothing parallel to their roles in either the medieval or the modern ecumenical councils.

The council of Trent is famous for its decree establishing seminaries for the formation of the diocesan clergy. Nevertheless the Catholic Church was slow to permit young men from outside Europe to be ordained into the diocesan clergy and even more reluctant, for the

most part, regarding priestly ordinations in religious orders. Maybe the higher standards set by Trent gave bishops and superiors of religious orders the pretext for excluding candidates from outside the traditional backgrounds. The early Church was much more open and welcoming towards indigenous backgrounds. We find Asians and Africans among the early popes, perhaps even an ex-slave in pope Anacletus I (79-81). When the tribes who had invaded the Roman Empire converted to Christianity in the fifth and following centuries, there seems to have been no hesitation in ordaining suitable candidates to the priesthood and episcopate. Such generosity of outlook was surely a crucial factor in the successful evangelization of Europe through this period.

Finally, the succinct combination of doctrine and discipline or lifestyle. This combination, or balance, has already been noted in the decrees of Trent and Vatican II. But it is also there in most of the first seven councils, combined in these councils with brevity and succinctness. In terms of doctrine, we may think of the composition of the "Nicene Creed" by the first two councils of Nicea I in 325 and Constantinople I in 381, or the Definition of the council of Chalcedon in 451. Yet both Nicea I and Chalcedon also promulgated disciplinary canons covering a wide range of topical issues. The twenty canons of Nicea I are the most remarkable: the role of women in the church, posture at prayer, castration, the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons, the organization of dioceses and the lifestyle of clergy, reconciliation of heretics and schismatics, public penance for sinners and the community's role in their reconciliation, are all treated with both tact and firmness. There is also brevity of expression: Nicea I's output reaches some 2,000 words in the Greek original compared with over 100,000 for Vatican II.

Notes

1. *Acta et Decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum Recentionum: Collectio Lacensis*, eds. Gerhard Schneemann and Theodor Granderath (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Herder, 1870-90), vol. 7, columns 845-6.
2. As reported in *The Tablet*, 27 February 2010.
3. Hans Eysenck, *Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire* (Hammondsworth: Pelican, 1986), 102, cited in "Sigmund Freud" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigmund_Freud#cite_ref-16. Accessed on 6th April, 2015.

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Modernity and the Catholic Church

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Abstract: This short article traces the meaning and use of the term 'modern' and gives an overview of the four different responses of the Catholic Church to modernity.

Keywords: Modernity, Pope Gregory XVI, Pope Leo XIII.

What is modernity? The term 'modernity' is often taken for granted. The term brings to mind varied pictures and ideas. In our day-to-day life we associate modernity with human rights, democracy, development, autonomy, and so on. In our discourse, we use the term 'modernity' for being the latest, up-to-date, new, fashionable, contemporary, etc. as opposed to the old-fashioned, antiquated or obsolete. To some extent the term conveys all these meanings. In fact, it could be said that to think of modernity is to think in terms of time that is historically new, recent or different.

The word 'modern' comes from the Latin *modus* which means 'measure'. "And as a measure of time, 'just now' with the Late Latin derivative *modernus*, from which all later forms [like *modernitas*, *moderno*, or French *moderne*], derive."[1] According to Gillespie, the term modern was not used to distinguish between "'ancient' and 'modern' until 1460 and was not used in its contemporary sense to distinguish a particular historical period until the sixteenth century. The English term 'modern' referring to modern times first appeared in 1585, and the term 'modernity' was not used until 1627."[2] It was only from 1627 that the term "modernity' was understood in opposition to antiquity. According to him,

> The concept of 'modern' arose in the context of the twelfth century reform of the church, although it had a different signification than it has today. In the belief that they stood at the beginning of a new age, these reformers or *moderni* saw themselves, in the words of Bernhard of Chartres (1080-1167), as dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, lesser

modern for them was thus to stand at the end of time, on the threshold of eternity.[3]

It was 'only in the 17th century that first Georg Horn (1666) and then Christophus Cellarius (1696) described world history in three stages, starting with antiquity, lasting until the time of Constantine, the middle ages until the end of Eastern Roman Empire, and *historia nova*/modern history beginning in the 16th century.'[4]

Historia nova or the modern age came to be considered superior to antiquity, because in the context of the discoveries and other scientific progress, modernity was thought to carry humanity to greater heights of achievement. It was thought that the application of proper scientific methods would ultimately help humans to "become masters and possessors of nature and thereby produce a more hospitable world for themselves."[5] The progressive character of modernity, however, is not unambiguous. While it gave us the ideals of equality, fraternity, and liberty, along with technical and scientific progress, economic prosperity, pluralism and so on, it is also marked by environmental pollution, exploitation of the weaker sections, growing individualism, constant stress, fanaticism, intolerance, intensified warfare, violence on minorities, and so on.

Different Responses of the Catholic Church to Modernity

Modernity has not left our reflection on God or our God-experience as well as our God-talk (theology) untouched. Modernity ushered in a secular age "in which man replaces God as the center of existence and seeks to become the master and possessor of nature by the application of a new science and its attendant technology."[6] Modernity also saw the rejection of "scholasticism [with its teachings on natural law] in favor of science and religious belief and enthusiasm in favor of a secular world."[7] However, this does not necessarily mean a rejection of God or religion; rather, it was the rejection of a particular form of religiosity or religious practice and belief. "From the very beginning," says Gillespie, "modernity sought not to eliminate religion but to support and develop a new view of religion and its place in human life, and that it did so not out of hostility to religion but in order to sustain certain religious beliefs.[8]

Within the history of the Church, modernity is mostly associated with the colonial expansions together with wide-spread missionary activity, as also the Renaissance with its cultural and artistic innovations. In spite of this positive interaction with modernity, the attitude of the Catholic Church towards modernity has been largely negative. William McSweeney points out three stages in this attitude.[9] The Church rejected modernity up to 1878, until the death of Pope Pius IX; it competed with modernity from the time of Leo XIII (1878-1903) until the end of Vatican Council II; and, finally, entered into partnership with modernity in the Post-Vatican period. Staf Hellemans adds a fourth period by dividing McSweeney's the post-Vatican period into two: the 1960s, the years during and shortly after Vatican II, and the period after the 60s. To him "these four periods correspond with the four positions the Catholic church adopted vis-à-vis modernity:" first, the "total rejection of a licentious and impermanent disorder;" second, the "competition against a hostile order;" third, "alliance" with an inalienable modernity; and finally, "an alternative voice".[10]

Hellemans explains that from "the time of the French Revolution until 1960, the position of the Catholic church vis-à-vis modernity can be summarized by the word 'anti-thesis'."[11] The church in all its intensity and determination condemned modernity for its godlessness. For example, Gregory XVI's encyclical letter *Mirari vos* (1832) condemned the proposal to welcome the new society and its civil liberties as an opportunity for Catholicism, saying that, "(a)t the present moment a brutal malevolence and impudent science, an unrestrained arbitrariness prevail." He considered modernity as a result of "criminal plans by malevolent people."[12] According to him the modernists had provoked unlawful revolutions against the legal order and, therefore, "any form of participation in such a society was fundamentally wrong since its liberties and policies undermined the prominent role of the church in society."[13] Catholics were advised to stay away from non-Catholic ideas and attitudes, as in a ghetto.[14]

Such opposition was kept up by later popes. For example Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) and Pope Pius X (1903-1914) gave no room for theologians to negotiate doctrinal changes within the framework of modernity. Pope Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi*

Dominici Gregis[15] is brutal in his attack on modernists.[16] To him, modernism poses a threat to our faith, and hence to our hope of salvation.

During the time of Pope Leo XIII, a marked difference can be noticed in the church's attitude towards modernity. With him the "compulsive passivity outside the sphere of religion disappeared."[17] Catholics were encouraged to understand the world by engaging themselves in all domains in order to bring a Catholic influence to bear upon the major problems of the day.

Even at this stage the antagonistic attitude towards modernity, new values and institutions remained. Catholics were not to be contaminated by the modern world. They were to be in the world, but not of the world. However, the triumphs of western democracies and the development of the consumer society, etc. made the church's arguments and discourses less and less plausible. Catholic academics and intellectuals could not maintain such hostility towards modernity and, therefore, dialogue became necessary to make the Church relevant in the changing times.[18]

In the third stage, beginning with the Second Vatican council, the Church began to have a new view of the world and it began to see the positive aspects in modernity, and entered into a partnership with the modern world. It began to interpret the signs of the times, recognized freedom of religion and with regard to modernity the Church began to be more hopeful and optimistic. It began to adapt itself to modernity. The Council documents, especially *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) gave the impression that the church and the good forces of the modern world were to be united for the common good of all.[19] In these documents, while the fundamentals of faith were reaffirmed, their meaning were explained and brought up-to-date with the modern experience.

The breath of fresh air, however, did not last long. "The radicalization that followed Vatican II - the demand for democracy within the church, for a revision of sexual morals, for a lifting of celibacy for Roman Catholic priests, etc. – all these became a thorn in the side of conservative believers."[20] The Church was confronted with rapid decline in its pews and rising tensions and confusions in

its rank and file with regard to the new approaches. It looked as if with Vatican II the Church had decreed its own death warrant. The fourth stage that Hellemans speak about begins here. With the suspicion that the radicals were beginning to interpret the Council as if it was the beginning of the Church and not merely its renewal.

> (The) Vatican decided to intervene in order to straighten things out. Doctrinal orthodoxy became important once again - *Humanae Vitae* (1968) can be seen as the turning point here.Conservative priests were appointed as bishops, sometimes against the expressed wish of the diocese. The cautiousdevolution process which Vatican II had started, was redirected toward more centralization. It seemed almost as if the centre no longer trusted its followers. The resulting restoration which Paul VI had begun, was continued and strengthened under John Paul II. In the same vein, the tone of church leaders talking about modernity once again turned more distant and negative.[21]

In general, the Church's approach to modernity, with the exception of the early 1960s, has been one of distrust and hostility, and uneasiness at best. This uneasiness is understandable when we realize that modernity had shrunk the power and influence of the Church, while modernity itself has gained acceptance and momentum.. In many ways, this struggle to be alive to modern conditions without undermining the precious gift she has received in Jesus Christ continues to this day. Today, as McSweeney says, "Catholics are united, not by a bond which imposes common obligations of beliefs and practices, but by their common origin in a religious tradition which has ceased to function as a communal system constraining the ideas and behaviour of its members."[22]

Notes:

1. For more details, see Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 2.
2. Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, 3.
3. Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, 4.

4. Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, 5.
5. See Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, 5
6. Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, xi.
7. Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, xi.
8. Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, xii.
9. See Bill McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), XIII-XV, 236-239.
10. See Staf Hellemans, "From 'Catholicism against Modernity' to the Problematic 'Modernity of Catholicism'" *Ethical Perspectives* 8, no. 2 (June - 2001): 119.
11. See Hellemans, "From 'Catholicism against Modernity' to the Problematic 'Modernity of Catholicism'," 117.
12. Hellemans, "From 'Catholicism against Modernity' to the Problematic 'Modernity of Catholicism'," 117.
13. Hellemans, "From 'Catholicism Against Modernity' to the Prob lematic 'Modernity of Catholicism'," 117.
14. See McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance*, 236.
15. Pope Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis: On the Doctrine of the Modernists* (Encyclical) (September 8, 1907).
16. For details, see Pope Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis: On the Doctrine of the Modernists*, 1, 2, 3, and 5.
17. Hellemans, "From 'Catholicism against Modernity....," 118.
18. McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance*, 237.
19. Hellemans, "From 'Catholicism Against Modernity...," 118.
20. Hellemans, "From 'Catholicism Against Modernity...," 118-119.
21. Hellemans, "From 'Catholicism Against Modernity...," 119.
22. McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance*, 239.

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Modernity and Posmodernity

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Abstract: This article tries to explore the continuities and discontinuities of postmodernity with modernity. While affirming that the boundary between modernity and postmodernity is not clear and well demarcated, it also tries to show there is no complete transition from one to another. What is postmodern is neither a singular school of thought nor a linear historical period, but the complex of questions arising from the extolling of reason and progress the Enlightenment project of modernity. This has affected philosophical discourses and research projects both of natural and human sciences. Hence the ambivalent relationship of between postmodernity with modernity: lack on faith on the claims of modernity on the one hand, and a heightened fulfillment of modernity on the other. Thus the article explores how this intriguing relationship both of critique and of connivance affect different spheres of human life including politics and economics of our society that can be characterized, with a certain measure of cynicism, as the fetishism of commerce and of spectacle.

Key words: reason, progress, metaphysics, freedom, fragmentation, legitimization, evil and control.

Introduction

The word "postmodern" is used in art, architecture and was first used in philosophy by Jean-François Lyotard for whom it refers to a way of expressing the unrepresentable, the unspeakable while representation in its conventional sense does not allow it. Thus Lyotard gives a positive value to this term.[1] In this paper, the term Postmodern is used in a broad sense characterizing a collective social condition in the sense used by Marcel Mauss,[2] which includes the complexity of our contemporary situation particularly in the West even though I know that the claim to totality is always illusory. By doing so, I attempt to give coherence to what we can consider as another period of domination and the evolution of capitalism. This period is presented anew as modern and more advanced. This

obviously complicates the perception and the attempt to understand and explain why this term is not used in common parlance. However, some authors speak of our period as what comes after postmodernity, namely "supermodernity."[3]

The attempt to demarcate the modern and postmodern periods is rather arbitrary. There is no clear epochal separation between the two. Here, the concept of postmodernity is an attempt of naming the experience of what changes. This is a new point of view, which has a personal aspect, a debatable projection, but also taking into account the understanding of the world attempted by others. Yves Boisvert synthesizes the question of the use of this term in the following words: "This is because postmodernists are convinced that it is no longer possible to define our world, marked by technological development, the widespread computerization and the growing hegemony of mass media, from a vision developed in the eighteenth century by the Enlightenment, they have chosen to refer to a new notion of postmodernity.

It therefore seeks to define an era of change that is ours."[4]The starting point of postmodernity is the recognizing the limits of the hallmarks of the Enlightenment such as reason and progress. Modernity began with the Renaissance and reached its apogee in the late nineteenth and twentieth century (the development of science, education, establishment of democratic parliamentary system, control of nature and emphasis on the primacy of the human subject). Postmodernity, as the term indicates, comes after modernity but marked both by continuity and discontinuity with modernity; continuity because our epoch flows from the previous one and discontinuity because the change is significant especially in how to justify domination and hierarchy of beings. From a metaphysical explanation or justification, we have moved on to a culture of relativism. Meanings ascribed by referring a transcendental signified such as God, nature, reason or history now seem to have disappeared and lost in the tragic vicissitudes of human history. Hence we do not employ the term postmodern in an aesthetic sense, but more in a political sense because the questions that preoccupy our mind from the 20th century are not the same as before.

A History of Rupture

We are in an unprecedented situation. Humanity is faced with a deep crisis, a rupture. With the experience of holocaust followed by World War II, the long-cherished rationality of the West and its civilization seem to have crumbled marking a definite break in human history. Adorno attempts to address this crisis through his critique of instrumental reason. The Nazis have made use of reason to organize and execute humans as an industrial technique. If reason is understood as resulting from the aberrant project of Descartes wanting humans to become "masters and owners of nature" through the use of reason, then reason has reached its apex. It is precisely why Hannah Arendt questions the meaning of politics after Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Stalin's gulags and wants us to assume the crisis of modernity, the crisis in our culture, the problem of the banality of evil. Both Nazism and Stalinism have something in common insofar as they both created totalitarian societies, but there is a remarkable difference between these two phenomena. As Catherine Vallée observed, "Stalin betrayed his ideas by his crimes, Hitler put his ideas into practice."[5]

Modernity itself had produced elements that have undermined its rational foundation. Max Weber speaks of the "disenchantment of the world." During the 19th century science has redefined the limits of religion and its influence even to the point of eliminating the enchantment offered by religion. Humans find themselves in a technically effective world, but disenchanted, cold and dreary. With the development of the industry machines become important for effective work and faith has become dispensable. In the process of secularization, religion has decisively become a private affair. In the early 20th century Durkheim notes with dismay the end of community and social organization and the emergence of individual. Darwin for his part came up with the theory that humans belong to the animal kingdom; they need to assume their origin and evolution and they are not fundamentally different from other species. Then come the "masters of suspicion." Marx questions the notion of society as a harmonious whole and affirms the divide between two classes of people who are necessarily antagonistic. Nietzsche with his famous assertion of the death of God holds that the logical categories are instruments with which life organizes and dominates the world. Freud

assumes the division of the subject and strongly limits the claim of human consciousness by highlighting the significant role played by the unconscious.

In natural science, new discoveries have led to crises so deep that the very concept of determinism is challenged. To name a few, such recent discoveries include the theory of relativity, theory laden observation, ambivalence of light as wave and particle, and the incompleteness theorem of Gödel. In art, the tendency to abstraction disqualifies the former standards of aesthetics. The idea of beauty is rethought with successive avant-garde movements such as Impressionism, Dadaism, Fauvism, Expressionism, Surrealism and Cubism that disrupt once accepted artistic codes. This set of crises leads to a general destabilization of the former rationality. At the end of the 1960s, humanities have witnessed the hostile idea of the "death of man" used to describe different approaches of structuralism including those of Foucault, Barthes, Althusser, Levi-Strauss and Lacan. The death man is a kind of echo of the death of God. It is a fundamental critique of human person understood as an autonomous entity characterized by consciousness, will and freedom. Relativity of cultures once frowned upon, is accepted with the earlier notions of universality being seen as mere masks for the ethnocentric rhetoric and logic of domination of the "white European male, an attitude of domination later came to be known as "phallologocentrism."[6]

In Philosophy the end of metaphysics is assumed, especially with the diffusion of the thought of Heidegger who raised the question about the forgottenness of the subject thanks to the reduction of human beings merely to be entities in the modern world. The death of metaphysics is the result of the death of God; it is the recognition that transcendence of God or of the ideas having no rational basis, where rationality is understood as having a cosmic character. The problem of the foundation is shifted from other-centered to the self-centered human. The problem of rational foundation has given way to theories on existence (Sartre), power (Foucault), desire (Reich, Marcuse, Deleuze, Guattari and Lacan), interpretation (Ricoeur), everyday life (Henri Lefebvre), deconstruction (Derrida), logic, epistemology, art, and language. All these undermine profoundly and

irreversibly the conscious and voluntary subject in many ways as well as the notion of representation that Western rationality has promoted for so long, particularly in Philosophy.

On the social level, the question of progress got amplified in the late sixties and early seventies of the twentieth century. This is due to, among other things, the early exhaustion of the Fordist model.[7] Politically the critique of progress is done both practically and theoretically. It is expressed, among other things, primarily in the shaping of ecological consciousness, with all its variants including relationship between humans and nature. The discussions about the historical subject dwell on the agents of change. For example in Europe in 1970s, the Maoist leftism has to address the question whether or not the proletariat should play the primary role in the struggle against capitalism. The question about the catalysts of change became imperative in the context of recognizing other disadvantaged social groups including illegal immigrants, women, homosexuals, the unemployed and the victims of AIDS. Some intellectual observers today talk of new terms of engagement. In 1848 communism offered hope, but in 1989 it offered frustration. The fall of the Berlin wall was a fatal blow to the Stalinist model of transforming the world in a rational way by controlling people through the exercise of the state power. This tends to devalue the idea of a possible social and political change, and has led to a strong critique on the notion of representation.

Today the term "postmodern" is often associated with relativism ("anything goes"), the confusion of genres, loss of meaning and the end of grand narratives. There is no more linearity. The postmodern attitude is characterized by the retrieval of old models but reinterpreted. This is why when we hear of postmodernity, we are confronted with complexity, absence of structure, disorder or chaos, discontinuity, random phenomena and pluralism.

The Philosophical Postulates of Postmodernity

According to Jean Francois Lyotard, postmodernity is a term that refers to "the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature and the arts."[8] The rapid progress of science and technology has resulted in enormous changes that have in turn led to a new state of mind that does not fail to have repercussions on

our knowledge and culture as a whole. Therefore, a review of human knowledge is necessary. To better understand this necessity, it must be remembered that the continuity of tradition was already ruptured by modernity, before shutting itself into a new tradition. The myths of modernity, including that of triumphant technology, have become fraught with threats, and modernity gradually becomes a culture of everyday life where culture itself becomes a fad. It is in these conditions arises a conflict between science and narrative. This conflict quickly turns to the advantage of science which defines and legitimizes its own game rules. Lyotard writes: "It [science] then produces a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy."[9] Legitimization of knowledge is done through metanarratives and the term postmodern comes to designate incredulity to metanarratives.

Postmodernity presents itself as both a lack of faith in modern outlook and as an end to modernity. As the fulfillment of modernity, postmodernity is also a consequence of the progress of modern science. Its centrality may lie in the finding of a crisis of meaning that stems from a widespread disillusionment with the humanist ideals of modernity. Ultimately, postmodernity in terms of time coincides with crises and changes. Raymond Aron observed that in our time, millions of people live and suffer deep within themselves the violent separation between a culture that is dying and a culture they hate and desire at the same time because it offers the path to power and wealth.[10] We can say here that postmodernity was born from the ashes of a culture at double speed where one does not know which way to turn. Henceforth emerge both a loss of meaning and a disorientation that afflict people who can no longer choose between what they create and destroy. It is unfortunate that the progress of science guarantees the progress neither of individuals nor of societies. The materialization of the rationalist project of modernity culminates in a frightening situation. And we now live in a position of permanent anxiety in which everything, even the worst is possible. This is probably what led Aron to continue the following statement: "Human life is dialectic, that is, dramatic, since it is active in an incoherent world, is committed despite duration, and seeks a fleeting truth with no other certainty but a fragmentary science and a formal reflection."[11] We find ourselves in a situation where everything flows from incoherence, where all knowledge is fragmented and where the

sought truth continues to elude. In these circumstances, it is the value and legitimacy of knowledge that are being challenged. Thus postmodernity clarifies itself as a consequence of modern knowledge and as exceeding the crises of modernity.

In response to questions from his contemporaries as to how to save humanity, Nietzsche replied with a counter question: how to overcome human person? By this question, the author of the *Antichrist* seems to be inaugurating a new era, a new way of posing problems and a new mindset. Overcoming human person is not to circumvent him/her, not without consequences from the philosophical point of view, since it would require an emptying of values, beliefs and knowledge. Among these moral and rationalist values, the supreme value, God, whose death announced since Hegel, has become effective with Nietzsche. We are thus placed in an immoral and irrational optic pacing towards optimism after the destruction announced by Nietzsche's nihilism.

Indeed, there is suddenly an era of vertiginous complexity where a void is gradually formed where in place of a benchmark. The parameters of modernity lose their vigor and intensity. They now oscillate at the crossroads of fear and hope, corrosion and promise. The historical experience of chaos and disruption is such that it perfectly corresponds to what is called postmodernity. The parameters are emptied of meaning, values dissipate, the principles of order are weakened; and the death of God is an important event in human history that informs that "time would be gone, and all the perishable would be but a lie?" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) Nietzsche teaches us that nothing is true, nothing is false but everything is permitted because we live in a malleable state where the previous state no longer has the importance it had. No value can claim a supreme role; we live in a different time in history. In this crisis of foundation, thinking has taken the first steps towards a detachment from the prevalence and irrefutable power of consciousness. Following the "death of God," Nietzsche proclaims the coming of the superman who is the expression of anti-morality, anti-rationalism and anti-dialectic, that is to say the expression of total nihilism. But what does this superman bring anew? It is likely that it would be a liberation of human vis-à-vis his consciousness and his domination. Is this

sufficient enough to move forward towards the transition from modernity to post-modernity? Does not postmodernity coincide with the outcome of the history written by the West? This history, as we know, has caused particular perception of life which has produced a world of constructing interpersonal relationships in which nothing could be described as metaphysics.

In so doing, the basic premise of anti-rationalism is due to the loss of a point of reference that has given birth to nihilism leading to the rejection of metaphysics. This reflects the reasons for a concern expressed by Raymond Aron, quoting the text of Henri Bergson: "We wish to know the reason why we have made up our mind, and we find that we have decided without any reason, and perhaps against every reason. But, in certain cases, that is the best of reasons. Because the action which we had performed does not express some superficial idea, almost external to ourselves, distinct and easy to account for: rather, it agrees with the whole of our most intimate feelings, thoughts and aspirations, it agrees with that particular conception of life which is the equivalent of all our past experience, in a word, with our personal idea of happiness and of integrity."[12] Although irrationalism in which we seem to settle may lack foundation, its justification may instead end up in our feelings, thoughts, and aspirations shaped by the results of scientific and technological progress and placed in a situation of constant fret. Time and again, science at its peak poses a threat to the human individual in his/her "being as being." Hence the true premise of postmodernity seems to be the one that is to return to modernity its own defense that there is no justification anymore.

The text of Gabriel Marcel cited by Emmanuel Levinas can be understood in this sense: "There is no doubt that we need to react strongly against the classical idea of the eminent value of [*autarkia*] or personal self-sufficiency. The perfect is not perfect because it suffices for itself; or at least the perfection of self-sufficiency is that of a system, not that of a being... Under what conditions can the relationship binding a being to what it needs have a spiritual value? It seems as though here there must be reciprocity, an awakening. The only relationship that can be said to be spiritual is that of a being with a being; ... What really matters is spiritual commerce between beings,

and that involves not respect but love."[13] There is a desire for a new rationality to be constructed over the tomb of the ancient metaphysics that leaves no place for relationship of being to the other. This new rationality will then be based on a language that binds two different individuals without however annihilating their differences.

In addition, we must recognize that the reason is not sufficient to exhaust all human aspirations. As noted by Arthur Schopenhauer, "With the exception of man, no being wonders at its own existence; but it is to them all so much a matter of course that they do not observe it. The wisdom of nature speaks out of the peaceful glance of the brutes; for in them the will and the intellect are not yet so widely separated that they can be astonished at each other when they meet again. Thus here the whole phenomenon is still firmly attached to the stem of nature from which it has come, and is partaker of the unconscious omniscience of the great mother. Only after the inner being of nature (the will to live in its objectification) has ascended, vigorous and cheerful, through the two series of unconscious existences, and then through the long and broad series of animals, does it attain at last to reflection for the first time on the entrance of reason, thus in man. Then it marvels at its own works, and asks itself what it itself is. Its wonder however is the more serious, as it here stands for the first time consciously in the presence of *death*, and besides the finiteness of all existence, the vanity of all effort forces itself more or less upon it. With this reflection and this wonder there arises therefore for man alone, the *need for a metaphysic*; he is accordingly an *animal metaphysicum*."[14] In other words, the metaphysical need exists in every human person, without which no belief is possible. From this point of view, reason cannot to be the basis of belief.

The concern of post-modernity takes shape by this, namely, to redefine metaphysics on irrational base unloading at the same time the burden of reason making it ineffective. It is also to get rid of the herd morality, whose foundations are considered immoral by Nietzsche. Post-modernity therefore places itself under the sign of death of all forms of unifying interpretation of the world. Post-modernity is thus characterized by anarchist traits of a polycentric world devoid of categorical differentiation that prevailed till then.

The constellation spares neither knowledge nor action in such manner so that even the concept of politics is subject to structural change. Similarly, modern knowledge developed during the reign of a reason that would make us "masters and possessors of nature," must be interrogated not only on its own validity, but also by its implications. If the assumptions of postmodernity can be summed up in irrationalism in the overcoming of metaphysics and the questioning of the legitimacy of modern knowledge, postmodernity can find in Nietzsche a definite precursor, who vigorously spoke of transmutation of modern values with the final phase of nihilism and the announcement of the advent of the superman to address the concerns of the modern world. Nietzsche writes: "Knowledge, taken in excess without hunger, even contrary to need, no longer acts as a transforming motive impelling to action and remains hidden in a certain chaotic inner world [...] and so the whole of modern culture is essentially internal: on the outside the bookbinder has printed something like 'Handbook of Inner Culture for External Barbarians'."[15] Modern consciousness is pregnant of an excessive historical knowledge, and has lost the "plastic powers of life" that makes men able to "interpret the past only from the standpoint of the highest strength of the present." This "surfeit of history" is the negative effect of historical knowledge, that is, the conservative approach of history. Nietzsche argued against historical knowledge – when pursued for its own sake – because its method was dependent on a false ideal of objectivity, which neutralized the standards necessary for life, and blocked the capacity, "the strength [to] use it from time to time, to shatter and dissolve something to enable [man] to live [in the present]."[16]

This succession of failures that Nietzsche had encountered obliged him to choose between returning to the critique of subject-centered reason and the abandonment of the entire project. Desperate to dismiss the dialectic of reason, he gave up revising the concept of reason and chose the second option. This is why Habermas affirms that in Nietzsche's works "the critique of modernity renounced for the first time its emancipatory content."[17] Modernity is thus deprived of its privilege and looks like a sunset in the great history of rationalization whose beginning is the end of the myth and the

disappearance of the archaic life. This is an idea that brings Nietzsche closer to Horkheimer, Adorno, Bataille and Heidegger, adds Habermas. In the light of this analysis it is worth noting that Nietzsche was a hub of postmodern debates. It is also undeniable that Nietzsche has succeeded in initiating a debate that continues to influence present day discussions. Habermas rightly notes that the Nietzschean legacy is shared and pursued in two directions: "Nietzsche's critique of modernity has been continued along both paths. The skeptical scholar who wants to unmask the perversion of the will to power, the revolt of reactionary forces, and the emergence of a subject-centered reason by using anthropological, psychological, and historical methods has successors in Battaille, Lacan, and Foucault; the initiate-critic of metaphysics who pretends to a unique kind of knowledge and pursues the rise of the philosophy of the subject back to its pre-Socratic beginnings has successors in Heidegger and Derrida."[18]

Economics of Control and Politics of Opacity

Postmodernity is the moment of reproduction and retrieval just as modernity was the moment of production and accumulation. The concept of reproduction corresponds to the power of financial capital in economics and to the information society in epistemology. On economic plan, profit is no longer primarily in the production but on financial gain. This explains why the value of work has no longer the same importance as before. This does not mean that work no longer exists but it is integrated into the financial system, where speculation becomes decisive. The example of Anglo-Saxon funds pensions is widely known. This aspect of the evolution of capitalism explains why commutation and communication have become fundamental to capitalism. The control center is both the mastery of power (military and financial) and mastery of sign (information and advertisement). The point of convergence between the two is money that is increasingly virtual and so is power and sign. The control of the imperialist countries, especially the U.S. imperialism is evident in money, information and military power. Services sectors (banking, insurance, software, engineering), the creation and dissemination of information (global media, advertising, telephone, computer, internet) are key sectors of capitalist domination. Hence we can say that the sign of power and the power of sign are closely linked to each other.

The way in which capitalism functions today does not care about addressing collective needs. Though this was the case previously Fordism, in Western countries, allowed for a social compromise where the rising standard of living and the increase in production went together. The gap between the common good for humanity and the capital is on the increase so much so that we often wonder why we need to run this huge machinery. Postmodernity is the crisis of meaning for everyone, the dominated and the dominant.

The attempt to demarcate the modern and postmodern periods is rather arbitrary. There is no clear epochal separation between the two. Here, the concept of postmodernity is an attempt of naming the experience of what changes. This is a new point of view, which has a personal aspect, a debatable projection, but also taking into account the understanding of the world attempted by others. Yves Boisvert synthesizes the question of the use of this term in the following words: "This is because postmodernists are convinced that it is no longer possible to define our world, marked by technological development, the widespread computerization and the growing hegemony of mass media, from a vision developed in the eighteenth century by the Enlightenment, they have chosen to refer to a new notion of postmodernity. It therefore seeks to define an era of change that is ours."[19]

The paradoxical authority appears less visible except in its police or military form, but maintains its power. Capital has become virtual, yet its power is undeniable. The more the capital becomes invisible and abstract (signs on computer systems) the more the authority seems to fade. It is an undeniable source of bewilderment, confusion, helplessness and loss of meaning. In addition, it is increasingly difficult to identify and challenge the political authority supposed to be responding to the social demand.

The exercise of power is masked behind laws to maintain social distinctions. Reactive power struggles, especially those of the socially oppressed, are condemned thus brushing aside the already existing social violence reproduced on a large scale. The content of the law should be regularly monitored and challenged. While equality and inclusion are often lauded in modern democracy, social apartheid

is generated and practiced in the profit driven market economy, a necessary component of the present-day democracy. Our society is incapable of articulating unity in difference. Politics has denigrated into policing.

Often questioning law only reinforces the authorities of that time, as law is promulgated from a position that claims the right to do so. Experiencing injustice is not enough to challenge domination; it may at best be translated into a demand for equality in the context of the consumer society. This demand may be legitimate without necessarily questioning the merits of social organization. Questioning law goes beyond any specific interest to show the contradictions of the system in a given situation. This, for example in the Western Europe, takes place in the struggles for housing, where the claim of the right to housing opposes private property, in the struggles of unemployment and precariousness, where the question of the future of human persons without work challenges the society that claims its foundation on work. This is also the case in the struggles of the illegal immigrants making us wonder if human beings exist only through an identity card and administrative boundaries.

Politics is transformed into a simple matter of management, mastery and distribution of powers. Political discourses lose their significance in the present day context due to varied factors such as nuclear weapons, corruption, abuse of power, incompetence, covert manipulation to stay in power, abandoning of ideals, cronyism and misuse of communication. In public opinion, politics is equated with the management of the state and the parliamentary system. For me, politics is not management, it must always be thought of in reference to the sphere that defines and directs the collective future of humanity, the common space of "being together," which traditionally has been called the common good. We can recall Hannah Arendt for whom politics is a space where the world community is established: "To be political, to live in a polis, meant that everything was decided by words and persuasion and not through force and violence."[20] For Hannah Arendt politics has no fixed place, it is not always present and cannot be locked into a locus specified in advance. From a libertarian point of view, politics is possible only by breaking with

the reproduction of domination. Thus politics is linked to the desire for justice and equality; it is critical freedom.

Thanks to the over-emphasis on science, modernity is reduced to a technique for the use of technical tools (mobile and computer). The best example is that of the computer in which what is more adapted to humans, more creative and the more rational choice are removed in the name of profit. We can easily observe this in the "micro-smooth" influence of Bill Gates. There is an implicit alliance between Microsoft Windows software and Intel microprocessors. This alliance also called "Wintel," by those who struggle against the domination of Microsoft, its worldwide quasi-monopoly of personal computers. The situation is the same for the millennium bug (Y2K) in the year 2000, which was then called "the height of imprudence." The problem once again is not the transformation of matter, the creation of new devices or objects; the difficulty comes from the lack of questioning purposes, from maintaining opacity (or clarified too much to be summed up as the pursuit of profit) that surrounds the choice of development of new machines and new technologies.

The influential members of society including celebrities of media admit the futility of what they do and sometimes the emptiness of what they are cynically. Postmodernity is often associated with a brilliant but cynical posture. Cynicism is a concept that has several meanings. In its philosophical sense, it refers to a school of Greek philosophy founded in the second half of the fourth century BCE. Its most prominent representative is Diogenes. The word "cynical" is derived from the Greek word for dog. This word is related to living the philosophy that Diogenes has proposed. He criticized the artificial way of life led by his contemporaries and often demonstrated the correctness of his thought by provocation and shocking audacity. Cynics of the time advocated an ascetic lifestyle. Thus cynicism is an attitude that mocks at certain behavior pattern. Its meaning presently is close to that of impudence. In its contemporary version, cynicism is an attitude that mocks at those who are unsuccessful and find themselves outside the hierarchy of domination. It is no longer provocation but striving for success in our postmodern world. This implies that we accept as normal to efface others to achieve success. It is the desire for success that seems to prevail in this

dynamic reproduction of domination. Thus the concept of cynicism has undergone a reversal.

In language and speech, language euphemism is increasingly employed. This is to mitigate the harsh directness of some expressions. This process is remarkable in naming the social phenomena. Jean-Paul Courthéroux has detected a certain conformism in this phenomenon because "it paradoxically helps to maintain even real discrimination by sweetening their appearances."[21] He notes that euphemism is a clever way to cope with a brutal reality. The link between rhetoric and politics is very old, the Greek Sophists were trading their mastery of language, in particular their skills in rhetoric. To dominate is to have effective mastery over language and speech.

Ambient Clichés: Freedom and Evil

On the ideological level, we know almost everything; nothing is hidden. The role of communication is fundamental because of the link between Information Technology and telecommunications. The omnipresence of the media in manufacturing opinion is a corollary to the disappearance of public space for discussion. The mental space is saturated with information and images, but meaning escapes us so often that we think something is hidden from us. Yet it seems that it is the contrary that strengthens domination of mind which Michel Surya calls "absolute capitalism". As a result of new procedures of domination, not only social but also cultural and ideological, the structural weakening of consciousness is underway with the discourse of post-modernity representing its ideological expression. In other words, the post-modern fragmentation and individualism allow us to conceive the renewal of shared collectivities. Given the generalization of commodity fetishism and consumerism, the frenzy for the ephemeral and immediate, can durable political and social projects appear again, beyond moments of intense fusion without future?

Information and knowledge are confused with each other. When the media extols freedom, it does so only when it comes to market economy or liberal politics. Human rights are constantly evoked, but the political leaders let barbarism continue. The discourse of domination gets adapted to a world of uncertainty, and menacing anxiety. Management becomes the only eligible horizon, Science

becomes omnipresent and the experts are called for help, while reason is regularly brought under erasure by maintaining the absurdity of the world. Freedom cannot be achieved only in the pleasures of objects made available by the system, but also in saying no to capitalist barbarism, an important aspect of freedom that involves a shift from the consumerist pleasures. This aspect of freedom is critical as it refuses to endorse a system that hurts and destroys people. Ours is an epoch where domination is exercised on mind through a continual process of indoctrination often championed by modern technology and media in terms of proliferation of information on consumer goods suggesting and even offering a free world while in reality we are "massified" by strong constraints of market economy even if the modalities of such constraints evolve.

The great human ideals are very useful for voluntary submission. They allow for a rationalization once humans are engaged in a process of submission to an authority. The work of Jean Léon Beauvois on "liberal servitude"[22] is pertinent in this regard. It complements what Freud said about reason which can justify all kinds of behavior and serve as a defense mechanism to the subject to face his fears and guilt feelings. In the postmodern period, this aspect of ideology is powerful, especially in the domain of human rights. This is because we cannot supposedly do otherwise because on the one hand the reality principle implies submission to markets and allied institutions and on the other, the great ideals on humanity give a good conscience at little cost.

The great human ideals of care, justice, common good, and empathy exist in human culture. They have great symbolic value and they even shape our moral conscience. These great human ideals are often assimilated into our meaning making processes. Meaning is related to the great human ideals, but to put them into practice involves the struggle to end social, political and symbolic domination. It makes a demand on us to fight for equality and justice without which we would continue to maintain an absurd and destructive system. The great human ideals are in accordance with meaning only when we try to answer the question "what does it mean to be human?" It is perhaps impossible to formulate a precise and definite answer, but the fact of the question and the refusal to accept the

present situation as normal add another dimension to the meaning of great human ideals within the perspective of emancipation in human history.

The notion of the banality of evil of which Hannah Arendt speaks places us at the heart of the link between theory and practice. The concept was created and used to describe and understand an aspect of Nazism: the technician bureaucracy in the service of barbarism. Here, it is used to name the operation or the consequences of the operation of capitalism. Without confusing Nazism and capitalism, you can use this concept. Its validity comes from both its practical power and its theoretical strength. Specifically, the banality of evil is well suited to account for the real suffering that generates oppression, exploitation contained in capitalist domination. Theoretically, we can consider a concept that is able to characterize Nazism can be used to describe something smaller: who can do more can do less, at least in principle. Some people reject the use of this concept in the context of contemporary society, arguing that it would put on the same plane the Holocaust and the evils of contemporary society. This rejection is a refusal to see and describe the damage done by the capitalist system and minimize the suffering experienced by millions of people around the world in the name of defending democracy. It is always difficult to quantify or qualify evil. Debates on the "absolute evil" show the difficulty of this question. The argument of the "lesser evil" is misleading and dangerous. General acceptance of the lesser evil can accommodate fatalistic way of oppression, exploitation and exclusion. This notion is also a justification of many social and political injustices. Rejection of evil requires us to think differently of evil other than a mere lack of being or of good. The reality of evil is widespread, yet it is often denied. It is so trivial as to be invisible, it no longer shocks, does not cause any surprise. If we reflect on this phenomenon, the notion of the banality of evil, as suggested by Hannah Arendt, seems justified.

In our society material goods, ideas, techniques – all of these seem to be at our disposition. Difficulties of implementation, however, exist at all levels. The feeling of not rising to the heights and hence a sense of helplessness is very common. Alain Ehrenberg speaks of depression as a common disease of the century, the symptom of

which he calls the "fatigue of being oneself."[23] Faced with the injunctions of success provided by the system and its negative effect, the guilt, the world of the possible seems quite limited, which in turn augments a sense of triviality of the self. The personalized contract of the employment only increases the need for a narcissistic ego in a competitive corporate world. This phenomenon is further strengthened by catchwords such as efficiency and competence. The management objectives become so important that the human subject has to prove his/her worth in terms of achieving the target set by his/her sector and his/her adherence to the set goals of the company in which he or she is an employee.

Suffering today is that which often affects the human psyche; it disturbs the mind more than ever before. This is visible especially among the less privileged people of our society. Loneliness, feeling of isolation, loss of collective confidence, and failure to make connections in society are often related to a failure in behavior, a sense of self-deprecation, and a loss of self-esteem. The anguish of the poor is obviously related with their living conditions, but their difficulty is not analyzed as social, rather associated with privation of individual capacities. Existential despair is reinforced by the paradoxical injunctions that require success in work and by labor. It is clear that there is not enough employment opportunity, or when it exists, it is precarious, poorly paid, without minimum guarantees, and without the possibility of progress. The reality of this suffering and distress was studied in France and an official report on this suffering and its impact on family life was published already in 1995 under the title "Cette souffrance que l'on ne peut plus cacher!" ("This suffering that cannot be hidden"). Reports of this kind seek solutions without changing the essential problems such as the social apartheid and the social relations linked to capitalism. At the end of the nineteenth century, suffering was probably more physical, it was due to the misery of that time, long hours of work, the drudgery of the hard labor of that epoch and some physical ailments for which medicines were not available. The symptoms of suffering today are varied and can be both physical and somatic. But the deep source of suffering is in today's lifestyle, in the loss of meaning, in isolation due to the exclusion from employment and more importantly in the feeling that

there is no escape from this misery and any effort to build meaningful relationships is useless.

The patriarchal domination is equally present today; the status of women is still not equal to that of men. The oppression of women is both real and symbolic. In the postmodern context pornography and advertising are both modalities and consequences of this phenomenon. In both cases, there is an eroticism of the female body and its use for show and merchandise. In commercial advertisements, the image of women is widely used; desire is staged to sell products through the diffuse of images. In pornography, several phenomena related to one another seem to be involved. Several arguments are invoked to explain this. The most important of all is the affective misery among men that causes excitement in them while watching an erotic scene. Another explanation is that pornography offers the possibility of domination over women and the pleasure of assuring to oneself that women are to be subjugated. In prostitution, it is possible to buy a woman while in pornography it comes to buying of the image of women, but the basis is the same: the buying and selling of human body. There is a well-organized industrial reality committed to the production and commercialization of porn videos and images. The female body is a commodity, a consumer good alongside other such goods. In this process of commoditization the human body is reduced to the genitals, it is fragmented without a "face." Passive woman is an available commodity, an instant consumer good that generally likes to be dominated. There is no relationship between two people who desire one another for mutual happiness as an act of love, but a merely mechanical activity between two people which is nothing short of an instrumental relationship that reduces the female body to a use value.

Conclusion

Lyotard has rightly expressed concern about this moment in history where everything is fragmented and specialized. We are in a time that seems to coincide with the end of the history described by the West, a history that has generated a particular perception of life and produced a method of construction of interpersonal relationships that can even be described metaphysical. These interpersonal relationships carry with them the imprint of individuals who are

themselves fragmented. Knowledge is fragmented and specialized too. Under these conditions, the very validity of knowledge is still problematic because having lost its center of gravity by its fragmentation, knowledge is no longer easy to apprehend and its legitimization becomes a major preoccupation. What makes the postmodern undertaking problematic is the abounding of utopias on account of what might be called the characteristic features of a postmodern inconsistency.

Taking clue from Debord, some affirm that the postmodern society has a strong tendency to be false and forge. Reversing Hegel's assertion "the false is no longer a moment of the true," he holds that "the true is a moment of the false."[24] Debord denounces the fetishism of [24] Guy Debord, *The Society of a Spectacle* (London: Rebel Press, 2005), 9. commerce and of spectacle, which is typical of our society. For him, the false is the common rule, an alienated activity that is everywhere. There are no good or bad performances; everything is included in the "integrated spectacle." These claims, though cannot be made absolute is not without relevance. From this point of view, postmodernity as a process appears to be a perception of life, a point of departure and of arrival. Therefore, the rationality of knowledge, the effectiveness of technical production, performativity of knowledge and the persuasive power of religious, artistic and social principles are presented as ordering the history of metaphysics. But how are we to deal with inconsistencies of postmodernity? No discourse has so far been effective to account for the challenges presented by the transition from modernity to postmodernity with its discontinuity and continuity as well. We must therefore shift attention to other horizons. This could be possible by developing a "new theory of language" that can take a critical look at the past to invent the necessary philosophical paradigm to address fragmentation in knowledge in order to facilitate the advent of better future.

Notes:

1. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1992).

2. Marcel Mauss (1873-1950) French sociologist, close to Durkheim, famous for his The Gift, orignally published in French in 1925 and translated in English in 1954, in which he studied the *potlatch*, that is, the ritual exchanges between leaders and members of clans in primitive societies in pacific islands. The gift assures prestige, power and symbolic position.

3. Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verson, 1995).

4. Yves Boisvert, *L'analyse postmoderniste, une nouvelle grille d'analyse socio-politique* (Montréal: Éditions l'Harmattan, 1997), 58, translation mine.

5. Catherine Vallée, Hannah Arendt, Socrate et la question du totalitarisme (Paris : Éditions Ellipses, 1999).

6. "Phallologocentrism" is the name given by some critics to a certain approach of Western philosophy based on the logos (both as discourse and as logical reasoning) of white European male. This term has been particularly used and developed by some feminist thinkers.

7. Fordism, named after Henry Ford, is a capitalist mode of development based on mass production, the rising of living standards and mass consumption.

8. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxiii.

9. Ibid.

10. see Raymond Aron, *Mémoires: 50 ans de réflexion politique* (Paris: Julliard, 1983).

11. Raymond Aron, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History: An Essay on the Limits of Historical Objectivity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 347.

12. Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 170.

13. Emmanuel Levinas, Entre Nous: *Thinking of the Other* (London: Continuum, 2006), 54.

14. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World As Will And Idea*, Vol. 2 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1909), 350.

15. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980), 24-25.

16. Ibid., 21.

17. cited by Fred Dallmayr, *Margins of Political Discourse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 51

18. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987), 97.

19. Yves Boisvert, *L'analyse postmoderniste, une nouvelle grille d'analyse socio-politique* (Montréal: Éditions l'Harmattan, 1997), 58, translation mine.

20. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 26.

21. Jean Paul Courthéroux, "Sur les euphémismes des professions et de la société," in *Revue Droit Social*, 7/8 (July 1998): 23, tra

22. see Jean Léon Beauvois, *La servitude libérale* (Paris: Éditions Dunod, 1994).

23. see Alain Ehrenberg, *La fatigue d'être soi* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil,1998).

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Religion Meets Modernity: Changes and Challenges

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Abstract: This article aims to delve into the mediatory role of religion in our contemporary world in that it investigates how religion is shaped by and shapes human beings in their encounter with modernity, its evolving characteristics, institutional arrangements, multi-locational interests and ideological compulsions. To achieve this goal, it begins its inquiry by focusing on the genealogy of political secularism and demonstrates the pitfalls of the 'wall of separation between state and religion' and the implications it bears upon the treatment, space and situatedness religion obtains in different nation states at different historical times. It further discusses the relationship between European colonial powers and the notion of religion by highlighting how the modern sense of religion emanating from Europe was proselytised, historicised and re-historicised in colonial countries since seventeenth century till our present times. The article also calls for the recognition of the proactive role of religion in the secular modern state, especially for its citizens who have become the unfortunate victims of the state's policies and administrative decisions.

Key Words: Modernity, Religion, Colonial Power and Secular Nation State.

Introduction

We live in a world of competing discourses and conflicting ideologies. While some would claim that we live in the post-modern world, others would say that modernity has not exited yet. Modernity lingers on, re-invents and recasts itself in various modes, forms and avatars to retain its abiding presence in human civilization. It is there to stay forever in our midst, perhaps with different hues and shades that change from one place to another, from one historical period to another, and from one socio-economic and cultural context to another. While definitions, descriptions and meanings of modernity are wide-ranging that include enlightenment, rationalization, disenchantment of the world, industrialization, individualism, the

rise of representative democracy and nation-state, the increasing role of science and technology in human life and the like, secularity is seen as one of the key components of modernity. While the theory of secularization solemnly proclaimed the demise of religion in a secular age, what we experience now is the post-secular resurgence of religion. Against this background, what is the relationship between religion and state, and what is the role of religion in modernity, especially in a country like India? These are some of the lead questions that animate the reflections in this article.

Deceits of Secular State and Religion

One of the important historical moments in the evolution of modernity is the Peace of Westphalia established in 1648. Though many would place this treaty as a watershed in the genealogy of the secular state system in the West, in fact what it directly produced was the founding myth of modern international relations.[1] Ending thirty years of warfare in Europe caused by religious forces, this treaty sought to do away with the doctrines of divine right and make each monarchical territory sovereign, protecting it from any external interference. "It attempted to banish religions from relations between states. It urged treating religion as a domestic matter."[2] In doing so, it pioneered a new historical trend of delimiting religion's domain of influence. A social imaginary that started off with containing religion within the boundaries of state would further result in banishing religion from the public sphere to the private. Both these ways of treating religion were invalidated in course of time. The first mode of treatment proved ineffective in a number of instances. To cite one example, the champions of secularity in international relations became so deeply engrossed by it that they "became all but blind to religious influence on international affairs."[3] It is only when al-Qaeda struck the World Trade Centre that scholars of religion woke up to the operation of religion as a force in international politics, a reality which had escaped their eyes thanks to antipathy and indifference created by secularisation and modernity. Paradoxically, both anti-secularists and secularists work out their strategies in their camps to bring back religion to the centre stage. If the attempts of Islamic terror networks like al-Qaeda can be read as anti-secularist's efforts to centre-stage religion in international power-politics, the US legislation of

International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 is evidently the secularist effort to place religion as a bone of contention, a topic of debate and, a matter of political arrangement of religious liberty in international relations and polity—which the Peace of Westphalia worked hard to overcome. Even in the formation of EU (European Union), religion was willy-nilly brought in. Though Europeans perceive themselves as increasingly secular, yet Europe's boundary is very much drawn along Christian lines. Analysing the emergence of European Union, Grace Davies observes, "whether consciously or not, the effective barriers to entry coincide with a geographical definition of Christendom. Nations dominated by Western (Catholic) Christianity will, in my view, find it easier than their Orthodox equivalents to enter European Union; Muslim states will find it harder still (if not impossible), despite the existence of significant Muslim communities within most, if not all, Western European nations."[4] The second mode of treatment of religion which aimed at evicting religion from the public and confining it to private sphere did not take place as anticipated. The wall of separation between state and religion could not be established strictly in all places; nor could it be actualised in all instances and circumstances in the same way. Theories like neutrality, indifference, equidistance and principled-distance were proposed to characterise the patterns of separation and the types of secularism that are in practice in different parts of the globe. As a result, what has come to stay is not estrangement but some sort of engagement and involvement between state and religion. To maintain secularism, non-interference of the state in religious matters was relinquished in the French exercise of *laicite* as we witnessed in the case of the ban on students wearing head scarves in public schools and of the bureaucratic barriers against the construction of mosques.[5]

Further, 'twin tolerations' is described as one of the important characteristics of liberal democracy by which the secular state continues its relationship with religions. The state on the one hand, accepts and permits the right of all religions to practice and express their faith and to participate in democratic policies, while religions, on the other hand, forgo hitherto-enjoyed legal and constitutional prerogatives that grant religious officials special authority to formulate or approve public policy.[6] In this approach of 'twin toleration' while a total divorce between the state and religion is realistically ruled out,

what has come about is a redefinition of the relationship of principled distance and proximity between the state and religion. However, this principled distance and proximity, when implemented in different states, has acquired varying degrees and intensities depending upon local factors and historical experiences. It is in this context that scholars refer to multiple modernities.

The idea of multiple modernities as proposed by many thinkers subscribes not to the notion of single-polar modernity but to the pluriverse of modernities characterised by 'culturally specific forms of modernity shaped by distinct cultural heritages and socio-political conditions'[7] that would produce variations in value systems, perspectives and institutions. This multiple-modernity outlook views modernity as "a story of continual development and formation, constitution, and reconstitution of multiplicity of cultural programs and cultural patterns of modernity."[8] In these productions, it is my submission that religions do play a crucial role not only in advancing the phenomenon of multiple identities by creating beliefs, practices and perspectives that emphasise the idea of non-sameness in place of oneness but also in cultivating the attitudes, inspirations and motivations that cater to the fall-outs of modernity to be discussed later.

Modernity, Genealogy of Religion and Colonial Powers

Though the phenomenon of religion(s) was found everywhere perhaps from time immemorial, the term 'religion' becoming a matter of systematic study and theorization is rather recent. As Asad observes, though the term religion has its origin in pre-modern times, its sense was produced only in modern times and the idea of religion gradually crystallized roughly around the seventeenth century onwards when European thinkers came to realize that in every society people had their own narratives about beliefs in supernatural beings, about the origin of the world and about life after death, and it dawned on them that religion was not a prerogative of Christians alone.[9] David Scott also illustrates how the idea of "religion" is basically a western invention and how it came to be viewed as a "demarcatable system of doctrines-scriptures-beliefs, and that of its plural, "religions," as "rival ideological communities."[10] According to David Scott, religion's "rise coincides and indeed is interconnected with

the emergence of other transforming social processes in early modern Europe: most notably, the emergence of the new science and of reason as the new adjudicating truth discourse, the rise of the modern secular state, and, of course, the great march of European colonial expansion."[11]

The Europeans who arrived in India in the sixteenth century and thereafter like Robert De Nobili,[12] Henry Lord, Abraham Roger and Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg who had not yet come fully under the influence of modernity's full-blown ideological apparatuses were more inclined to portray the so-called Hinduism in more pluralistic terms, calling different types of Hinduism as 'sects'. If at all they had occasionally described them as 'religions', it was more to refer to their pluralistic religious characters, some of which were based on Indian self-representations. But as the idea of 'religion' got conceptually more crystallised later in its evolution, it came to refer to a unified system of beliefs, doctrines and practices based on authority of the canonical texts and monotheism, which were very much effects of modernity's overarching worldview in the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.[13]

As Asad perceptively observes. "defining is a historical act and when the definition is deployed, it does different things at different times and in different circumstances, and responds to different questions, needs, and pressures. The concept "religion" is not merely a word: it belongs to vocabularies that bring persons and things, desires and practices together in particular traditions in distinctive ways."[14] Thus the category of 'religion' did affect the construct of Hinduism and other Asian religions during the colonial period. Be it Europeans or modern Indian thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ranade, Tilak and Vivekananda—all their interpretations of Hinduism were heavily influenced, shaped and constructed along the lines of modernity's much celebrated virtues of reason, neat-systems and unified doctrines. Even the Sanskrit pandit, Dayanand Saraswati who was never formally trained in English/western education came under the influence of this dominant thinking so strongly that he would uphold, based on reason, only Vedic Hinduism, totally rejecting Puranic and later forms of Hinduism as irrational and superstitious.

One of the pitfalls of the implementation of the modern view of religion is that it did not merely serve as a weapon of domination and control in the hands of the powerful during the colonial period. "In the past, colonial administrations used definitions of religion to classify, control, and regulate the practices and identities of subjects ,"[15] observes Asad. Rather, it "altered the conditions of the lives of non-European peoples in ways that obliged them too to reconstitute themselves as members of one exclusive "religious" community against others."[16] The transforming conditions brought about by Europe and its world-conquering project of empire not merely produced "the new conceptual space of 'religion' as such, but the space of its potential ideological and political appropriations as well."[17] It is this constructed space (by the colonial power) that would eventually become a site of competing discourses and identity politics by various fundamentalist religious agencies in India and other colonies in South Asia.

Thus colonial decisions, Western disciplinary frameworks and their classificatory devices—the by-products of modernity—did construct the category of what we call the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism in former colonial states. Though the political decision of religious construct was of the British, the idea was often well-received by the native political ideologues who capitalised on the process to unify India under one religious label and to consolidate anti-British sentiments using religious resources. Strong differences, in some cases enmity, between religious traditions, were glossed over in the face of the common enemy. However, it is also true that what was 'constructed' as religion in the modern period of colonial times is revisited at times through the interventions of liberal democracies, another phase of modernity.[18]

Religion in Service of the Secular Modern State

Vibrant discussions on secularism, one of the important reigning ideas of modernity, have so far revolved around the relationship between the state and religion, and its implications for inter-state relations and policies and intra-state relations and policies have been the topics of study for a while. Here the preoccupation has been so far about how to manage best the domain of the state,

its administration and its arrangements (be it political, cultural, legal or economic) vis-a-vis the sphere of religion. In such an approach, what is employed is the perspective of the state and it turns out to be a top down approach on secularism. Instead, if one were to look at secularism from the view-point of victims of the nation state and its administrative and economic policies, and look for the understandings of and answers to the issues emerging thereupon, new views on secularism would spring forth calling our attention to new areas of engagement between the state and religion. The victims of secular modern state(s)—which are of different types—are not only people of particular religious tradition(s) alone. As fallout of nation states' policies, not only religions suffer; cultures, ethnicities, tribes, and other vulnerable and marginal groups too feel disadvantaged. At times, these people may experience discrimination in the religious sphere. But often their experience of marginalization is too large to be located in the domain of religion alone. Though their religious belonging may play a role in their experience of marginalization, there are multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization these people undergo. Yet, as citizens of a nation state all have a right to be in the state and the state has to discharge its duty delivering its goods to all in a non-discriminatory manner and to make national goods accessible to all. It is here that religions—all of which invariably promote the well-being of all, with their varied emphases on the values of compassion, love, justice, fraternity and peace—can bring in their philosophies, principles, perspectives and values, and prevail upon the nation state and its citizens to act in favour of the victims and the marginalized.

The motive for humanitarian work often finds its inspiration from religious sensibility as we see in the works of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Florence Nightingale and Henry Dunant who in the nineteenth century established the Red Cross. He adopted the symbol of Cross as its official emblem, even though there is an ongoing debate as regards the political, cultural and religious connotations of use of such a symbol as a universal symbol. Further, though religious humanitarians prefer to be viewed by and large as apolitical providers of humanitarian works to overcome such difficult conditions as genocide, war-conflicts, famine, rape and 'hopelessness generated by institutional oppression and poverty,'[19] the role of religion cannot be ignored in such initiatives and in projects which can be called

'selfless vocation of service.'[20] In the last four decades or so, there has been a sustantial transition in religious humanitarianism of the Christian NGO's, with a shift from a charity-based approach to a rights-based approach. For Lynch, this shift is the effect of changing religious discourse. "Charity Model has difficulty in fulfilling the Gospel mandate to 'heal' the world, instead of promoting Band-Aid solutions to suffering."[21] Rights-based approach mentioned above is in consonance with the Christian Gospel's view of ministry which demands a holistic vision that includes striving for basic rights, empowerment and social justice. It means that religious reasoning changes the way NGO's act in the secular domain, and shape up their patterns of involvement in society. To put it differently, religions not only motivate religious NGO's to take care of the ill-effects of modern ideas, policies and practices at the personal and institutional levels, but also produce religious reasonings that alter the way religion-based agencies insert themselves in the social realm by fashioning their vision and mission.

This contributory dimension of religion can be identified as the performance-role of religion, to borrow Peter Beyer's idea,[22] and it is very significant in the functioning of the nation state and in the transformation of the life-worlds, especially of the common people. The humane ethos of the 'immanent frame'[23] cannot merely be imposed from above nor can be legislated by the state. It has to spring forth from below (within) and percolate people's lives all the way upward to their mind-set, and to their individual, collective and institutional consciousness and behaviour. It has to become part of their habitus which in turn would affect democratic nation state, its policies and its day-to-day public life.

It is in this context, we need to note that certain theological trends and ideas in our modern times demolish the predictions about neat separation between the secular and the religious and about restricting religion to the private sphere. At least two examples can be furnished in support of this view. For instance, the movement of liberation theology—which began and flourished in Latin American countries and Third World nations after 1970's—was based on the Christian idea of liberator God Yahweh who delivered the slaves from Egypt. It drew Christianity's attention to Jesus who intervened

in human history in support of the oppressed and marginalized. Its emphasis on liberator God provided compelling motivation and unparallel inspiration for the religious actors to get involved in the burning issues of society, and to take up the problems of exploitation and injustice, and thus to transform the world. They sought to address such simmering ill-effects of modernisation as exploitation of labour and the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor rendered by various economic schemes, educational projects and social practices. The second example is about the inculturation processes of the Catholic Church which began after Vatican II. Inspired by the Christian idea of the incarnation of God in the world (i.e. invisible God assuming visible human nature), this project calls for re-visioning of the 'word of God' as being born in local cultures and indigenous traditions. Within this framework, it is strongly argued that the Christian message should be translated into locally appropriate cultural idioms and practices which should be adopted and adapted for this purpose. Christian practices of Asian spiritual exercises such as *Yoga*, *Vipasana* and *Zen* meditation and establishment of Christian Ashrams and Christian centres of indigenous medical care which uses and preserves local herbs, some of which have become very rare, all of which illustrate that Christian agencies and organisations in the last four to five decades have been progressively evolving a more holistic and an inclusive view of the sacred in which the demarcation between the sacred and the profane, between the inner and the outer, the private and the public is made to vanish gradually. Thus the two examples that we cited indicate that the Christian movements, agencies and NGOs[24] show sustained interest in human emancipation here in this world rather than liberation in the next life, in the well-being of this worldly human existence rather than that of life-after death, and in a more holistic vision which embraces both the sacred and the profane as two sides of the same coin. Such a view engenders in religious actors perspectives and motives that drive them to get involved proactively with the day-to-day problems of secular modern states.

Ambivalent Roles of Religion in Modernity

Religion's relationship with the secular realm is not a one-sided affair. Religion affects and gets affected by the developments of the mundane

realities in which it is embedded. It is true all the more of our modern era which effects changes all around. Here, religion finds itself in a situation of continuity and change. As an agency of transcendental order and divine revelation, religion claims to transmit eternal truths and to provide stability. However, religions find themselves located in an unstable mundane world. Religious practitioners carry out their lives precariously, both individually and communally, here on earth. Hence the developments of the secular realm affect not only the life-styles, perspectives and personal preferences of the believers individually, but also those of the community collectively. Religion as an agency of meaning-system would make itself irrelevant if it cannot offer to its believers a meaningful re-interpretation of faith practices and a new set of religious services in this changed context. It means religions are forced to change in response to the changing contexts. However, as a transmitter of long-surviving tradition religion has to be beholden to the past. Thus religion finds itself in conflicting functions and ambivalent dynamics. In this context, I want to elaborate on five areas in which religion finds itself in a situation of ambivalence.

1. Religion and Globalisation

We live in a globalised world. Globalisation has become an all-compassing mega-phenomenon in which "the world is more and more becoming a single place," to borrow Ronald Robertson's expression. It has come to rein in every aspect of human life producing mutations in economic, political and cultural domains. More importantly, it has redefined borders and redrawn boundaries between these realms. Besides, globalisation is distinctively characterised by an unprecedented massive system of global communication. It has made it possible for each of the social subsystems like political, economic, scientific and religious to invent their own specific modes of communication. Thus each of the subsystems not only invades foreign territories and penetrates new soil, but in turn gets inhabited and encroached by other subsystems as well. As a result, their borders become porous and territories vulnerable to influences from outside. It is in this context, Peter Beyer talks about the 'performance' role of religion by which religion is believed to possess the power to wield influence in other subsystems as mentioned earlier. Others call

this the soft power of religion as opposed to the hard power of military and economic regimes of world systems. It is also true that just as other systems cannot remain impervious to religious influence in our globalized world, religion also becomes vulnerable to the outside forces and ideologies. When religious practitioners turn to other sources to come to terms with the opportunities and challenges of our era, their dependency on religion gets increasingly shrunk and religion loses its grip on its believers. Religion is no more the only source of reference for individuals to exercise their moral agency. Under these and other circumstances, both the leaders and the practitioners of religions feel threatened and religions undergo an identity crisis. To recover from this sense of identity loss, religions react very strongly by guarding its borders, reasserting its regime of doctrines and beliefs with high certitude, thus turning to religious fundamentalism which admits neither freedom to be exercised nor uncertainty to creep in. Thus, in this context of globalisation, religion finds itself in a situation of ambivalence. On the one hand, religion appropriates happily the newly evolving global networks to spread its ideas transnationally and reach out and take care of its diasporas spread across the globe. But on the other hand, it tends to withdraw into its own safe ideological and structural cocoons to shut off its practitioners from any threats and dangers of globalisation. Religion, once a pioneering agent of globalization of ideas, practices and cultures in human history, now resists the globalization process under which it faces loss of identity.

2. Religion and Development

Though development has come to be perceived as one of the visible markers of modernity, its meaning has been changing in the last four decades, leaving behind an interesting trajectory of how human beings altered their perspectives of progress and advancement. The concept of 'development' meant different things to different people at different times.[25] Buijs and other theorists point out that religion has played a 'substantive role' in the project of development.[26] By 'substantive role' is meant a set of motivations and actions provided by the system of religious values in initiating, promoting, universalizing, maintaining and sustaining the agenda of development.

For instance, Christians believe in the notion of the universal divine love which compels them to do good to all peoples and to all nations "even regardless of whether they themselves experience the intervention as *good* "[27] or not. Some also view the western notion of progress as a secularized and technicised translation of the Christian longing for a new heaven and a new earth. In this connection, it is interesting to note that development practice is also described as a missionary practice. "For without a missionary zeal, be it Christian, socialist or otherwise, it becomes very hard to keep up the motivation for and in the practice."[28] This enables people to connect the longing for a better world for the whole of humanity with the actual and concrete practice. Historically speaking, religions like Christianity did play a vital role in the old model of development. They developed hospitals, schools etc which, in many ways, promoted human development. They made people move from one part of the globe to the other for various charitable activities and developmental works. Religion thus did engage in the project of what Bas calls 'global responsibility.'[29]

However, in developmental theories, as Govert Buijs points out, there is a lack of recognition of the fact that behind the development practices there hovers a specific cultural-religious horizon. In fact there is a belittling of the roles that religious sentiments and religious experiences of meaning play in the practice and theory of development.[30] Bujis puts forward four reasons for the non-recognition of religion's ability to take part in the process of development: a) An assumption that modernization or development will drive out religion; b) religion is a private affair and hence is socially irrelevant; c) the religions of some people and cultures are unsuitable for development; d) religion cannot be changed or influenced. These reasonings help us understand the kind of cold relationship that existed between religion and the development theories.

Besides, the latest theorising on 'development' as promotion of human dignity shows that religion and development can move closer to each other in this mission. For instance, Nauta points out that development has to become a praxis, engaging in the recovery of the original meaning of intervention: *intervenire*, a process of

'coming in between' which involves much more than 'doing'. It should involve love, care and good will.[31] Accordingly, the author suggests that development has to be reconstituted as "a relational field of sharing and contestation where coming in between involves establishing an appropriate relationship between care of the self and care of the other."[32] Religion, as a moral interlocutor in any culture, can positively and constructively 'intervene' in cultural practices and social institutions, and can effectively become a partner with 'development' in constituting, confirming and sustaining an appropriate relationship between 'care of the self and care of the other.' However, a caveat is in place here: "care for the other carries the seeds of paternalism."[33] Both the projects of development and religious engagement in the world should take the necessary precaution not to be trapped by a kind of condescending paternalism.

As Giri points out, understanding the project of development in terms of the human (human right, human dignity) has helped only the broadening of the agenda of development, which perhaps lacks its complementary component of 'deepening.'[34] Giri suggests that this deepening can be actualized by bringing both an aesthetic and an ethical perspective and mode of participation to this field of relationship.[35]

Further, care of the poor—the current concern of the ethics of development—has been, for centuries, the legacy of most religions' teaching on love. All religions, be it Christianity, Islam, Jainism or Hinduism, have given importance to the care of the 'poor' and the needy,[36] though they might do so in varying degrees. Religion's proactive role in the development project calls for new ways of theorising which will take into account, on the one hand the different concepts of the 'other' given in different religious traditions, and on the other hand, reinterpret them in a manner that will pave the way for aesthetics of self that will lead to better inter-religious dialogues/ praxis-collaborations. In order to do this, the philosophers and theologians of each religious tradition have to aim at trans-disciplinary engagement, wherein, without losing one's rootedness, one transcends one's systemic chauvinism, and communicates one's specificity to the other, not so much for the transformation of the other, but for

the mutual enhancement of one another. This type of religious engagement can play a vital role in the global modern society.

3. *Religion, Communal Violence and Peace-building*

Conflicts and violence seem to have become one of the recurring events of our modern society. Phenomenologically speaking, the fact that more and more communal violence takes place, not in the rural areas, but in the urban settings goes to show its relationship with modernity. At the intersection of religion and violence are the possibilities provided by modernity and its manifestations such as urbanisation, migration, economic opportunities which the social actors engage in and compete for in the modern societies. As Wilkinson argues, though these possibilities and practices do not directly cause violence in most cases, they contribute to the perpetuation and spread of violence.[37] As Jafferlot[38] and Brass[39] demonstrate, most of the incidents of communal violence is deliberately orchestrated for political mileage by political parties during election time—an important event in democracy, one of the most acknowledged features of modernity—'to raise communal temperature and solidify the electorate behind the party.'[40] So too the social actors who have interest in real estate or other lucrative businesses or a grouse against the migrants of a particular religion capitalise on this communally tense situation to settle scores with their religious opponents and thus participate in communal violence.

That said about the relationship of communal violence to modernity, it is equally true that the modern period witnesses across the globe more and more initiatives taken by different agencies to tap into religious resources for conflict-resolution and peace-building. The seed of peace and harmony is to be found in all religions. Hindu's thrice-repeated prayer of "*om, shanti, shanti, shanti'* invokes the idea of tranquillity and calmness of mind. The Buddhist practice of *metta* meditation aims at generating loving kindness, a process which proceeds from kindness and concern toward oneself, extends itself to one's friends, to those who are indifferent, even to ones' own enemies and gradually expands to include all persons in the world, and all beings throughout the whole of space and time. The Hebrew idea of '*shalom*' calls for harmonious relationship within the family,

local community and among the nations, and it comes from a root, meaning 'wholeness', considered to be a richer concept than the English word 'peace'. Muslims' greeting of *'salaam'*, an Arabic word which means 'peace with you', was a customary salutation since the time of the Holy Quran. *'Salaam'* also means more than peace as it includes contentment, good health, prosperity, security and fullness of life. Contrary to the general perception that Islam promotes religious militancy, Muslims in general understand Islam as a religion of peace, for "Quran sees peace as the will of Allah, whom it describes as 'the King, the Holy, the peaceful." The Christian idea of peace is said to be founded on the famous *Sermon on the Mount* which says, 'Blessed are those who are peace makers, because they shall be called sons of God.' Peace-makers like Dalai Lama, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu, Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, Nelson Mandella, Abdul Ghaffar Khan from Afghanistan, Helder Camera and Oscar Romero do represent various religious traditions which they found as valuable sources of inspiration for peace and harmony. German Theologian Hans Kung's famous 1991 book *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* contains an often quoted famous statement "No peace among the nations without peace among the religions; no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions." [41] Kung played a very significant role in producing the 'Declaration toward a Global Ethic' promulgated by the Parliament of the World Religions in Chicago in 1993. Religion's role in peace building is also reiterated in *The Earth Charter* of UNESCO promulgated in 2000, which calls upon humanity to attend to 'the wisdom of the world's great religions and philosophical traditions'[42] to evolve fundamental principles for constructing 'a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st Century.'[43]

Organisations like WCRP (World Conference on Religion and Peace),[44] Universal Peace Foundation which also promotes peace through its journal Dialogue and Alliance, The American Quaker and Peacemaker Elise Boulding (1920-2010) and initiatives like Annual week of World Peace supported by different faith traditions of the world do highlight the centrality of religions' contribution to bring about global peace.[45]

4. Religion and Ecology

One of the worst fallouts of modernity is its mindless destruction of natural resources by human beings who have taken recourse to instrumental rationality in the name of development. This approach rests on the view that human beings, with their power of reason is superior to all beings and as pinnacle of creation/evolution, have a right to instrumentalise their reason only towards their personal well-being, comfort and happiness. This view clearly discredits the worth of other beings and the value of natural resources, reducing them to be mere objects to be exploited. This view translated into developmental and technological practices has proven to be catastrophic. Although the ecological crisis is often ascribed to the Christian worldview which not only hails human beings as the crown of creation but also has given to them a god-given mandate of subduing the earth, this has been shown to be untenable; rather it is a product of modernity.[46] This is further confirmed by the fact that exploitation of nature and its resources are rampant not only in the global north but also in the global south, i.e., Asia, which is primarily a non-Christian world. Nevertheless, there is a growing awareness and consensus among the academia that religion and culture are key players to solve the problem of current ecological crisis. They fall back upon religio-cultural resources and try to unearth views, motives, dispositions and practices buried in religious myths and rituals. In particular special attention is paid to indigenous religious beliefs and rituals that make humans respect nature as an extension of oneself.

5. Religion and Human Rights

The relationship between nation and religion is not a one-way process. As religions can suggest correctives and offer humane practices to the effectiveness of the nation state, nation state and its best practices can also offer changes to religions. For instance, the idea of democracy, equality and justice, the reigning ideals of nation state needed to penetrate the religious domain especially in countries like India where discrimination based on caste, class and gender in the social realm is religiously sanctioned and sustained, and has come to affect the very character of religious practices whose equalitarian face continues to remain much to be desired even in Independent

India in spite of the efforts taken to correct them. The provisions of Article 25 clause 2 of Indian constitution came to defend the religious freedom of the Hindu Dalits, the ex-untouchables of India. It stipulates the responsibility of the state to ensure the public character of Hindu religious institutions by opening its doors to all classes and sections of the Hindus. In conformity with this constitutional principle, state after state introduced and passed in its legislative assembly the controversial Temple Entry Law in favour of Dalits. This constitutional principle and the Temple Entry Law were seen as defiance of Hindu *varnashrama dharma* by the orthodox Hindus, while for the founding Fathers and the architects of Indian Constitution, the existing Hindu Dharma was a violation of the basic human and democratic rights of the Dalit citizens. Hence the new law was seen as a major step to ensure the restoration of dignity, liberty and the human rights of the Dalits, denied until recently by the Sanskritic Hindu religion. Thus the famous statement that 'state and religion are mutually constitutive in secularism' acquires a new contextual meaning in India's democratic secularism.

Further, religions can play a significant proactive role in protecting human rights, especially of the women even in Muslim countries. For instance, in the Muslims dominated democratic state of Senegal, many feminist and human rights groups wanted to stop the inhuman practice of female genital mutilation (FGM).[47]And the campaign against FGM could not have borne positive results had ANIOS (National Association of Imams of Senegal) not openly declared that this heinous practice had no sanctions either from the Quran or from the Haddiths. ANIOS further sought the help of government authorities and NGOs to train imams on the ills of FGM and to provide facilities to the imams to give talks on radio and television to convey the message to the people. Subsequently, Abdoul Aziz Kebe, the coordinator for the largest Sufi order in Senegal, the Tijans, wrote a powerful forty-five page document detailing religious and medical reasons in favour of the ban on FGM, which was widely circulated and well received by the general public in Senegal.[48]

Conclusion

As open-ended beings, humans evolve and adapt themselves to the changing conditions of their inhabitation. Hence they can neither remain immutable with regard to the social conditions of their life-world nor stay immune to the impeding changes of their historical period. As they advance, their former notions, institutions and structures need to be altered and repositioned, and new meanings of the old and fresh visions, goals and directions of ever growing new frontiers need to be acquired. No institution can escape this inevitable process. Not even religion, one of the oldest institutions of human civilisation, can circumvent this route. However, religion also remains as the most enduring phenomena in human history since humans, as meaning-seeking animals, seek—with the help of religious resources—transcendent meaning in the contingencies of human existence, and beyond the new frontiers humans explore. As people undergo complex transformations in multiple social locations of our modern world, their consciousness gets altered and religious reasoning and sacred ideas enter their discursive and practical consciousness to deal with the new situations. In such contexts, the religious practitioners do experience two discordant sets of roles played by religion: one in support of transformations and another quite critical and subversive of recent and imminent changes encountered in our modern era. This article has shown how this process transforms, and gets transformed by religion, and the way religion is received, rejected, defended, contested and condoned in the bargain of modernity.

Notes :

1. Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntherpen, "Introduction" in Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntherpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15.
2. Ibid., 16.
3. Ibid.
4. Grace Davies, "Global Civil Religion: A European Perspective," *Sociology of Religion* 62, no 4 (Winter 2000): 467-68.

5. Alfred Stephan, "The Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democratic and Non-democratic Regimes" in Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntherpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 118.

6. Daniel Philpott and Timothy Samuel, "Faith, freedom, and Federation: the Role of Religious Ideas and Instructions in European Political Convergence" in Timothy A.Byrnes and Peter J. Katzenstein, eds., *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 47.

7. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Jens Riedel and Dominic Sachsenmaier, "The Context of the Multiple Modernities Paradigm" in Dominic Sachsenmaier and Jens Riedel with Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, eds., *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities* (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2002), 1.

8. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, "Some Observations on Multiple Modernities" in Dominic Sachsenmaier and Jens Riedel with Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, eds., *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities* (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2002), 27.

9. Cf. Talal Asad. "Thinking about Religion, Belief, and Politics." in Robert A. Orsi, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 36–57.

10. David Scott, *Refashioning Futures: Criticism After Post-coloniality* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 55.

11. Ibid., 56.

12. While the prevalent western/Christian categorisation of religions was four-fold, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Heathenism, early Europeans did explore varieties of 'sects' or 'religions' in category of 'Heathenism.' Cf. Will Sweetman, "Unity and Plurality: Hinduism and the Religions of India in Early European Scholarship," *Religion* 31 (2001): 209–224.

13. Cf. Ibid., ; Bryan Smith 'Questioning Authority: Constructions and Deconstructions of Hinduism,' *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 2 (1998): 313–39.

14. Asad, 'Thinking about Religion,' 39.

15. Ibid. [24] See Lynch ('Religious Humanitarianism,' 218-221) takes note of various religious agencies and NGO's that seek to promote the

well-being of this worldly human existence in different parts of the world.

16. Scott, *Refashioning Futures*, 56.

17. Ibid., 58.

18. Cf. Ibid., 55 ; Asad, 'Thinking about Religion,' 39.

19. Cecelia Lynch, 'Religious Humanitarianism and the Global Politics of Secularism,' in Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntherpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 208.

20. Ibid., 207.

21. Ibid., 217.

22. Peter Beyer in his book Religion *and Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 1997) distinguishes between the function and performance of religion. While function refers to religion's ability to deal with problems arising in its domain, performance refers to religion's capability to influence other domains.

23. See Charles Taylor's book *Secular Age* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007) for the distinction between transcendental frame and immanent frame.

24. See Lynch ('Religious Humanitarianism,' 218-221) takes note of various religious agencies and NGO's that seek to promote the well-being of this worldly human existence in different parts of the world.

25. Scholars identify three post-World War II phases of development. In the first phase (1947-1949) between the world war and the beginning of the cold war, development was seen as a 'work of hope,' aiming at alleviating poverty. In the second phase (1949—1980's) of cold war, development was first defined as 'growth with change,' referring to economic and cultural change, influenced by structural functionalism. Later in mid 1970s, it meant a decent standard of living for all humans, in line with the basic human rights as defined in the UN charter, and measured by 'human development indicators.' In the third phase (1990-), the natural environment and its ecology became integrated into the development discourse, and 'sustainable development' became the watchword. Yet, development had little to do with equity and justice for all. It was in this context that the UN General Assembly resolution called for politi-

cal will to invest in people and their well-being in what could be the trend setter for the next millennium, and set up a special committee in the year 2000 to review the process of development. Following these, a whole array of new discourses of development, such as Amartya Sen's idea of development as freedom (i.e., development as expansion of substantive freedom to achieve alternative functions), development as human dignity and human rights, development as 'global responsibility' development as cultivation of 'self' etc...has acquired significance in the development theories.

26. Not all religions were always positively evaluated by social scientists in relation to development as in the case of development as economic progress. For instance, Max Weber indicted Hinduism as anti-development. It not only lacked resources to promote development but contained within itself ideological and doctrinal underpinnings that demote development, a controversial position contested by many. At the same time, his famous work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* illustrates the positive role of Protestant Christianity in inspiring and motivating Christians to undertake with rigour economic pursuits not for materialistic benefits but for a spiritual goal.

27. Buijs, "Religion and Development," in Giri et.al, *The Development of Religion and the Religion of Development* (CW Delft: Eburon Delft, 2004), 104.

28. Ibid.

29. Cf. Bas de Gaay Forman, "In Search for a New Paradigm" in Ananta Kumar Giri et al. *The Development of Religion and the Religion of Development.*

30. Buijs, "Religion and Development," 102.

31. Cf. Wiebe Nauta, "A Moral Critique of Fieldwork," in Ananta Kumar Giri et al. *The Development of Religion and the Religion of Development*, 91.

32. Ibid.

33. Cf. Quarles van Ufford, Ph. and Ananta Kumar Giri, "Development as a shared responsibility: Ethics, aesthetics and a creative shaping of human possibilities" in Ufford and Giri, eds., *A Moral Critique of development* (London: Routledge, 2003).

34. Cf. Ananta Kumar Giri, *New Horizons of Social Theory* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2006), 200

35. Ibid.

36. One might wonder if Hinduism has an other-centered ethics. The concepts of *daya*, *dana*, *seva* and *lokasangraha* in Hinduism show that it has the other as a reference point for the pursuit of one's *dharma*. The total welfare of all (*lokasangraha)* is integral to one's liberation. For instance Gita says, "Lokasangraham evapi sampasyan kartum arhasi (3:20)." It means one's action, which leads to salvation, has to be for *lokasangraha*. The first verse of *Isa Upanishad* states, "Behold everything in the form of God". This 'advaitic' statement should create a deep respect for all forms of life and cultivate a sense of equality among all beings. Later *visistadvaita* philosophy and other bhakti schools of Vedanta viewed the whole world and the human beings either as different parts or as different aspects of one God. This indicates how the concept of the 'other' understood as a reality outside one's self is regarded *metaphysically* sacred in Hindu traditions.

37. Steven I. Wilkinson, "Introduction" in Wilkinson ed., *Religious Politics and Communal Violence (*New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-23.

38. Christopher Jafferlot, "The Politics of Processions and Hindu-Muslim Riots" in Wilkinson , ed., *Religious Politics,* 280-307.

39. Paul Brass, *The Production of Hindu Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (New Delhi: OUP, 2003)

40. Wilkinson, "Introduction," 13.

41. Ursula King, "Reflections on Peace, Women, and the World's Faiths," *Dialogue & Alliance* 25, no 1 (summer 2011) 15.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. WCRC is the outcome of the dream of four religious leaders Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, Bishop John Wesley Lord, and Bishop John Wright who held a number of local conferences in the US and several consultation meetings in different parts of the world including one in New Delhi in 1968 which finally culminated in the first World Conference on Religion and Peace in Kyoto, Japan in 1970. So far, five such worldwide conferences have been held so. While openly and humbly stating that religious elements have aggravated rather than reconciled existing tensions and conflicts among communities, the conference is resolved to "work to-

gether as religious people and with all people of good-will for the realization of a world free of violence -- a world in which all people may live in freedom, justice, and peace." (See their web site at http://info@wcrp.org)

45. Cf. Ursula King, "Reflections on Peace, Women, and the World's Faiths," *Dialogue & Alliance* 25, no 1 (summer 2011), 8-18.

46. See, for example, George Karuvelil, "Contemporary Ecological Crisis: Tracing Its Emergence, *Jnanadeepa: Pune Journal of Religious Studies* 8, no 2 (July 2006), 5-19.

47. Cf.Alfred Stepan, "The Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democratic and Non-Democratic Regimes" in Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntherpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism*, 114-144.

48. Ibid., 132-134.

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Religion and Modernity: The Future of Belief in the Secularized Society

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Abstract: The author narrates the complex relationship between modernity and religion in the past and explores its future. After a brief introduction to modernity, its failed mission of secularization and the resurgence of religion are dealt with. The article ends with four intellectual challenges that faces Christian theology in the changed scenario: intelligibility of the love-ethic in a world of individualism, a consistent stand on human dignity in a world of conflicting messages, connecting to the spiritual longing of our contemporaries, and articulating the Jesus Christ as the mediator of immanent transcendence to a culture that seems to lack the sense of transcendence.

Key Words: modernity, religion, secularization, future of faith.

The debate on Modernity is of immediate relevance to the very destiny of Christianity, indeed of religion, in the contemporary world. What is at stake is no less than the future of the possibility of faith itself, in a society undergoing rapid changes. The debate is not only sociological or historical but also specifically theological. The thesis of this paper is that far from being interpreted in terms of a challenge and even a threat, this debate could be about an opportunity for Christianity and for religions in general.

What is Modernity?

Sociologically and historically Modernity refers to the four revolutions inaugurated already by the middle of the 17th century: revolutions in science and philosophy, revolutions in culture and theology, revolutions in state and society and revolutions in technology and industry.[1] Underlying these revolutions were the catchwords of Modernity, Reason, Progress and Nation which again were based on the two foundation stones of Modernity: subjectivity and rationality. Modernity was the emergence of a human subject aware of its autonomy and rationality, leading to tremendous transformations in the world. The modern man is the "newly self-conscious and autonomous human being – curious about the world, confident in his own judgements, skeptical of orthodoxies,

rebellious against authority, responsible for his own beliefs and actions, enamoured of the classical past but even more committed to a greater future, proud of his humanity, conscious of his distinctness from nature, aware of his artistic powers as individual creator, assured of his intellectual capacity to comprehend and control nature, and altogether less dependent on an omnipotent God."[2] He was the product of an extraordinary convergence of events, ideas and figures in Europe between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries beginning with the Renaissance, followed by the Reformation and the other momentous developments. These collectively ended the cultural hegemony of the Catholic Church in Europe and established the more individualistic, sceptical and secular spirit of the modern age.

Compared to the preceding medieval worldview, the modern world had some radically different perspectives. In contrast to a cosmos which was not only created but continuously and directly governed by a personal and omnipotent God, the modern universe was an impersonal phenomenon governed by natural laws. The Christian dualistic stress on the supremacy of the spiritual and transcendent over the material and concrete was now largely inverted, with the physical world becoming the predominant focus for human activity. With an enthusiastic embrace of this world, human aspiration was now increasingly centred on fulfilment of this- worldly desires, dreams and aspirations. Science replaced religion as the pre-eminent intellectual authority, as definer, judge, and guardian of the cultural world view. Human reason and empirical observation replaced theological doctrines and scriptural revelation as the principal means for comprehending the universe. Radical human independence – intellectual, psychological, spiritual – was affirmed, against all structures and authority that would inhibit self-expression. The goal of Modernity was to create the greatest possible freedom for man from nature, from oppressive political, social, or economic structures, from restrictive religious beliefs, from the Church and from God.[3]

Cosmologically, however, Modernity was a move away from a human-centred universe. Modern cosmology posited a planetary earth in a neutral infinite space with a complete elimination of the traditional celestial-terrestrial dichotomy. The universe did not exist for man; it consisted of straightforwardly material entities moved by

natural and mechanical forces composed of the same material substances as those found on the earth. Complementing this was the theory of evolution and its multitude of consequences for the understanding of human beings and other biological entities. The origin of species and of man was exclusively attributed to natural causes and empirically observable processes. Thus as the earth has been removed from the centre of creation to become another planet, so now was man removed from the centre of creation to become another animal.

How Successful was Modernity?

It is certain that after all the experiences of revolution, Modernity now appears to thinking people in a different light from that in which it appeared to itself. There is still no disputing the magnificent achievements of Modernity with its revolutions in science and philosophy, technology and industry, state and society. But there are also critical questions which we cannot avoid putting to this Modernity and its leading values of reason, progress, nation, etc. which resulted in an equally unprecedented existential danger to humankind. The deadly irrationality of the enlightenment notions of reason, nation and progress and their dehumanizing consequences continue to haunt and afflict human communities with war, violence, poverty, and destruction of the natural foundations of life. It is impossible even to summarize the diagnoses of Georg Simmel and Max Weber, of Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, of Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, of Michel Foucault, Jean-Francios Lyotard, Jürgen Habermas, Antony Giddens, Stephen Toulmin, etc.[4] Almost all of them were anticipated by the theologian Karl Barth with his radical criticism of Modernity who initiated the postmodern paradigm in theology.[5]

Today there may be said to be largely a consensus about the crisis of the modern paradigm and its leading values. Given the development in world history, particularly, in the twentieth century,[6] it makes little sense to deny it. Modernity sought to sell one project after another to promote the reign of reason, but in almost every case one saw the triumph of unreason. In an age in which millions have perished in gas chambers and labour camps, new technologies of mass destruction have grown into a monstrous cancer and ideas

have come to look more and more like advertisements of rationalizations, every blueprint of a rational society cannot but appear as a cruel joke. In the face of such barbarism and unprecedented crimes against humanity, it was not reason, which was all too adaptable, that made resistance possible, but rather personal convictions, values, attitudes and moral courage. It is not that there is nothing good with the Modernity project but it has to shed some of its inflated claims and false hopes. Enlightened ultramodernists would do well to ask the simple question: why should western societies feel so distraught at a time when they have never had it so good in terms of material comforts? Why this uneasy feeling among some over having hit the ceiling or having reached the end of their tether?

And what about the Postmodern? While it proclaims an end to Modernity, Postmodernity has only radical pluralism or relativism to offer as an alternative.[7] Are "arbitrariness, colourfulness, a mix of anything and everything, an anarchy of thoughts and styles, a principle of aesthetic and literary collage, a methodological "anything goes", a moral "anything that gives you pleasure", are these and suchlike going to be able to overcome the dilemmas of Modernity?"[8] Here the necessity of a lack of consensus is turned into the virtue of randomness. Modernity in all its contradictions is not overcome, but is merely repeated yet again in a hyped-up form. Postmodernity in this sense is a disguised form of "Late Modernity."[9] Like a totalitarian unity without multiplicity, so, too, a relativistic plurality without unity is hardly the way to a better future. The postmodern challenge lacks clarity and vision for the future.

Modernity and Religion

Fortunately there is the increasing conviction among nations and peoples that humanity has an ethical vocation and that religion may have a role to play in helping to refocus on it. This is the background of the discussion that follows now; the focus will essentially be on Christianity and Europe, but the conclusions can be applied to religions in general. It is often said that Modernity was a development of the potentialities inherent in Christianity (for example, the emergence of the human subject as an agent of history), but finally it became a powerful rival of Christianity, and in many ways Christianity became its victim. In fact, many supporters of Modernity even prophesied

the end of religion, its progressive and inescapable disappearance. Yet it is yet to be demonstrated that the end of the social function of religion is necessarily the end of religion itself; or that the stress on the autonomous and free subject is a betrayal of the essence of religion - the total submission to the divine; that religion and Modernity are essentially in conflict. Historically it is true that there has been a conflict to a certain extent, but it is in no way normative for the future. Today we are in a better position to appreciate the irreversible gains of Modernity: the historical critical method the autonomy of culture, the uncoupling of religion and politics, the legitimacy of the modern state as a legal entity, the legitimate autonomy of civil societies, the concept of democracy, etc. But the ills of Modernity and the return of religion show that the alleged massive secularization that has taken place in the wake of the Enlightenment does not mean the end of religion.

At the same time, there is also a real consensus that dreams of a new Christianization of Europe and a Christianization of the world are illusory. The real opportunity for Christianity and religions in general lies in the chance to rethink creatively the forms in which they can be present to the men and women of today and communicate with them. The vocation to bear witness to a prophetic vision of human beings and society cannot be given up or allowed to be progressively marginalized. The existence of a secular ethic does not in any way make witnessing to the paradox of the gospel superfluous. Christianity, and for that matter, any religion cannot afford to forget its historic vocation of calling men and women to their existential roots. This is one of the most promising tasks of a theological interpretation of Modernity.

It would be helpful here to briefly recall the attitude of the Catholic Church to Modernity. It was not felicitous; it sought to be resolutely anti-modern because it thought that Enlightenment reason undermined faith, authority and hierarchy. The result was an anti-modernist stance and a purge, which lasted right up to the Second Vatican Council. The entire energy of generations of Churchmen was wasted on protecting the integrity of the Christian faith in the face of the sacrilegious claims of Modernity. Only after Vatican II did it dawn on the Church that secularization is not necessarily to be

identified with secular atheism, that freedom of conscience would not fatally compromise the rights of a true objectivity.

One gets an idea about this "mutual exclusion" from the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX (1864) and *Pascendi* of Pius X (1907). But there was a substantial group of Christians who pleaded for an accommodation to modern thought which was rejected by the Church.[10] The Church was caught unawares by Modernity whose magnitude, consequences and power it was unable to measure. For a long time its great resource was resistance to what it saw as repudiation and apostasy and failed to engage in any coherent or specific reflection on it, although the revolutions of Modernity were prepared long before by centuries of Christianity itself. But it is fruitless to lament the lapses of the past. If the Church admits that the conscience is sovereign, autonomous and creative, that it has an authority of its own, a rapport with the modern mind is already created. This is the challenge facing the Church – finding relevant connecting factors for an interaction between the two. This is the task of theology. But even those who argue that the Christian religion may have a role in the modern world are doubtful about the present day theology. It looks as if theology is lagging behind cultural developments generally, and is simply reacting; it is no longer able to communicate in the cultural pluralism of our time. Theological contributions to a future world order can only rarely be detected in current discussions. Theologians are more concerned with hermeneutical and methodological questions than with concrete plans from a Christian perspective for a universal world order. So it is not surprising to hear, religion yes, theology no, praxis yes, theory no.

The Persistence of Religion

The great dream of the twentieth century, of the final demise of religion and the existence of a religionless society, has turned out to be a myth. Religions are thriving and new religious movements are flourishing in every corner of the globe with a different religious sensibility, new priorities, forms of expression and sources of inspiration.[11] The survival of the sacred is a fact in spite of the prediction of its disappearance by some of the great thinkers for over a century: August Comte, Karl Marx, Max Weber, etc.[12] Many assumed that religions would just wither away – along, as Hegel put

it, with all opposition to Modernity. But religion turns up in strange places, in the industrialized secular society, in scientific enterprise, in political radicalism, in psychology, and of course in the traditional places, in mysticism, in popular piety and so on. The most convincing case study has been America where it has been proved that in spite of the shifting social patterns, religion continues to exercise important social functions.[13] In fact, there is a resurgence of religion the world over, much of which is a backlash against the anti-religious secular currents in the Western world, ending in fundamentalism and religious terrorism. This "revenge of God"[14] is an indication of the fact that religion is not an accident of biology,[15] but a fundamental human activity dealing with issues of utmost significance for human life. Religious claims are purpose claims.[16] They are still the meaning-giving systems for a vast majority of human beings.[17] It may be that religion in one form or another is an abiding human phenomenon.

Religion is rushing into a vacuum created by the ills of Modernity. Modernity's liberal thinking and acting have brought about much prosperity, freedom and self-fulfilment to human beings; but it has also increased individual self-interest, caused unimaginable ecological degradation and impoverished our personal and social relationships. It has reduced morality into a mere expression of personal preference. It is into this vacuum that religion is rushing. This shows that the religion-secularism debate is not over but is beginning all over again. What is needed is a new kind of settlement based not on containment or tolerance but which is more positive and creative. We cannot forget that we are still drawing on the moral capital of centuries of religious tradition in which many of our secular truths find their origin. Nobody can say that only religion can make people moral, but it was through religion that morality has historically been created, nurtured and transmitted. Secular liberalism is having great difficulty in replenishing this moral capital. It offers, at best, a relativist amorality; it provides no checks on the excesses that we see all around. Religion has something to offer to help to make good this deficit, but not religious revisionists. The sacred and the secular, the religious and the profane, are not opposite poles of an evolutionary model but alternative dimensions of reality which interrelate with one another, and interpenetrate each other in complex periodicity.

But what religion would be in the future is a difficult question to answer. There are all forms that religiosity takes today and could take in the future. At one end we have the vague spirituality of the New Age. At the other, we have fundamentalism and terrorism.[18] There is traditional religiosity, but there is also the fascination with the occult and the Eastern meditations. There is also a new sensibility towards human solidarity, especially towards the underprivileged, often practised by people on the margins of the Church or even who have abandoned the Church. Vatican II calls this the "birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined primarily in terms of his responsibility for the brothers and for history."[19] They are secular but their actions have a deeply religious dimension. So we know now how inadequate and misleading is the strict separation of the sacred and the secular. People begin to experience the sacred as a deeper dimension of secular experiences. There is religious meaning in man's vocation to become fully human. Although a one sided anthropocentrism is not the whole experience of religion, this new humanism is very much an element of religion. The interest in the occult and Eastern meditations on the other hand, is a fascination found in the elite, and it is not grounded in social life. It is inspired by social resentment than by identification with a social commitment. They are gods of the moment without much power. However, the new religious experience of man's humanity, so widely spread among divers groups has shown remarkable social vitality and has become a source of renewal even within the Christian Churches.

The Religion-Secularism Debate in Modernity

In the light of the above reflections, we need to take a fresh look at the history of the religion-secularism debate, and answer a few fundamental questions. The first one is, does Modernity or modernization lead to secularization? For a long time this question was answered in the positive, both by militant opponents of religion and those who waited patiently for the disappearance of religion. Even believers, theologians and Churchmen were convinced that it was inevitable that with modernization, there has to be secularization and some even saw it as a chance given by God to clean up the system. Surely there were doubts about this widely circulated thesis, but the history of the last twenty years has laid this thesis to rest.

People don't doubt the phenomenon of secularization but question the interdependence of modernization and secularization.

Let us also clarify the concept of secularization. We are not dealing with a history of this concept.[20] But it is useful to say that it arose very much in an ecclesiastical context, where Religious clergy was contrasted with the "secular" clergy or the clergy in the "world"; sometimes the process by which clergymen who abandoned their priesthood and went back to a lay state was called secularization. Then in the course of the Napoleonic wars of the 19th century, property of the Church was taken over by the state and this was called secularization and from this developed a philosophical and theological concept of secularization in which the characteristic features of modern society and culture were contrasted with the Christian faith or religion in general. This is the starting point of the sociological discussion of the phenomenon in the late nineteenth century.[21] Sociology has used the word to mean the following: a generally declining significance of religion or a retreat of religion from the public sphere and freeing of social functions like economy, science, art, politics, etc. from the control of religion, or in a more understandable language, as a general weakening of traditional religious faith, affiliation, and practice along with a strict distinction between church and state.

But secularization is not a straight-line transition from faith to disbelief that works at a uniform rate, or with predictable outcomes. So the decision not to affiliate with a church does not necessarily mean defection from religion. There are people who believe without belonging. There is a notable number of Europeans who say they believe in God, or who pray, and yet say that they have no religious affiliation. Conversely there are also pockets of Europeans who say they belong to a church, but who don't necessarily believe in God, go to church, pray or regard religion as important. This is belonging without believing. Grace Davie coined the word "vicarious religion" meaning people who don't belong to a church and who don't practice a faith, but who for various reasons want religion to hang around. When the need arises, ultra-secular people spontaneously flock to local churches.[22] Again when one speaks of the retreat of religion from the public sphere, there is no clear sign of that, since religion

still continues to be an effective public entity in many so-called secular societies.

The history of the secularization thesis has not been written but some sketches can be made.[23] The first representative of the thesis that Christianity has only a limited future, that it would be dead by 1900, was the Englishman, Thomas Woolston (1670-1733). But the real prospering of this thesis happened in the nineteenth century. Everyone with name and fame in the social sciences, like Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, George Herbert Mead, Friedrich Nietzsche and many more dealt with the topic. Of course there were opponents, like Alexis de Tocqueville, William James, Jacob Burckhardt, Ernst Troeltsch, Max Scheler, etc. By the 1960s it came to be accepted as a matter of course. So Peter Berger said in 1968 that in the year 2000 there would be practically no religious institutions, but only some individual believers, who will have to fend for themselves in the ocean of secularity.[24] A counter argument to him was delivered by David Martin.[25]

One problem here was the understanding of religion and faith by these sociologists. Some saw religion as cognitively unripe and offering an inferior knowledge, a pseudo-science. Another understanding was that religion is a wrong response to suffering, material need and social and political oppression, the famous "opium of the people" of Karl Marx. Another understanding of religion was that of an authoritarian system where no questioning and doubts are allowed. In any case, religious knowledge, faith, etc. were considered to be inferior forms of expression of an immature humanity.[26] So it was hoped that modern thought and modernization would do away with this sort of religiosity, and secularity would triumph.

Of course, the representatives of these arguments do not know what religion really is and what it does for human beings. Human beings have always looked to their different religions for an answer to the unsolved riddles of human existence, because all religions "attempt in their own ways to calm the hearts of men by outlining a programme of life covering doctrine, moral precepts and sacred rites."[27] The primary purpose of religion is not creation of knowledge, but trust. It deals with fundamental human experiences of suffering, pain and happiness and not with issues like individual freedom nor is it concerned with limiting human freedom.[28]

We have already noted that the sociological thesis that Modernity leads to secularization is not a universally valid proposition. In the first place, even in Europe there are exceptions, like Poland, Ireland, Croatia, and even Bavaria in Germany; in America religion has remained strong in spite of it being a thoroughly modernized society. Empirically it is proved that membership in religious communities went up continuously from 1800 to 1950 and grew by 400 percent. There is surely a lot of modernizing tendencies all over the world, but there is no question of a wave of secularization and loss of religion. In this context it is also useful to say that European religiosity was not a seamless robe, that it was not always a religious continent. There was always criticism of the Church and it had a lot of problem keeping its flock religious. It is enough to go through the disciplinary decrees of the councils and the matters on which they legislated to understand this point. So, modernization is in no way essentially linked to secularization and secularization takes place without modernization. The entire thesis was developed from the experience of France and some West-European countries which was then made a state ideology by the Marxists in the countries of Eastern Europe. This of course should not and need not lead to triumphalism of the Churches and religions to establish that religion is essential for spiritual and moral health and motivation and social binding. This is also not true.

The second question is whether Modernity or modernization leads to destruction of morality. It was clearly established by William James that great examples of asceticism and heroic moral life were found among religious people, but it was not to say that such examples were not to be found among non-religious people.[29] It is not true that without religious faith there will be a moral collapse and that social order would simply break down. Even in the most secularized countries there is no total loss of morality. Some of the most corrupt countries in the world are some of the most religious ones. Some of the most violent countries are where religion is very vibrant, like America.[30] Causal relation between secularization and moral collapse does not exist. There are of course radical elements on both sides. Radical atheists, like Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, see religious people as limited in intelligence or even outright stupid, but it is equally laughable when radical Christian groups see atheists as

ignorant, irrational, amoral, etc.[31] Often the atheists of the nineteenth century were against Christianity because in their view, Christianity preached an other-worldly religion and did little for the life this side; Christian morality was a morality of guilt, denial of the body, and it was full of hypocrisy. Whether these accusations are justified or not, one thing is sure, their motives were fundamentally moral. As Ernst Troeltsch said, the atheistic ethic is possible only because it is able to measure itself against a religious ethic.[32] There is a non-religious source of morality. The reciprocity and community feeling found in primitive societies are not founded on any religious belief.[33] The entire history of human rights can be seen as a complex history of religious and secular forces working together and not as Christian or anti-Christian. So secularization does not lead to the collapse of morality. Morality is strengthened by religion, but the moral orientation is pre-religion. It is not correct to say that values and morality need God. When believing people articulate and live a set of values, it does not mean that non-believing people cannot articulate the same values. Secularization does not weaken morality, but weakening of religion does destroy one of the important pillars of morality.

The story of secularization is best expressed by Owen Chadwick in his story of the origin of the Pantheon in Paris which was originally supposed to be a Church in honour of St. Genevieve.[34] It shows that it was not a linear, continuous, and uniform process but has a very complex, conflicting, heterogeneous, and contingent history. There were different waves of secularization and it did not, as often thought, happen because of the unified efforts of some "enlightened" French intellectuals.

At least three waves can be observed.[35] The first wave was from 1791 till 1803. The French Revolution was the first major political attack on Christianity since the Roman persecutions in the early centuries of Christianity. What led to this was not the religious role of the Church, but its political and economic role. The Church was now made a state Church, and the clergy was divided into Constitutional and anti-Constitutional clergy, which led to the persecution of the anti-Constitutional clergy. What infuriated the anti-religious faction was the condemnation of the Revolution by Pope

Pius VI. Basically the regions that were affected were France and some countries which were in close alliance with it.

The second wave began at the middle of the nineteenth century as a result of rapid urbanization and industrialization and the Church's inability to understand these developments, coupled with the political developments, namely, the 1848 revolutions and their aftermath. The Church was not able to move with the people to the cities and provide religious care and it was not able to mitigate the sufferings of the workers and the poverty of the masses. The Church became a stranger to the majority of the working class. Wherever there was support by the Church to the people the Church survived, for example, Bavaria and Rheinland in Germany.

The third wave came in the 1960s and 1970s. It was a transnational and trans-European movement. The impulse for it came from the student revolt and the related cultural and political movements, which had sure Christian roots. The leaders of the student movements came from deeply religious families. The student communities of the Churches in the universities gave support to the movement. Religious convictions led to political engagement, which gradually led to a conversion to secular convictions. It soon became a movement for an intensive secularization, a normalization of the secular option. Secularism itself became a religion and developed an aversion to traditional religions, particularly Christianity. Connected with this was also a sexual revolution. There was also an interest in Asian religions, especially in the erotic *Tantra* traditions, or in good old paganism. Many were not interested in religion at all and still others were professedly anti-religious. The religions had now a serious task at hand. The option was either to adapt or to react. The conflict goes on even today. So secularization did not come in one day suddenly from nowhere with an atheistic ideology and destroy the innocent religious communities of Europe.

The Chances for Religion in Contemporary Society

If we understand these waves, then we will also understand the changes in the patterns of collapse and revitalization of religions in the present. There are all sorts of names given to the postmodern, contemporary society by sociologists – "risk society", "thrill-seeking

society" "consumer society", "knowledge society", "communication society", "multi-option society", "networked society", and so on. There are others who speak of the post-Christian, post-colonial, post-imperialist, post-industrial, post-secular society. All these are partly correct analyses but there should be an overarching characteristic of this society. Given the pluralism that is prevalent, the best expression for this age is multi-option society. Is multi-option a danger or a chance?

Whenever one speaks of the pluralistic situation of today, there is talk of fragmentation, disintegration, loss of values, loss of community, loss of trust, loss of faith and corrosion of character. But not everything is gloomy. The increase of options in the contemporary world is a fact. It means more individuality, more options for action, and also more chances for establishing contact, community. It offers more chances for bonding. Our values come out of experiences and the diversity of experiences enriches our values. Mere knowledge of persons or values does not lead to acceptance of them. Rational knowledge of alternatives does not automatically lead to abandoning of one's own values or attachments. The mere knowledge that there are billions of women does not destroy the attachment of a man to his wife. In the same way, the mere knowledge that there are many religions or world views other than Christianity does not automatically destroy my attachment to my religion. It is a value to have options, and this develops empathy. Oscar Wilde spoke of the dogmatism of the untraveled, meaning, one who knows only what is his, will think that it is the only thing.

In the case of religion, this situation has led to the emergence of concepts like "patchwork religion", "a la carte religion", "cafeteria religion", "pick and choose religion", etc.[36] The common thread that is running through all these expressions is that such religiosity does not lead to transformation. Growing pluralism leads to mixing up of values, cognitive contamination as Peter Berger calls it, mixing up of difficult-to-reconcile ideas. Faith becomes purely subjective and without power. Such Religion will not be able to withstand the dynamic of secularization, and one of the results of it would be the emergence of fundamentalism, as a reaction to relativism. But religious pluralism and increased options do not necessarily lead to

relativism and secularization. America is a case in point. The options may lead to change from one religion to another and even from religion to non-religion or from non-religion to religion. All these do not lead necessarily to the loss of faith. No individual can live all the options available. But he will be attracted to a dynamic and lively option, an option that is concretely lived by its followers. So the quality of life of those who live a religion or ideology is important.

Religious Option – Risk or Chance?

In theory, religions are best prepared to contribute to social cohesion and peace in the world because they are considered to be the guardians of morality and values in society and they are in the best position to hand down these to their children. But if it is to become a reality, it is important to keep in mind that religion is much more than a value system or a collection of doctrines. Religion is in the first place an intensive experience which is very much connected to rituals which also are in turn sources of experience. Religions present before us models that call us to discipleship. They have stories and myths which help us to understand the meaning of our existence. All these are too rich to be codified into a system. When the experience is missing, the entire religious system will only attract indifference, disinterest and even derision. That is also the reason why non-religious people have less and less understanding for the religious convictions of many of their fellowmen. This is also the reason why one religion does not understand the other easily. But the only way out of this logjam is to see religions in their totality and not merely as systems of values or quasi-scientific systems of knowledge, but as expressions of human life and experience. But one should have the humility to acknowledge that my experience is mine only and the other also has an experience which I cannot comprehend fully.

It is easier said than done and openness to the other alone will not suffice. One needs serious encounter with the other, which is difficult. Christians see how difficult it is to engage with fellow Christians in ecumenical dialogue. How much more difficult it would be to deal with other religions! Christians have also learnt how difficult it has been to understand Judaism, which is part of the Christian tradition and with Islam which is also a religion of "Abraham." Even today all these dialogues are still in their beginning and one sees already

the problems, intellectual, theological and political. These religions need one another to understand themselves. Then come the other religions of the world.

It was George Santayana who said that the attempt to be religious without a concrete religion is as impossible as the attempt to speak without a concrete language. What is meant is that in the concrete situation of religious pluralism, without dialogue one cannot achieve anything, but dialogue is not possible without concrete religious commitment. In the end it is not religions which act but human beings who believe. Conflicts are not between cultures and religions but between human beings who use their faith or their political objective to define reality in a particular way. Human beings can decide in which way to act. They can decide to confine themselves to their own religion, their own members or also to go beyond. This happened in the early centuries of Christianity. The readiness of Christians to be open to all without distinction of race, creed, colour, class or gender attracted many to it and that was the reason for the phenomenal success of it. Of course there are people who have no religious commitment at all; how to reach out to them, for example people in East Germany or in the Czech Republic where atheism is still a big trend? But even here there are still traces of the religious past and presence of believing religious communities and this could lead to a better understanding of both religion and secularism.

So what is the future of faith, religion, Christianity? It is difficult to foretell the future. The future is capable of surprises, and the history of religions is no exception. While the thesis of the necessity and irreversibility of secularization needs to be rejected, confidence of a bold return of religion and "gods" in a post-secular society, too, is likely to remain an exaggerated hope. But here are some possible scenarios:

In the secular societies, at least in the case of Christianity, we see a trend to cross the confessional boundaries and live the faith; the communities are vibrant and they make effort to hand down their faith to their children. In many cases, their dialogue partners are the non-Christians. What is lost is the so-called "milieu Christianity" or closed communities that have no future in a pluralistic world.

Only a coming together of intense religiosity and religious tolerance can succeed.

Another trend is implicit religion or the recognition of diverse worldviews and forms of life that may not be explicitly religious by traditional standards but function very much like religion for the followers of these practices. The decline in official religious membership is countered by an increase in membership in these extra-Church religiosity and interest in new religious movements, New Age, occultism, spiritism, body cult, football cult, music cult, or even political movements. Even secularism is a religion, in this sense..

Then there is the globalization of Christianity. Hilaire Belloc's "Faith is Europe and Europe is the Faith" isn't true any more. Christianity and Islam continue to grow in many other parts of the world. The demographic change in the religious scene is a fact even though the interpretations of it differ.[37] In a global perspective, there is no reason to doubt the survival of Christianity. In fact, globally seen Christianity is experiencing one its greatest phases of expansion.[38] This is for Christianity a matter of importance. There are going to be tensions about the understanding of faith, practices of faith, rituals, moral teachings, etc. The relationship with Islam will be different in different parts of the world. The Pentecostal movement could weaken as a movement but it will leave its stamp on the mainline Christian Churches. The migration of Third World Christians and believers of other religions into the First World could have some impact on the way Christians understand themselves in these countries.

This last development shatters the myth that Europe is synonymous with Christianity. Even historically the thesis has been problematic. Europe was neither homogenously Christian nor was Christianity purely European. There was an African and Asian Christianity which was as vibrant as the European. Christianity was not a European religion and it is not now. This approach will have consequences for the intellectual understanding of Christianity and the transmission of the Christian faith. Globally Christian faith will be in competition with a diverse number of religions, and other secular, semi-secular and vaguely religious world views; this will call for the interpretation of the Christian faith afresh by people who are living in very diverse social and cultural conditions, like massive

poverty, oppression, discrimination and marginalization. This will free Christianity from its parochialism but it calls for great intellectual courage.

The dissolution of confessional milieus and finding the common roots in their faith is important for Christians confronted with a secular culture and other religions and this is possible through improving the ecumenical dialogue. Dialogue is of paramount importance and to neglect it would be perilous. The presence of implicit religion may be seen by many Christians as a simplistic religiosity, syncretism, loss of tradition, rejection of transcendence, narcissistic egocentrism and so on. On the other hand, this implicit religion can also be seen as the presence of a religious sensibility that calls for dialogue and deeper communication. To reject all these forms of religiosity as irrelevant and meaningless would be a mistake.[39] The very effort to understand them would lead to a new experience of one's own religion. There is no other way than the way of dialogue in the globalized and pluralistic world.

The Intellectual Challenges to Christianity

But the real challenges to Christianity are intellectual. In 1910, Ernst Troeltsch perceptively spoke about the future of Christianity in Europe.[40] He believed in a new vitality for a deeply reformed Christianity. As the biggest intellectual challenges before Christianity he named the growing lack of understanding of the four important pillars of the Christian religion: The ethic of love, the understanding of the human person, the communitarian cult, and the centrality of Jesus Christ. If we reformulate these challenges for a secularized and secularizing world, the challenges facing Christianity would be: the hegemony of values and cognitive assumptions which make the love ethic of Christianity increasingly unintelligible; a new understanding of human beings that rejects the traditional Christian understanding of persons as unique; an increasingly individualistic spirituality and the loss of the idea of transcendence without which the understanding of Jesus Christ as mediator between immanence and transcendence is impossible.

On all these four challenges a few words could be said.[41] First, there is the intelligibility of the love ethic in a world that is

characterized by individualism. And there are two types of individualism. One is utilitarian individualism that judges life and relationships purely in terms of its utility for material profit, personal enjoyment, and therefore, life as basically making clever choices so that the maximum profit for oneself or one's country. The entire financial system of the world, its business philosophy, its banking system, and indeed, even the whole science of economics are dominated by this type of individualism. The crises of the last few years did offer some occasion for a rethink, but now, it is business as usual once again. A second type of individualism is the expressive one which maintains that the goal of life is self-realization, self expression of the individual and the satisfaction of one's emotional needs.[42] Against these two types of individualism there is another individualism which looks at the welfare of all individuals, and that is what the Bible means by loving the neighbour as oneself, irrespective of one's group, class, religion, family and country. That is the core of Christian morality. But no one has answered the question, why human beings should be motivated to act in this way and not the other way, that is, in self interest. It is also not shown how one comes to understand the sufferings of others or how one can be sensitized to it. There are no rational arguments for these types of behaviour. Here it is a challenge to Christians to show to the other two forms of egocentric individualism their limits, and also to come out of a "group think" in morality where my love is limited to my own group or country, which is also common today, and to show that true morality is truly universal and it truly goes out to every human being. Then will Christianity be once again the religion of justice and love, the very important concepts for modern man. Christian faith in a God who loves humans without conditions is a motivation for us to love without conditions.

The second intellectual challenge is the understanding of personality. The attempt today is to explain the human person and his actions purely biologically. This reductive naturalism, which sees no difference between animal behaviour and human behaviour, rejects such concepts as freedom, symbolization, etc. This of course has the potential to oppose a religious worldview of man and his world and has consequences for Christianity and its understanding of the human. Christianity believes in the unique dignity of the human person

who is endowed with an immortal soul and is created in the image of God. Unfortunately, this exalted understanding of the human person did not prevent the Church from denying such fundamental values as democracy and human rights for centuries. These were largely the fruit of non-Christian or anti-Christian movements like the French Revolution. The idea of the person as created in the image of God, as unique, with dignity and inalienable rights is not what we see in the history of the Church with its brutal suppression of the rights of people in the name of truth, authority, obedience etc. This is a major secular criticism against Christianity. At the same time, who can deny that the precursor to the Russian revolution was led by a Christian priest or that the transformation of ancient Greco-Roman slavery into serfdom was a Christian achievement, or even that the modern abolitionists like Wilberforce in the U.K. and the Quakers in the U.S. were motivated by their Christian ideals? What is needed is a critical evaluation of Christianity in the light of its history. Only such an evaluation can pave the way for a real dialogue on this issue.

The third intellectual challenge concerns the understanding of spirituality. Modern man has an understanding of spirituality that is at odds with the Church and many other religions. Modern man has spiritual experiences where we least suspect. In art, aesthetics, in erotic love, in confrontation with existential crises like illness, death, or loss of loved ones. They seek after exotic spiritual experiences and rituals and spare no energy in the search of it. They think that spirituality is a very individual and personal affair. But the Church is nowhere in their scheme of things. The Church is even seen as a hindrance to spiritual development. Many people wonder why people still remain in the community of the Church at all, although they have many problems with the Church. They of course do not understand what the Church is, that it is not a club, that spirituality can have other forms as well. The core of the Church is a community of agape, love, a community of relationships which is not like a relationship in a family, clan or tribe. There is a spiritual experience that binds people in this community which cannot be substituted with self-certified worldviews and practices. The challenge is to make this community attractive again, as a place of spiritual experience that satisfies the individual and does justice to the community.

The next challenge is the concept of transcendence as understood by Judaism and Christianity, the total otherness of the divinity. Here there are two challenges. The first one is the specific Christian understanding of transcendence in the form of the Trinity and the Jewish and Islamic understanding of pure monotheism and the need for a dialogue which calls for great intellectual acumen; the other challenge is to answer the secular criticism of the idea of transcendence because it relativizes everything this-worldly and earthly as without lasting value. There is an enmity toward transcendence in philosophy and politics, in the twentieth century. This loss of transcendence, the idea of the holy, is a very serious challenge to Christianity and to religions. The history of the origin of this idea and its disappearance needs to be studied. The political and moral potential of this idea in the contemporary world in resisting political religions like the ones we experienced in National Socialism and Communism and in resisting radicalism, fanaticism and fundamentalism need to be explored.

One may wonder why the whole question of sexual morality is not seen as one of the serious intellectual challenges before the Church. It is not given much prominence here because if Christianity takes the love ethic seriously, most problems of sexual morality can be answered. When the law of love takes the backstage and questionable anthropological and natural law based legal prescriptions take the centre stage there will be problems. Then in sexuality procreation of children will be given a false priority over bodily expression of love. Then celibacy of priests will not be misunderstood as enmity towards sex but as liberative asceticism for the service of others.

Then there is another alleged challenge, the so-called dictatorship of relativism popularized by Pope Benedict XVI. Seen in the proper perspective, the number of people who profess an epistemological or moral relativism is small so that a dictatorship of this small group over the majority of human beings is not a tenable scenario. What is true is a pluralism of philosophical and epistemological positions which is the right of those people who choose to profess them. Surely there is competition among them and claim to truth. In this context it must be said that the Church

itself has the duty to critically analyze its own claims for truth. The multiplicity of epistemological processes and the possibility of variety in the articulation of religious experiences are facts of reality and Christianity has to accept these facts. The position of the Church in the nineteenth century that faith is equal to obedience to a set of doctrines of a highly institutional and authoritarian Church was a mistake. This sacralization of the institution instead of measuring it on the holiness of God cost the Church dearly. The Church has to face the challenges from competing ideologies and religions through the attractive power of the Good News of Jesus.

The fact is that Christianity with its solid intellectual and moral heritage of two millennia is well equipped, has the power and the vigour, to face all these challenges. Only it must give up the defensive approach to secularism and come out of its hiding. Sometimes the Church reminds us of the proverbial ostrich which buries its head in the sand and deludes itself that the world does not exist. It has the intellectual legacy and moral authority in spite of all its sins and failures. It must articulate its positions with conviction. Theology and philosophy are essential for such a new articulation but also other sciences, particularly, history and the social sciences. Without their help, the Church and her teaching will not be understood.

Was Europe ever homogenously Christian? No. Judaism was a continuous part of Europe. Islam was part of European history through its presence in the Iberian Peninsula and in the Balkans. In many parts of Northern and Eastern Europe pre-Christian practices were prevalent till the late Middle-Ages. The Christianization of some of the countries of Europe like Lithuania, took place only in the fourteenth century. And the different types of Christianity present in Europe -Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic and other groups - show a story of heterogeneity and diversity. So we can speak of a Europe which is very plural from the beginning and it was not uniformly Christian, and Christianity was never European. In the enthusiasm for a Christian Occident it is even forgotten that Christianity is an Oriental religion and it was at home in all cultures of the world from the beginning. Unfortunately, this history has not been written.[43]

Is Europe secular? This has to be answered with a yes, but with the proviso that this secularity has great regional and national variations.[44] Europe today is very secular in some countries, but this is not thorough and continuous. Even in very strongly secular countries, significant numbers of people belong to communities that live their religions and propagate it. There are others who share some of the religious beliefs of their respective communities and take part in rituals some time. There is on the one hand a dissolution of religious milieus but at the same time there are new regroupings, and the migration has added momentum to these regroupings. There is also a religious revitalization in some post-Communist countries. The case for a rejection of the thesis that Modernity and modernization lead essentially to secularization is a comfort for religions to regroup and be ready for convincing action. The New Evangelization is the Catholic answer to this call. But it is unlikely that even with that, the future of Europe will be Christian in the foreseeable future, but a multi-religious one. Its history will also be a history stamped by the interaction between believers and non-believers, but how this interaction will develop is difficult to say. But one thing can be said with certainty that the quality of this interaction will depend on the ability of both groups to give a fundamentally new value orientation to the world with its manifold problems. The vacuum in orientation is a world problem. People complain of an orientation jungle and a lack of taboos unprecedented in cultural history. Particularly the young must cope with a confusion of values the extent of which is impossible to estimate. Clear standards of right and wrong, good and evil, of the kind that were still being communicated by parents and schools, churches and sometimes even politicians are hardly recognizable any more. Nietzsche's man 'beyond good and evil' obligated only to his will to power has become a fatal reality not only in the horrors of the twentieth century but also in everyday life, in the ever more frequent and unprecedented scandals involving leading politicians and businessmen, clergy and the religious, in colossal corruption, in the egocentricity, consumerism, violence and xenophobia of so many people, young and old. If humankind on our planet is going to have any further guarantee of survival, there is urgent need for a universal basic consensus on humane convictions. This is a task both for religionists and secularists, Modernists and Postmodernists.

Notes:

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4. There is a discussion with some of these authors from a theological standpoint in C. Geffre and J.P. Jossua (eds.), *The Debate on Modernity, Concilium,* 1992/6.
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The Evolution of Modern Self-Identity: A Taylorean Perspective

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Abstract: The second half of nineteenth and twentieth century has seen tremendous changes in the way human beings understand themselves and how they relate to the changing cultural, economic, political, religious, social, and scientific practices of society. It is important that we understand this 'evolution of modern self-identity' in order to understand its changed attitude to Religion, especially toward Christianity in the West. Modernity has both challenged the traditional way of being religious and at the same time offers the resources for adopting a 'reflective religious perspective.' Drawing inspiration from the works of Charles Taylor I provide a genealogy of the different transitions and transformations of our understanding of *human self-identity* in view of indicating its impact on modern understanding of religion.

Key words: modernity as cultural, self-identity, inwardness, deism, moral sentimentalism.

Introduction

It is evident from the recent history that there is a new shift of emphasis in the way we understand ourselves. This, in turn, has also changed the way the moderns understand and practice their religion. Different religions have been affected in different ways but there is little doubt that they have all been affected. There was a time when "everyone believed, and so the alternative [to believing] seemed outlandish"[1]as rightly noted by Charles Taylor. This is no longer the case with regard to religious belief, especially in the West. In order to understand this change Taylor attempts a retrieval of the history of the factors that were instrumental in shaping modernity and the resulting change in self-identity. There are four factors that he considers crucial to this purpose: (1) the sense of self as inward, (2) affirmation of the ordinary, (3) Deism, and (4) moral sentimentalism. Before turning to these, let us begin with Taylor's understanding of modernity.

1. Taylor's Understanding of Modernity: Some Introductory Considerations

The word modernity comes from the Latin word *modo* which simply means "of today" or "what is current" as different from the earlier times. The concept "modernity" refers to new modes of social life, social institutions, and organizational ability which became evident in the 19th century. By the 20th century the evolution of modernity was explicit and was expressed in different forms, especially as it manifested secularism. Historical evolution of modernity can be construed in various ways. Some of the prominent factors that became instrumental in the shaping of modernity are: The Renaissance (C. 14-16th Centuries), The French Revolution (1789), The Reformation (C. 16-17th Centuries), The Scientific Revolution (C. 16-17th Centuries), The Enlightenment (C. 18th Century), and The Industrial Revolution (C. 18 – Early 19th Centuries). In general all these historical factors contributed to the human self being seen in more individualistic, rationalistic, scientific, and secular in perspective. It will definitely be a rewarding exercise to elaborate on the above historical factors to understand their impact on the formation of the modern self. Prior to that, let us see the specific character of Taylor's analysis of modernity as found in his "Two Theories of Modernity".[2]

Taylor describes two ways of conceiving modernity. First it can be understood in "cultural" terms where the main focus would be on the differences between cultures or civilizations. It sees the present society as "the picture of a plurality of human cultures, each of which has a language and a set of practices that define specific understandings of personhood, social relations, states of mind/soul, goods and bads, virtues and vices, and the like" (TTM 172). With changes in these, a new culture has emerged in the West that we call modernity. The second view sees modernity as an "acultural" happening that has to do with the emergence of new discoveries and the demise of "traditional" myths. He clarifies what he means by "acultural":

> By this I mean an operation that is not defined in terms of the specific cultures it carries us from and to, but is rather seen as of a type that any traditional culture could undergo. [...] a

> paradigm case, would be one that conceives of modernity as the growth of reason, defined in various ways: For example, as the growth of scientific consciousness, or the development of a secular outlook, or the rise of instrumental rationality, or an ever-clearer distinction between fact-finding and evaluation. (TTM 172-73).

In the acultural understanding the change to modernity is seen as a result of increased technology, ease of living, mobility, etc. These, it is thought, are indifferent to our notions of personhood, the Good, or society and could occur in any culture regardless of their norms and practices. Taylor observes that most see modernity in acultural terms, describing it as the rise of reason against Romantic irrationalism. He considers many negative views of modernity as equally acultural. For example,

> Modernity is characterized by the loss of the horizon; by a loss of roots; by the hubris that denies human limits, our dependence on history or God, that places unlimited confidence in the powers of frail human reason; by a trivializing self-indulgence that has no stomach for the heroic dimension of life, and so on. (TTM 174).

"Acultural theories tend to describe the transition of modernity in terms of a loss of traditional beliefs and allegiances" (TTM 175). This loss may be moaned or celebrated, but both consider modernity as a matter of either "coming to see" (positive reading) or coming to "lose sight of" (negative reading) certain perennial truths. What is missed out by acultural theories of both kinds is that there was no inevitability about the transition to modernity. Speculating on how the acultural theories have come to dominate our understanding of modernity, Taylor notes that the West, with a dominance of Christendom in the beginning of modernity, considered all other cultures and people as "barbarians, or infidels, or savages" (TTM 174). Taylor continues:

> It would have been absurd to expect the contemporaries of the French Revolution, on the either side of the political divide, to have seen the cultural shift within this political upheaval,

when the very idea of cultural pluralism was just dawning in 174).

According to Taylor "materialism" can be considered as another factor driving acultural theories. The proponents of the acultural view are reluctant to invoke moral or spiritual factors and therefore, changes are seen as the bye-products of more down to earth causes like social change, industrialization, etc. Taylor sees three things wrong with this preference for the acultural theories. Two of these become obvious upon reflection, but the third is a "more subtle mistake about the whole framework in which human history unfolds" (TTM 179).

Firstly, modernity in part is based on a moral outlook than merely a matter of "coming to see" truths. He continues, "In the West science itself has grown in close symbiosis with a certain culture, in the sense in which I am using that term here - that is, a constellation of understanding of person, nature, society and the good. To rely on an acultural theory is to miss all this"(TTM 179). The result is a distorted view of modernity as an inevitable product of the enlightenment package, say, the result of science and technology, or we fail to see the change at all. Thus, for example, it is assumed that all cultures in history held similar (though perhaps undeveloped) views that moderns in the West do, not seeing the central role that such distinctions as the "inward/outward" have had in shaping post-Augustinian Western culture/modernity. Hence, Taylor states,

> [...] a purely acultural theory distorts and impoverishes our understanding of the West, both through misclassification (the enlightenment package error) and through narrow focus. But such a theory's effect on our understanding of other cultures is more devastating. The belief that modernity comes from a single, universally applicable operation imposes a falsely uniform pattern on the multiple encounters of non-western cultures with the exigencies of science, technology, and industrialization. (TTM 180).

The second error of the acultural approach is to think of modernity as an inevitable point of convergence for all traditional societies due to some universal constant at work such as reason or

technology. It affects our understanding of other cultures because we assume that the newly industrialized culture must now "come to see" certain truths and, hence, make some cultural changes, "such as the 'secularization' or the growth of atomistic forms of self-identification" (TTM 181). The acultural understanding, thus, levels off all cultures, making them simply 'less advanced' versions of ourselves; it is assumed that others will eventually "come to see" as we do once they see the success of instrumental rationality and technology. As against this view, the cultural theory does not see modernity as following a linear path. On the contrary, changes will be seen as necessarily influenced by the past, analogous to conversion of the Rome to Christianity or Indonesia to Islam. In the one case Roman Christianity is deeply influenced by Greek philosophy and in the other case Indonesian Islam is very different from the other versions of Islam. Therefore, Taylor proposes that we should start speaking about "alternative modernities" instead of "modernity in the singular" (TTM 182).

Thirdly, the acultural view promotes the lack of awareness "that our explicit beliefs about our world and ourselves are held against a background of unformulated (and perhaps in part unformulable) understandings, in relation to which these beliefs make the sense they do"(TTM 186). In this matter he acknowledges the influence of Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Michael Polanyi, John Searle, and Herbert Dreyfus. But Taylor goes beyond them in recognizing the social character of these background understanding in terms of which explicit beliefs make sense.

Taking a cultural view of modernity Taylor examines, in his massive *Sources of the Self*, how the Western world has viewed the self throughout history, tying it into their moral outlook. Most relevant is his examination of the rise of modern individualism and the valuation of the 'common life.' He finds the roots of individualism in Augustinian Christianity and the Reformation. Prior to Augustine's ruminations on the self, individualism was practically non-existent (reflexivity). Later in Descartes, the self was atomized and the detached observer became "the Good"; the self was no longer essentially tied to its history and culture, but only contingently related.

Through the exercise of rationality one can transcend their particular context, finding universal truths that are divorced from such contingencies as history. Let us follow Taylor's analysis of the evolution of the identity of modern self in more detail, as found in his book *The Sources of the Self.*

2. Evolution of Modern Identity and the Sources of Inwardness

Emphasizing the role of history for understanding the modern self, Taylor boldly states that "we cannot understand ourselves without coming to grip with history."[3] For him, "Understanding modernity aright is an exercise of retrieval" (SS xi). Taylor argues that it is necessary to save modernity from its most unconditional supporters, as he considers their view of modernity flawed.[4] Dissatisfied with his contemporaries for not being faithful to the genealogy of the self, morality (good) and identity, he attempts an alternative retrieval of history. And his re-reading of history to frame self-identity is a unique combination of the 'greatness and dangers (*grandeur et misère)* 'of history (SS x).

A key feature of the modern notion of the self is a sense of inwardness (SS 111). Universal as this "inner-outer" distinction might seem, Taylor contends that it bears a large stamp of the modern West. In tracing the evolution of modern self, Taylor distinguishes between what belongs to human agency *as such* in all times and places, and what is shaped differently in different cultures. His main thesis is "that the self exists essentially in a moral space by means of a master image, a spacial one."[5] One of the flaws of modern self-understanding is its localization of the inner and outer i.e., restricting the notions of "inner" and "outer" to specific locations (e.g, reason, soul, nature, etc.). This is flawed because it forgets that human self lives in a space of moral issues. Such localizations have become significant in our understanding of immanence and transcendence which, in turn, also changed our approach to religion. As Taylor sees it, "What we are constantly losing from sight here is that being a self is inseparable from existing in a moral space of moral issues, to do with identity and how one ought to be. It is being able to find one's standpoint in this space, being able to occupy, to *be* a perspective in it."(SS 112). Being a self in our modern understanding is inextricably related to a moral predicament and human agency. In this moral

space, one is not just a 'biological organ' but a person living and engaging in a situation, and measuring up to what is good, what is right, and what is worth doing (MT 298). Heidegger's famous formulation of *Dasein* as "there-being" is in question here (MT 298) as it seems to lack this moral aspect of the self.[6]

Taylor presents those historical developments, which have been distorted, one-sided, and conflicting in many respects, from the dimensions of *inner* and *outer* sources with a view of combining them in the same self. In order make his argument, Taylor brings out two major trends in history with regard to the self: **a**. moral frames of self-mastery (self-control) and **b**. moral frames of self-exploration.[7] These will be seen in the following subsections. What Taylor calls 'inwardness' I present here as 'inner sources' which contribute immensely to the making of the modern identity.

2.1. Moral Frames of Self-Mastery: Plato, Descartes and Locke

There are three main philosophers whom Taylor considers as contributing significantly to the moral frames of self-mastery: Plato, Descartes, and Locke. For Taylor, the main theme of Plato's *The Republic* can be summarized as 'we are good when we are ruled by reason.' There are three kinds of selves: rulers, auxiliaries and farmers; these were guided by desire, courage and reason, respectively. The harmony or balance of society comes through the 'ruling of the reason.' Here we can identify a very explicit localization of the higher and the lower (reason and desire). The good soul enjoys order (*kosmos*), concord (*xumphonia*), and harmony (*harmonia*). According to Taylor, Plato offers us a view of moral sources and his higher moral state is in the domain of thought.[8] What we gain through thought is self-mastery. The good man is master of himself (SS 115). With Plato the ethics of action and glory found in the poets was replaced by the ethics of reason and reflection. Plato never used the inner/outer dichotomy; for him, reason is connected to order and unity. "To be ruled by reason, to have a clear vision, is to be ruled by that vision. One might almost say that on this view one's action is under the hegemony of the order of things itself."(MT 304). The soul ruled by reason is an ordered one. The same reason is instrumental for the ordering of desires and other ambitions. Hence

there is an ordering of the lower to the higher which can be seen as a substantive vision of Plato. Higher order of goods demands a higher order of reason which can see the *Good.* What is important for Taylor is how this *ethic of reason* has brought about a new understanding of the human agent. Without the *unified self* of Plato, the modern notion of interiority could never have been developed, though it took a further step to bring it fully about. (SS 116-120). Taylor states:

> [...] mastery of oneself must mean that something higher in one controls the lower, in fact that reason controls the desire. From Plato through Stoics, into the Renaissance, and right to the modern day, this mastery of reason remains a recognizable ideal even though it is contested in modern civilization in a way it doesn't seem to have been among the ancients. (MT 303).

The Stoics refuted Plato's view, especially his "theoretic vision of truth and its soul/body dualism." (MT 304). They emphasized our ability to make deliberate moral *choices;*[9] for them, all that matters is to execute this capacity. This capacity must be in our power too. Hence, a proper form of life is sufficient unlike Plato's world of forms. A shift from theoretical reason to practical reason is clear here. The concern is not "the good" but a "the vision of the order of goods" (MT 304). According to Taylor, in *A Secular Age,* something like this Stoic view influenced Rene Descartes. The implication is that even among the stoics there were distinctions of realities. Not all things were considered as equally pleasurable or profitable.[10]

In Descartes, we find advocated not hegemony of a certain vision but "direct domination of one faculty over the other: reason instrumentalizes the passions."(MT 305). He thus situates the moral sources within us (SS. 143), even if his first concern was not with morality. The goal is to gain mastery of oneself, shifting the hegemony from senses to reason. Descartes makes a 'transposition' by which we no longer see ourselves as related to moral sources outside of us, or at least not at all in the same way. An important power has been internalized (SS 143). The universe has been understood *mechanistically.* One can observe the Galilean-scientific-representational model is echoed or repeated here. Hence, the order

of ideas ceases to be something we *find* but it is rather something we *build.* The order of representation must meet with the standards of the thinking activity of the knower (SS 145). Descartes' "dualism" of body and soul is strikingly different from Plato's. For Plato, one realizes one's soul when one turns toward a supersensible Forms or Ideas, which is eternal, immutable. There is no such Order of Ideas or Reality in Descartes (SS 145). The material world is mere extension. Thus, Descartes comes up with his "disengaged" or "disenchanted" reason which functions mechanistically and scientifically.

Descartes' intellectualism and instrumental reasoning creates a new theory of passions but not of tradition. Passions are emotions in the soul, caused by movements of the animal spirits. Reason rules the passions when it can hold them to their normal instrumental function. The hegemony of reason for Descartes is a matter of "instrumental control (SS 150).

Here, mastery of reason brings about the internalization of moral sources. But later on Descartes is concerned with "generosity" (*generosite*) and "inner peace" and he makes strength of will as the central virtue (SS 153). He places the notions of "dignity" and "esteem" at the heart of his moral vision (SS 155). His emphasis on reason (speculative and practical) pushes him to disengage from the world and worldly senses. Rationality is no more defined substantively in terms of the order of beings, but *procedurally* in terms of the standards by which we "construct" our own order (SS 156). A procedural approach will result in substantively true beliefs about the world. One meets one's own core in the utmost inwardness, which is not God (SS 156). This is a great internalization different from Plato and Augustine. Whereas Augustine's inward turn led to the realization of one's dependence on God, the Cartesian turn results in self-sufficiency. And with it, Taylor sees the road to Deism being opened up.

Locke takes the Cartesian disengagement and active making to the next stage. The mind is a *tabula rasa* (empty tablet) with simple ideas coming from the senses, which are combined by the mind. The Lockean model of the mind, thus, shapes the world from sense impressions. As with Descartes, knowledge for Locke is not

genuine unless you develop it. Further, the Lokean self not only shapes the representation of the surrounding world but of the mind itself. "The subject who can take this kind of radical stance of disengagement to himself or herself with a view of remaking is what I want to call the *punctual self*. Identify oneself with the power of remaking." (SS 171) He makes it on the basis of consciousness. Locke's person is a moral agent who takes responsibility for his action in the light of future retribution.

Taylor sees one of the great paradoxes of modern philosophy here. "The philosophy of disengagement and objectification has helped to create a picture of the human being, at its most extreme in certain forms of materialism, from which the last vestiges of subjectivity seem to have been expelled. It is a picture of the human being from a completely third-person perspective. The paradox is that ... Radical objectivity is only intelligible and accessible through radical subjectivity. (SS 175-76) This is a place where the modern followers of Descartes, Locke, and Kant, in different ways go wrong: they do not have an in-depth subjectivity, in the first place, to understand radical objectivity.

The modern disengaged self was also linked to a 'moral topography' which took away all our external moral resources and sees our moral resources as *inner*. Undeniably this has contributed greatly to the making of the modern self, which goes along with a certain conception of the 'dignity of a human person.' However, there is a *paradoxical* element in this approach:

> The modern disengaged self aspires after a kind of neutrality. Disengagement entails a kind of neutrality in relation to what it is disengaged from. With Descartes and Kant, the connection of this neutrality with a moral ideal is clear enough. But once the drive to objectification becomes all-encompassing, as with modern naturalism, and is meant to account for the totality of human life, this connection becomes lost to view. (MT 312).

Here the disengaged self is considered as a *natural fact*. Taylor thus notices that something is lost from the fact that there is an unmistakable connection with the moral background.

2.2. Moral Frames of 'Self-Exploration': Augustine and Montaigne

The experience of inwardness is so much a part of our nature and language. We speak of and identify people having inner depths simply because they have the ability to turn to themselves. Human thoughts are understood as something *within*. Taylor contrasts our experience of inwardness with the fact that the ancients actively strived to reach it. Taylor sees something new here. "[...] the suggestion that in turning away from bodily things to those of the soul we are turning inward seems to be absent. Plato doesn't speak that way."(MT 313). Taylor continues to articulate the contrast of this self-exploration with the erlier explanation of self-mastery.[11]

> The fact is that the lore of the soul gave no special status to the first- person perspective and that the moral sources were external. The turning is captured in the powerful image of Plato used in *the Republic*, where the soul swivels around to direct its gaze toward the illuminated reality, the Ideas. It is not self-focus, but attention to true reality that makes for wisdom and justice (MT 313).

This self-exploratory turn starts with Augustine. His inner and outer dimensions and ultimately his emphasis on the inner has significance for our modern self identity. Though Augustine was influenced by Plato, Plotinus and Manichaeism, he shifted his primary emphasis from reason to *soul*. His distinction of body and soul was based on Plato's notion of "bodily" and "non-bodily." (SS 127-128) Thus we find in his works such dichotomies as: spirit/matter, higher/ lower, eternal/temporal, and immutable/changing. All may be seen essentially as forms of inner and outer. *Noli foras ire, in teipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas* (Do not go outward; return within yourself. In the "inward man" dwells truth). "Inward lies the road to God" (SS 129). Augustine takes a *first person stance-reflexivity* which is almost like Foucault's "the care of oneself." Augustine is between Plato and Descartes. He is the inventor of *"Cogito"* because he is the first one to identify the *first person stance*

as essential for the discovery of truth (SS 133). Taylor's view is that,

> [...] he (Augustine) means by "within "is that one encounters God in one's own presence to self. That is because God is not only the maker of heaven and earth whose work can be seen in the cosmos; he is also the power that continually sustains me as a spiritual being. He is at the foundation of my power to think, know, and love. (MT 314).

His proof for the existence of God was framed by his inward journey, as distinct from Aquinas' natural theology. God is found in the intimacy of Self-presence. *Memoria* is not a collection of thoughts, rather the 'Master within (God)' who lights it there, Illuminated by another source (SS 134-135). At the very root of memory, the soul finds God. Two-way movements of the Soul demonstrate the tremendous difference between knowing and loving. Thus the notion of "will" is developed in Augustine. A teleological theory of nature underlying the Greeks (Plato and Socrates) supposes that everyone is motivated by a love of the Good, which can be sidetracked toward evil by ignorance or distortion and bad habits (Aristotle). But for Augustine, according to Taylor, the "will" must first be healed through "grace" before we can fully function in the Socratic model (SS 138). In Plato and Aristotle, the eye already has the capacity to see, in Augustine the eye has lost its capacity to see which should be restored by grace. Grace opens the inward man to God.

Augustine's self-exploratory method is part of our culture. Later on people started exploring the 'within' not for gaining intimacy with God, but simply to know more and more of their own 'interiority.' This model "becomes central to our culture that another stance of radical reflexivity becomes of crucial importance to us alongside that of disengagement."(MT 314). It is different from and in some respect antithetical to the first disengagement.

Later on Montaigne attempts to recover contact with the permanent, stable, unchanging core of being in each of us – a unanimous feature of ancient thought. He sought, and found some inner peace, in his "*maistresse forme.*" Self-knowledge is the indispensable key to self-acceptance. Coming to be at home within

the limits of our own condition presupposes that we grasp our own limits and possibilities. (SS 179). It is in this context that one should 'live one's life to its natural condition.' Taylor states it clearly as, "To live right is to live within limits, to eschew the presumption of superhuman spiritual aspirations." (SS 180). Each of us has to discover his or her own being. Montaigne therefore inaugurates a new kind of reflection which is intensely individual, a self-explanation the aim of which is to reach self-knowledge by coming to see through the screen of self-delusion which passion or spiritual pride has erected. In this new kind of individualism, Montaigne tried to bring the particularity of human feelings to expression. The search for identity can be seen as the search for what I essentially am (SS 181-184). Hence, Montaigne gives us another model of self-reflexivity which also has tremendous influence on our modern culture. There is a question about ourselves and our identity which cannot be fully unraveled or discovered.[12]

> The search for identity can be seen as the search for what I essentially am. But this can no longer be sufficiently defined in terms of some universal description of human agency as such, as soul, or reason, or will. There will remain a question about me and that is why I think of myself as a self. (MT 316)

Taylor sees Montaigne as raising not just *a question,* but rather an *area* of questioning. Thus, the question can be seen as a question about the 'identity.' It is here that this question 'first arises in our culture.' We understand that there are individual differences, and each one has a 'moral significance.' Here, one's moral action constitutes the moral topography. "Our identity not only presupposes points of moral reference in relation to which we define ourselves, but also itself constitutes a central moral issue. Whether one is true to one's identity can never be a neutral issue." (MT 316).

After exploring inwardness in and through self-mastery of reason and self-exploration of sentiments Taylor turns to another significant feature of modern identity, namely, its emphasis on the affirmation of ordinary life as against an extraordinary life. Here the former can be seen specifically as *secular* (*immanent*) and the latter

as *spiritual* (*transcendent*). An apparent tension between these two is a modern factor.

3. The Affirmation of Ordinary life at the Expense of the Transcendental

In the process of the *retrieval* of the moral sources from history, Taylor observes a shift of emphasis on the *ordinary life* in contrast to the *transcendental life*. Hence we observe an evolution of a new idea of "good" and a new ethics disregarding the earlier ethics based on religion or a transcendental absolute. The self begins to evaluate the nature not as something *outside* of it but as something *inside of the outer*.[13]

In fashioning an account of the identity of the modern self, Taylor continues to analyze different facets which can contribute to the formation of a *new ethics* of ordinary life.[14] The very emphasis on ordinary life mainly implies production and reproduction which is related to the human labour that makes things needed for life and our life as sexual beings (marriage and family). This aspect of life was considered "lower" by Plato and Aristotle. "Slaves and animals are concerned exclusively with life."(SS 211). It is a narrow purpose; it is not a true polis (Aristotle). Theoretical contemplation was the highest ideal to be pursued. Stoics and Epicureans affirmed ordinary life. They were considered lower in grade in that society since their ordering of reality had a less level of conception than the metaphysical contemplation of Plato and Aristotle. Taylor observes:

> The transition I am talking about upsets the hierarchies, which displaces the locus of the good life from some special range of higher activities and places it within life itself. The full human life is now defined in terms of labour and production, on the one hand, and marriage and family life on the other. The former one is vigorously criticized (SS 213).

In the affirmation of the ordinary life, what was previously categorized as lower is being exalted, and what was previously considered higher is convicted of presumption and vanity. There has been a *social leveling* or *social reversal* taking place. Hence, in contrast to hierarchies there came equality and benevolence.[15] The ethic of

honour is critiqued and values ordinary life promoted. The Marxist theory is the best known, but not the only case in point (SS 214-215).

This new ethic gradually developed its own *reformed theology*, and a rejection of the mediatory role of the religious priests and organizations, which in turn eventually enhanced the previously condemned *profane life*. Personal commitments of the believers became most important. Protestant churches rejected the special order of the priesthood in favor of the priesthood of all believers (SS 216-217). As a result, the distinction between sacred and profane slowly vanishes. Taylor uses Joseph Hall's[16] words: "God loveth adverbs" to refer to this shift to the ordinary (SS 242).

There came numerous analyses that exalted the ordinary for which the Bible itself provided sufficient material. The creation account of the *Book Genesis* reads: *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.*[17] This is one of the foundational beliefs for all of the three Abrahamic religions (Judeo-Christian-Islamic). Christian renunciation is an affirmation of the goodness of what is being renounced (SS 219). So life is good in itself. Paul states, "It is better to marry than to burn."[18] The highest life can no longer be defined by an exalted kind of activity; it all turns on the spirit in which one lives whatever one lives, even the most mundane existence. All of these affirm the sanctification of the ordinary life and activities. Calvin's[19] call for militant activism (ordinary life) to build a new and proper order of the world does make sense here. It does not in any way mean that he was without any fault in his religious activism. The Old Testament imperative to rectify the disorder in the world is another source for the articulation of our life in the world. The New Testament focus on the poor, sick and sinners is also taken as a source for the emphasis of ordinary life. All the apostles were ordinary, illiterate fishermen. The Puritan theology of work and ordinary life provided a hospitable environment for the scientific revolution. God's role in creation assumes: 1. That working in accordance with our calling preserves ourselves and God's order. 2. It (God's role in creation) is also what protects us against the absorption in things which would wrench us away from God. Hence action takes over

reflection (SS 233) and a new theology and ethics of ordinary life (pragmatic theology) evolves.[20]

In making our preservation the central point of God's will for us, Locke seems to follow the Protestant affirmation of ordinary life. Locke is in fact a crucial hinge in the evolution of the ethic of ordinary life from its original theological formulation to the modern "bourgeois" naturalist one, which has both facilitated and been entrenched by the rise of capitalism. Taylor states: "His ethical outlook was plainly an endorsement of the serious, productive, pacific improver of any class and against the aristocratic, caste-conscious pursuit of honor and glory through self-display and the warrior virtues." (SS 240).

Eventually the Enlightenment of 18th Century had crystallized humanism as a distinctly secular, liberal philosophy which became a source for the rationalists known as *Deists* to come up with a set of rationalized ethics (Deism) which naturally rejected traditional theology and clericalism in favor of 'natural religion.' They also emphasized on *natural moral intuition* as against revealed religious moral norms. This intellectual movement has been influencing modern individuals to focus more on natural foundations of ethics rather than the supernatural. Hence it is appropriate to analyze such a *deistic turn* in the West.

4. Deistic Turn: The Rationalized Christianity of Modernity

The philosophy of ordinary life has significantly influenced deism since revelation which was the source of moral inspirations, is replaced by natural moral intuition. Answers were found in the mind itself. Hence Taylor argued that within a deist order, the road to salvation was no longer determined simply by a person's position in the world and by a person's actions, but also the manner in which a person lives one's life; living "worshipfully" according to Protestants or "rationally" according to Locke.[21] Locke's theological voluntarism[22] became another form of rationalized Christianity. The law of nature is normative for us, according to Locke, because it is God's command. He reconciles the two since he thinks that human beings are capable of understanding God's purposes fairly easily from the actual nature of his creation. This linking of theological voluntarism with the natural

law of human reason makes him a hedonist too.[23] Locke's moral theory consists of two explicit and distinct elements — a broadly rationalist theory of natural law and a hedonistic conception of moral good. Taylor cites Locke, "For humans good is pleasure, pain evil."[24] (SS 235).

According to Taylor, Locke's psychology could be seen as a new transposition of the theology of ordinary life, on the way to its naturalistic successor doctrine (SS 242). In this version, we come to God through reason. That is, the exercise of rationality is the way we take part in God's plan. The ethic of ordinary life, while rejecting supposedly "higher" activities, makes the crux of the moral life depend on the manner in which we live our ordinary life.[25] There is a 'maximizing of reasoning.' Instrumental rationality, properly conducted, is the essence of our service to God. In thus making reason central, Locke was plainly stepping outside the orthodox reformed theology; rejection of original sin is also part of it. Thus, rationality became procedural[26] and instrumental[27] which is to say essentially concerned with our practical affairs. But Locke's "reasonable" religion is not just a swallowing of religious obligation in egoism, or just a step on the road to naturalism, as it too easily can appear to critics. According to Taylor, Locke offers a new understanding of what it is to serve God where one recaptures the old terms in a new significance. (SS 243-244). "Instrumental rationality is our avenue of participation in God's will" (SS 244).

Though deism has its own momentum there is also another modern trend which proposes a *providential order* that comes out of *moral sentimentalism*. This trend has something new to add up to our modern frames of inwardness, emphasis on ordinary life and deism.

5. Turn to Moral Sentimentalism and Providential Order: A Natural Order

Moral sentimentalism is a theory in moral epistemology or our knowledge of moral truths, according to which our knowledge of morality is somehow grounded in moral sentiments or moral emotions. A turn to such a moral outlook can be seen as part of the new emphasis on ordinary life. Moral sentimentalism was expounded by

the third earl of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, David Hume and Adam Smith.

Being closest to the Stoics in his views, Shaftesbury[28] considered that the highest good for humans is to love and take joy in the whole course of the world (SS 251). His questions are more cosmological than theological (SS 253). According to Taylor Shaftsbury was unalterably opposed not only to hyper-Augustinian Christianity but also to its offshoot, Lockean Deism, and the idea that God's law is something external. For Shaftsbury, as Taylor views it, "The highest good doesn't repose in any arbitrary will, but in the nature of the cosmos itself; and our love for it is not commanded under threat of punishment, but comes *spontaneously* from our being."(SS 253). This of course entails a rejection of the externality of divine law that was emphasized by deists.

According to Shaftesbury, the good person loves the whole order of things. Instead of finding this dignity in a disengaged subject, objectifying a neutral nature, he sees it in the inherent bent of our nature towards a love of the whole as good. For Shaftesbury, language itself is "natural affection" which keeps societies together. He speaks of the "internalization or subjectivization," a transformation, of an ethic of order, harmony, and equilibrium into an ethic of benevolence (SS 254-255). Shaftesbury's language is a "language of inwardness," but one which is quite lot different from the inwardness of Plato, Descartes, and Locke.

Hutcheson[29] continues very much in his line, developing it into the "theory of moral sentiments" perhaps best-known from Adam Smith's book by that name.[30] According to Hutchenson, the world was designed so that each in seeking his or her good will also serves the good of others. The fullest human happiness, is attained when we give full reign to our moral sentiments and feelings of benevolence, which will in turn contribute mostly to the general good. "God's goodness thus consists in his bringing about our good. His beneficence is explained partly in terms of our happiness."(SS 267). This is the central tenet of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition that God loves and seeks the good of his creatures. However, Taylor observes that the modern deistic views have tendency to define good as self-contained. Though God is not wholly absent (at least they refer to

God) in their view, it seems to be *subordinate to a conception of happiness* which is defined purely in creaturely terms. (SS 267). Thus, as a purely self-contained, non-theocentric notion of good, happiness plays a central role in this outlook. In short, human happiness is central to the moral order. In the older view, "Humans are there for God, not vice versa."(SS 268).[31] But deism breaks away from this Christian tradition. We also see an anti-hierarchical affirmation of ordinary life. (SS 271). These are the foundations a "rational religion" where inter-connection of mutual service and harmonious life together become major tenets. Living according to the design of nature became the very principle of living. Hierarchical and instrumental conceptions gradually give way to a sense of 'providential order' (SS 279-281). This new order is more connected to natural design (immanent) then to supernatural design (transcendental). And from these arises a commitment to an "immanent frame" that will be developed further in what Taylor calls the 'expressivist[32] turn.' This was a turn away from the Lockean Deism. For Locke, cosmos could be understood in terms of inter-locking purposes which can be grasped by disengaged reason. However, the expressivism of Rousseau articulated a natural source of life that could be shaped and given a real form through human expression.

Conclusion

I have been tracing the roots of our modern sense of the self. This has involved us, even in these short remarks, in many facets of the long history Taylor's North Atlantic civilization. The diverse models of inwardness presented by Plato, Descartes, Locke, Augustine and Montaigne are certainly building blocks for our modern self-identity. But with an expressivist turn human self became expressive of not only about the nature of our inner depths, but also see the grounds for construing this inner domain as even having *depth*. Perhaps secularist perspectives have replaced this *depth* with its own affirmations on values that are not derived from religions or deeper aspects of a particular culture. And so, the inwardness of the modern self has predominantly two facets/power: the power of disengaged rational control and the power of expressive self-articulation that is ascribed to the creative imagination. There is an ongoing tension

between the two powers. Once you disengage from your own nature and feeling, you cannot exercise the second. In other words, the first cannot be first without a proper disengagement. So, these two powers are *constitutionally* in tension. (SS 390).

This diversified moral source with two frontiers of self-exploration (Enlightenment and Romanticism) on the one hand, complicates our moral predicament, but on the other hand, enriches it. Expressivism relates to these frontiers differently than enlightenment humanism. This distinction can be seen broadly as the differences of approaches between the *rational* and the *emotional.* Procedural rational approach considers nature as an object outside of the subject where they scientifically analyze it. However, the romantic approach considers the self as a reality within the nature as a part of it. Here, self *cannot* disengage as being *engaged* to the nature.

Besides these two frontiers, there is a Theistic Variant of thinking which is most ancient, original, and still most influential around the world today. Majority of human race, still have affinity to a theistic source, as their model and moral predicament. Hence, we are products, some way or other, of these three frontiers/sources: Theistic (Christian/Religious), Rational (Disengaged), and Romantic (Expressivist) moral predicaments. Apparently the 'decline' or 'changed' face of the theistic frame has been a historical process where some of its dominant features (ritualistic expressions like church attendance and natural easiness to believe without reasoning) drastically changed and even became unimportant. Still it is hard to believe that the influence of religions, especially Christianity can be ignored or erased from the face of the earth, though a visible shift of paradigm is evident and inevitable.

Abbreviations of Taylor's Original Works (within the Text)

MT	Moral Topography
SA	A Secular Age
SS	Sources of the Self
TTM	Two Theories of Modernity

Notes :

1. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 25. (Hereafter SA which will be given within the body of the text).
2. Charles Taylor, "Two Theories of Modernity," in *Alternative Modernities* Ed. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (London: Duke University Press, 2001). (Here After: Taylor, TTM. It will be given within the body of the text).
3. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), ix. (Hereafter: SS which will be provided within the body of the text).
4. Joshy V. Paramthottu, *The Dialectics of Religion, Politics and Ethics: A Rereading of Gandhi through the Intellectual Frames of Taylor* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2014), 64. (Hereafter: Paramthottu, Dialectics).
5. Charles Taylor, "Moral Topography of the Self" in *Hermeneutics and Psychological Theory* ed. Stanley Messer, Louis Sass, and Robert Woolfolk (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988) 300. (Henceforth: MT. This will be given within the body of the text).
6. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 65.
7. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 66.
8. Taylor deliberately uses 'thought' in place of 'reason' because he wants to show the flow of the domain of 'thought.'
9. Taylor takes this from Chrysippus expression *proairesis.*
10. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 68
11. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 72-73.
12. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 75-76.
13. Taylor has more explanation on the same theme in his article on *Embodied Agency.*
14. Charles Taylor, "Reply to Commentators," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research vol LIV*(1994): 203.
15. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 79.

16. Joseph Hall (1574 -1656) was an English bishop, satirist and moralist. His contemporaries knew him as a devotional writer, and a high-profile controversialist of the early 1640s.

17. Gen. 1: 31 (NRSV).

18. 1 Cor. 7: 9 (NRSV).

19. John Calvin (1509-1564) was an influential French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. He was a principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology later called Calvinism. Originally trained as a humanist lawyer, he broke from the Roman Catholic Church around 1530. Taylor analyzes his concept of *militant activism* to emphasize the new interest in *ordinary life.*

20. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 81.

21. wikipedia.org/wiki/Sources_of_the_Self, accessed on 25.06.2014.

22. The "voluntarism-intellectualism" debate in natural law theory predates Locke. Briefly, the voluntarist declares that right and wrong are determined by God's will and that we are obliged to obey the will of God simply because it is the will of God. Unless these positions are maintained, the voluntarist argues, God becomes superfluous to morality since both the content and the binding force of morality can be explained without reference to God. The intellectualist replies that this understanding makes morality arbitrary and fails to explain why we have an obligation to obey God. ("Locke's Political Philosophy," in *Stanford Encyclopedia*, accessed Novermber 2, 2012, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke-political/).

23. Ethical hedonism is the idea that all people have the right to do everything in their power to achieve the greatest amount of pleasure possible to them. It is also the idea that every person's pleasure should far surpass their amount of pain.

24. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), Book 2. 28. 5.

25. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 82.

26. Procedural Rationality: It is opposite to what is known as "substantive rationality" where reason is considered to have a substantive unity.

27. Instrumental Rationality: In social and critical theory, instrumental reasoning is often seen as a specific form of rationality fusing on the most efficient or cost-effective means to achieve a specific end, but not in itself reflecting on the value of that end.

28. Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671 -1713), and exerted an enormous influence throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on British and European discussions of morality, aesthetics, and religion. His philosophy combined a powerfully teleological approach, according to which all things are part of a harmonious cosmic order, with sharp observations of human nature. He is often credited with originating the moral sense theory, although his own views of virtue are a mixture of rationalism and sentimentalism. ("Shaftsbury," in Stananford.edu, accessed June 21, 2011, http:// plato.stanford.edu/entries/shaftesbury/).

29. Francis Hutcheson (1694 – 1746) was a philosopher born in Ireland to a family of Scottish Presbyterians who became one of the founding fathers of the Scottish Enlightenment.

30. Paramthottu, *Dialectics*, 85.

31. Taylor states that the traditional catechism of the catholic: Human being are created "to serve and to love God."

32. For Taylor expressivism has its roots in self-expression and is linked to subjectivity by making or bringing about. Hence it embraces the two fold meaning of expression as a medium or an outward form conveying something that precedes independently of the expression and as something that it brought into being in and by expression itself. In a way Taylor returns to expressive self-realization in Romanticism.

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Modernity and Moral Theology

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Abstract: Just as in other fields, whether of science or branches of theology, Moral Theology has developed greatly in the modern times. From being a help in individuals confessions of personal sins from the sixth century it has developed into a comprehensive field of reflection that animates and guides almost all areas of human life today. What is presented here is short sketch of some of the most important persons and events that have made significant contribution to the blossoming of moral theology today, and some of the important developments that have taken place because of them. Since it is a herculean task and beyond the scope of this article to speak of all who have contributed to make moral theology what it is today, the article makes a mention of a few moral theologians who have contributed to moral theological reflections in India.

Key words: modernity; moral theology; Scripture; human dignity; conscience; social justice; human rights; Vatican II.

Introduction

Theology has developed through the constant reflection of believers on the life, words and deeds of Jesus, and on their lived out experiences in the light of the Word of God in specific contexts. In other words, theology is the result of the constant reflection on and articulation of the faith in life situations. The seed of faith received by the disciples and the early Church has been constantly articulated and lived out in particular socio-cultural and political backgrounds, in time and space. Lived-out experiences nurture theology. As such, modernity has made its decisive impact on theology, including moral theology. Contemporary theology reflects the characteristics of modern world of individualism, pluralism and scientific approach. Theological pluralism replaces dogmatism.

As far as moral theology is concerned, what once was just an aid to the faithful in their confessional practice, modern moral theology has developed into a comprehensive field of reflection that animates and guides or directs almost all areas of human life today. Scientific

morality replaces the objectivist morality where sin is not determined by the act alone but by intention.[1] Founded firmly on the dignity of the human person, the image of the creator God, moral theology guides human life – thoughts, words and actions, to grow in perfection in that image. Many would credit such changes to Vatican II, and few Catholics would disagree with the judgment that the Second Vatican Council has been "the most important event within the Church in the past 400 years."[2] But the change has not been easy. It is said that the crisis, agony and renewal has caused if not the end of Christianity, at least, it was "the end of one Christianity – the one that was familiar and predictable to everyone, believer or unbeliever."[3]

My attempt here is to present the influence of modernity on moral theology. Although Vatican II remains the key reference point it is important to realize that the changes that were brought about by Vatican Council II did not come out of the blue, all at once, as James F. Keenan so beautifully presents in one of his latest books, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*.[4] Therefore, I shall begin with a glimpse at the state of moral theology before the Council and proceed to the changes that were already in the air at the time of Vatican II. Then I shall focus on the contribution of Vatican II, and conclude by highlighting the contributions of some of the known moral theologians in India to moral theology.

1. Moral Theology before Vatican II

It is generally accepted that moral theology as the study of Christian moral behavior, as a separate discipline in theology, was the creation of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and the sixteenth century monastic practice of regular private confessions of personal sins.[5] However, as most scholars would indicate, moral theology then was quite different from what it is today. Literature in moral theology then was primarily the moral manuals intended to help priests at confessional practices of personal sins. Anything that did not ascribe to this or tow this line would not be even considered as moral theology. Therefore, some theologians, like John A. Gallagher, would not even consider that the modern moral theologians like Curran, McCormick, Fuchs, Häring and so on, as moral theologians, because

for them these people differed so much from the manuals and their primary goals. Gallagher believes that "(m)oral theology is no longer a helpful term with which to categorize the work of Curran, Schüller, McCormick, Fuchs, Häring or other revisionist theologians. Their theological positions and moral theories are simply too distinct from the prime analogue."[6] For Gallagher prime analogue meant the moral manuals which gave priests and seminarians practical theological guidelines.

While it is true that there existed differences in the articulation of moral truth as perceived by theologians at different times and places, as Keenan points out, they are not "contrary to the nature, that is, the *proprium* of moral theology."[7] Therefore, Keenan says "moral theology did not begin at Trent. It began when the Church gathered and asked how as a people of God, they were going to live morally upright lives, as a response to their baptism in Christ."[8] Moral theology, therefore, can be found in the scriptures, in the reflections of the fathers of the Church, in the writings of the theologians down the centuries when they tried to respond to the question of living upright lives as Christians. The difference between the past and the present moral theology is the difference in the issues that confronted them, the way they approached or responded to these issues, and the primary or immediate goals they had in mind while articulating their reflections. Therefore, in this sense, "Moral theology is a constant: what Paul, Augustine, Ambrose, Thomas, Suárez, Slater, Davis, Tillmann, Häring, Ford, Cahill, [Keenan,] and Farley are all doing is moral theology, whether they write a treatise, a summa, a revisionist thesis, or an essay in a theological journal."[9] The ultimate purpose of all these were responding to the call of Christ, and to help oneself and others to imitate Christ.

The penitential practice became a part of the Church from its inception, because despite their best efforts to follow Christ, they failed in their efforts because of their sins. Therefore, the practice of penance, absolution and reconciliation, became a significant aspect of Christian life. However, the beginning of the private confessions that began in the sixth century, demanded guidelines for priests and monks, and this resulted in the preparation of penitential books or moral manuals, as we know them now. Although they had poor

theological content, they were the first genre of moral theological writings. The theological content of these manuals remained without any considerable change all through the middle ages and up to the middle of the twentieth century.

Even after the Council of Trent moral theology remained with moral manuals and penitential books "for a thorough going pastoral 'care of souls'," [10] at the confessionals. These books of moral theology were to help confessors and parish priests "in the discharge of their duties. They are as technical as the text-books of the lawyer and the doctor. They are not intended for edification, nor do they hold up a high ideal of Christian perfection for the imitation of the faithful. They deal with what is of obligation under the pain of sin." [11] Although books like the *Summa Confessorum* had better theological content, they still primarily catered to priests with ready information "on moral norms, canonical regulations, liturgical prescriptions as well as pastoral instruction on the sacraments." [12] The *Manuals of Moral Theology* produced after the Council of Trent by seminary professors and which primarily catered to seminary formation had clear instructions for priests on how to administer the sacrament of penance. These manuals were considered authoritative texts on moral theology, and they dominated the field till Vatican council II. Because of their heavy concentration on sacramental penance, Richard McCormick, the famous American moral theologian, rightly described moral theology then as "all too often one-sidedly confession-oriented, magisterium-dominated, canon law-related, sin-centered, and seminary-controlled." [13] Moral theology was legalistic (centered on the observance of law, especially Church law), extrinsic (centered on the external act), minimalistic (centered on the avoidance of sin) and casuistic, detached from Scripture, dogmatic theology and spiritual theology. [14]

2. Seeds of Change

Although real change in the Church's treatment of moral theology came with Vatican II, it is important to mention that renewal of moral theology had started decades before it. James Keenan, as mentioned earlier, outlines a number of important authors and moral theologians in the pre-Vatican era, especially from the post-war era who initiated these changes. Some of them are Otto Schilling (1874-

1956), Fritz Tillmann (1874-1953), Emile Mersch (1890-1940), Odon Lottin (1880-1965), Gustav Ermecke (1907-1987), Johannes Stelzenberger (1898-1972), Gerard Gilleman (1910-2002), Bernard Häring (1912-1998) and Joseph Fuchs (1912-2005).

Otto Schilling maintains charity as the formal norm of moral theology. According to him the goal of Christian morality is union with God and this is possible only through charity. Therefore, according to him, charity must be the basic principle of moral theology. Although "he divides his subject matter into three cycles of duties – duties towards God, towards self, towards one's neighbor" he says that the second and third cycle must be revised frequently.[15]

Fritz Tillmann deserves special attention, because he was a scripture scholar who was forced to quit his work as an exegete of the scripture, but was permitted to enter any other field of theology and he took up moral theology. He could be seen as the first and among the greatest in presenting a Christo-centric moral theology. According to him moral perfection in Christian life consists in the progressive imitation of Christ. God calls us to be like him and, therefore, ours is a lofty vocation: "The goal of the following of Christ is none other than the attainment of the status of a child of God. By becoming more and more like the Father in heaven, the soul mounts toward perfection...."[16] We are to become progressively other Christs following the values of the Sermon on the Mount, and avoiding a morality of the minimum required and the asceticism meant only for the perfect.

Emile Mersch presents each individual as a social being and, therefore, one's moral life, according to him, should reflect this communitarian dimension of life. The community is the mystical body of Christ and, therefore, the concentration is not on the individual sinner, but on society or the community to which one belongs. We do not stand as individuals but are bound to others by supernatural social bonds. Accordingly, if one is to act purely on individualistic principles his/her moral life would not correspond to the supernatural realities.[17]

Odon Lottin has done much to bring moral theology out of the clutches of the manualists. He found that the primary reason for

the failure of the moral theology was the over-emphasis of the confessors' singular focus on sin, law, especially cannon law, and external acts. Besides, moral theology had detached itself from scripture, spiritual, dogmatic and mystical theology. Lottin was also critical of the manualists' insistence on external acts (conformity to good acts) and the neglect of cultivation of virtues which should be the primary purpose of moral theology.[18] He emphasized was the formation of conscience. Through well-formed consciences and the formation of virtues like prudence he wanted to liberate the Christian faithful from a complete dependence on the confessor priests and he wanted them to "become mature self-governing Christians, insisting that they have a lifelong task, a progressive one ... toward growing in virtue."[19]

Gustav Ermecke, although supported the manuals, realized that the only way to reform moral theology was to develop a strong theological foundation to complement the manuals. "He contended that being made in the image of Christ required us to develop a Christ-centered foundational moral theology."[20] However, he was "against a single unifying category for moral theology (like the kingdom or discipleship)" and held that "moral theology ought to aim to be comprehensive."[21]

Gerard Gilleman's biggest contribution is that he gave moral theology a positive thrust. While the manualist tradition emphasized the negative principles – actions that are to be avoided – Gilleman emphasized the overarching personal, internal dispositions, and the good that needs to be pursued by the Christian disciple. Identifying the Christian with the filial understanding of Jesus, the Son of God, Gilleman recognized that charity/love establishes our relationship with God.[22] And the task of Christian morality is to make this love more and more explicit in our life. Gilleman criticized the moral manuals saying, "Law rather than love is their dominant theme. Where there should be a spiritual impulse, we find a fixed body of doctrine. Even inspiration and liberty are precisely codified."[23] Gilleman also criticized moral theology's disconnect with dogmatic theology, which actually led to Moral Theology's preoccupation with laws and commandments with minimal obligations and devoid of virtues which scarcely merited the name moral theology. Gilleman emphasized charity as the core of Christian values. He says,

> For among all other values love is most able to bring together the living subject and the moral object. By its insatiable demands it liberates all the generous impulses of the individual without minimizing precise duties, without diminishing the importance of his own person, it drives a man into the society of other men.[24]

Again, according to him the core of the good news is that God is love, and that we are no longer mere creatures or participations but are His sons and daughters invited in His Son to be in communion with the Father. Therefore, with this whole world renewed, we could no longer live as before.[25] Our actions should be elicited from this love, and in as much as this love is within us we are divinized. He says that an ideal Christian life is one that consists of a series of acts that spring from love.[26]

Bernard Häring could be rightly called "the father of modern moral theology" in the Catholic Church.[27] He advocated an ethics of personal responsibility when the field was strongly controlled by legalism, where the good actions relied primarily on adherence to moral laws. Bernard Häring says that his experiences as a medic in the German army on the Russian front during World War II prepared him "to work to overcome a one-sided ethic of obedience and to preach instead a morality of personal responsibility and brotherly love, with adherence to one's own sincere but ever searching conscience."[28] His personal experiences at the War where he witnessed "the most absurd obedience by Christians toward a criminal regime," made him to return to teaching moral theology with the firm conviction that the core of morality is not obedience, "but responsibility and the courage to be responsible."[29] This is what is clearly seen in his three volume work, *The Law of Christ*, where the pattern of casuistic thinking is replaced by personalism. To him, "The basic model of moral behaviour was no longer conformity to law but a personal response to the call of love from the other."[30]

Häring's influence on moral theology prior to Vatican II was such that he was one of the three theological experts that Pope John XXIII personally chose and appointed to the Council. One of his key contribution was on the issue of the meaning of morality and religious freedom. His ideas and pastoral approach shine through the Council's

document on *The Church in the Modern World.* It is said that "One of his many achievements was to introduce the social sciences into moral theology as a methodology for reading the signs of the times."[31] The Council endorsed his stance when it said, "In pastoral care appropriate use must be made ... of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology."[32]

For Häring "The principle, the norm, the center, and the goal of Christian Moral Theology is Christ."[33] As Keenan points out, for him "Christ is the principle, the foundation, the source, the wellspring of moral theology; Christ is the norm, indeed a positive norm, a norm about being, a norm about persons as disciples; Christ is the center, not the human; and Christ is the goal, for charity is union with God forever."[34] Regarding moral theology, he says, "We understand moral theology as the doctrine of the imitation of Christ, as life in, with, and through Christ... The point of departure in Catholic moral theology is Christ, who bestows on man a participation in his life and calls on him to follow the Master."[35] Keenan points out, "Among the innumerable contributions of *The Law of Christ* are five central themes: an entirely positive orientation; an emphasis on history and tradition; human freedom as the basis for Christian morality; the formation of the conscience; and the relevance of worship for the moral life."[36] In it he had proposed a biblical, liturgical, Christological and life-centered moral theology.

At the council, Häring's contribution had been much. He had been on the preconciliar and conciliar commissions. It is said that he drafted the document on priestly formation, *Optatam Totius.* It offers "a simple two-sentence statement"[37] on the content and style of moral theology, emphasizing scripture and charity. It reads, "Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology. Its scientific exposition, nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world."[38]

His contribution in the drafting of the document the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World was so significant that he was publicly referred to as "the quasi-father of *Gaudium et Spes"* by Cardinal Fernando Cento, the co-president of the mixed

commission in charge of that document.[39] His indelible marks in *Gaudium et Spes* are seen where the document describes the nature of marriage, as a "communion of love" (no. 47), and an "intimate partnership" (no. 48) which is no longer a contract, but covenant (no. 48), and in the Council's formulation of its teaching on conscience (no.16) which, according to Keenan, is indebted to Häring's *Law of Christ*, where the subject of conscience is extensively dealt with. Keenan says, "Häring roots his understanding of conscience in freedom. Noticeably different from his predecessors, the postwar Häring privileges human freedom as the possibility of responding to God's call to do God's will."[40] According to Häring, "In essence freedom is the power to do good. The power to do evil is not of its essence."[41] It is quite clear that the Council developed its teaching on conscience based on this framework of Häring. "His work anticipates, inspires, and forms the now famous conciliar definition of conscience in *Gaudium et spes*, no. 16."[42]

After the Council he published *Free and Faithful in Christ*, another three volume work, an update of *The Law of Christ*, for a changing world. *Free and Faithful in Christ* moves further away from the legalistic model of moral life towards a more relational model. According to him legalism makes God into a controller rather than a gracious savior. Our moral life is a grateful response to God's loving gift to us. We are all called to a continual conversion and growth in our relationships with God, others and self.[43]

Häring with his over 90 volumes in moral theology "helped to reshape the entire discipline of Catholic moral theology in the post-conciliar era. In his various writings he also showed a broad knowledge not only of theology and scripture but also of sociology, psychology and medicine."[44]

Joseph Fuchs is another moral theologian who has left his significant contribution in moral theology before, during and after the Council. He advocated critical evaluation of traditional concepts of moral absolutes, intrinsic evil and tradition. His contribution to autonomy of conscience has been significant. He emphasized that moral truth is not necessarily found in the long held norms articulated by the magisterium. According to him "one finds moral truth through the discernment of an informed conscience confronting reality."[45]

Focusing on personal responsibility and the conscience of the agent, he says, "Many confuse objective morality with the prescriptions of the Church. We have to realize that reality is what is. And we grow to understand it with our reason, aided by law. We have to educate people to assume responsibility and not just to follow the law."[46]

3. Contribution of Vatican II

What we have seen here are some of the outstanding moral theologians whose individual contributions to the renewal in moral theology were acknowledged in Vatican II. Now we shall see how the Council has contributed to the development of moral theology. Vatican II clearly called for a renewal of moral theology and the "special attention"[47]it should receive in priestly formation. Some of the important developments that were evident from Vatican II could be pointed out as: a) the emphasis on Scripture, b) the emphasis on the human person, c) the emphasis on human dignity; d) importance given to conscience, and e) a fuller understanding of marriage. Let us discuss them in brief.

a. The Emphasis on Scripture:

The Council says that the perfecting of moral theology and its scientific exposition should be nourished on the teaching of the Bible. "The teaching of the Bible should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world."[48] The Scripture is authoritative in matters of faith and morals and it guides the faithful to live the demands of their faith. However, it is true that good exegesis is needed to discern what a particular scriptural injunction is actually saying to the faithful in particular situations or, in other words, whether it is normative at all times and to all situations. It is also important to "avoid extremes of fundamentalism, which is too prone to a literal interpretation, and of excessive erudition, which gets lost in technical details to the detriment of vital knowledge."[49]

The Council's emphasis on Scripture is not one sided; it equally emphasizes the "scientific exposition" of moral theology. The truth received in revelation must be studied in the light of human sciences and human experience in order to provide the faithful with intelligible and coherent moral truths so that they can respond appropriately

and according to the Gospel values in varying situations and circumstances of life. Moral theology needs to become a theology of Christian living in concrete situations and not just a set of laws, rules and regulations as in the manuals.

An ideal Christian life based on the teachings of the scripture will not have a preoccupation with sins, rules, laws and prescriptions. These were the hallmark of the manualists, whose works were rightly and lightly called "manuals of pathology"[50]. Avoidance of sins and thereby punishment, was the preoccupation of the faithful. What was neglected by this minimalism was the 'law of love,' the heart of Christian spirituality and morality based on the Scripture. In a morality based on the Scripture charity/love takes precedence over law. Although laws are important, they demand a moral minimum, unlike love.

Finally, it is love that can really promote 'life of the world.' Life can flourish only in an atmosphere of love. Love is the heart of the Scripture, and it is the foundation of God's Kingdom. There can be no flourishing of the Kingdom in its absence. We are to work for the flourishing of the world, because the world we create here is closely related to the world we hope for. As Theilhard de Chardin says everything in this world, including matter has a cosmic role, "and, by assimilation to the Body of Christ, some part of matter is destined to pass into the foundations and walls of the heavenly Jerusalem."[51]

b) Emphasis on the Human Person:

The Council emphasizes the individual human person's ability to relate to God and others. This view came to be emphasized because of the manualist tradition's tendency to evaluate morality in terms of individual acts of the person. The Council pays "attention not only to the biological faculties connected with individual acts but a broader understanding of human flourishing in terms of the fundamental dimensions of the human person that include not only the physical aspects, but also the inter-relational, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the human person."[52] The individual human experience as a source of moral knowledge is given importance here. It acknowledges the fact that every human person is to a large extent

unique and is significantly different from the others. This makes it difficult to formulate clear and concrete moral norms which will apply to each and every person in all circumstances and times.[53]

The Council also recognizes the fact that the human person is by nature social and, therefore, the progress of the human person and the advancement of society hinge on each other. The subject and the goal of all social institutions are and must be the human person.[54] Therefore, there is a need to understand the human person as a whole. "It remains each man's duty to retain an understanding of the whole human person in which the values of intellect, will, conscience and fraternity are preeminent. These values are all rooted in God the Creator and have been wonderfully restored and elevated in Christ."[55] Therefore, as George Lobo points out, what we need to consider is not the dichotomy between body and soul, but the physical, psychic and spiritual dimensions of the human person in both their individual and social aspects as presented by biblical anthropology while making moral decisions or judgments.[56]

The modern social sciences can be of help in understanding the social, psychological and other factors that inhibit free moral responses of the individual human person. Understanding these factors is important to evaluate one's moral responsibility and to promote personal growth. As the English writer Galsworthy once said, "To teach Johnny Latin, it is more important to know Johnny than to know Latin,"[57] it is more important to know the human person to provide him/her moral education.

c) The emphasis on human dignity:

Human dignity has been a major theme in the Church's social teachings even before the Council. In fact, all Catholic social teachings, whether in *Rerum Novarum* (May 15, 1891) or in *Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963), are based on the dignity of the human person. Therefore, Vatican II wasn't the first time that the Church spoke out on human dignity or committed herself to the promotion of it. However, in the Council it was reaffirmed and explicated in detail in *Gaudium et Spes* (12-22). As Christopher Baglow said, "With Vatican II, the church also began to look closely at the ways with

which modern thinkers tended to promote human dignity and showed how they and the Gospels are complementary."[58]

The Church is constantly growing in its awareness of the sublime dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, endowed with free will, mind, body and soul, standing above all things as the center and crown of the visible creation, and called to an eternal communion with God, has rights and duties that are universal and inviolable. This dignity gives the human person access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life.[59] The perfection of human dignity is a gift made available to humans by the death and resurrection of Jesus and the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit, who "in a manner known only to God offers to all the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery."[60]. The council also makes it clear that human dignity demands that one acts "according to a knowing and free choice ... Man achieves such [perfect] dignity when, emancipating himself from all captivity to passion, he pursues his goal in a spontaneous choice of what is good, and procures for himself through effective and skilful action, apt helps to that end."[61]

The concept of human dignity has since served as an important criterion for much of the Church's teachings on issues of bio-medical and bio-technological ethics, social justice and human rights and in ethics of economics and politics. Although in the secular world the nations affirmed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) declaring that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Article 1) and, in keeping with this inherent dignity, they have the right to realize their accompanying social, economic and cultural rights, it is the Church that has given the concept a solid foundation through its anthropological and biblical perspectives.

d) Importance given to conscience:

Conscience is another subject that the Council has dealt with elaborately. Traditionally and according to the Scripture, moral life meant the living out of the covenantal relationship with God and His people. "The call of God heard in the heart" of the human person asking him/her "to respond to the divine gift of salvation, has been referred to as 'conscience' in the Christian tradition."[62] However,

there has been a remarkable development with regard to the concept of conscience. The Council declares,

> In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths. In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbor.[63]

A few points are worthy of note here. First of all, conscience is an integral part of human dignity itself, and is the core of the human person. It is also the personal center of one's communion with God. Second, the basic direction of conscience, and hence, of morality is love – love of God and love of neighbor. Therefore, third, the derived conclusion from this also is the fact that conscience is relational. Conscience prompts the human person to "do good and to avoid evil" and this is fulfilled in one's loving God and neighbor, which is also the fulfillment of Gospel law. Fourth, truth according the Council, is the result of a common search of all, Christians and others alike. The Council document says, "In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals from social relationships." This means that moral truth is the result of a common search and not just a given; nor is it the monopoly of any particular group. Such a balancing between the 'objective truth and subjective striving' is a specialty of the Council. While it acknowledges the freedom of the individual conscience, it also reminds one of his/her obligation to seek the truth.

The exalted position of individual conscience is clearly evident when it says in the document on religious freedom that the human person perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience. In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience in order that he may come to God,

the end and purpose of life. It follows that he is not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience. Nor, on the other hand, is he to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience ....[64]

e) A fuller understanding of marriage:

Influenced by the views of St. Augustine, who wrote in the fifth century in *De Conjugiis adulterinis*, "Therefore the propagation of children is the first, the natural and the principal purpose of marriage," the Catholic tradition for centuries had strongly emphasized the finality of marriage. Procreation and upbringing of children as the primary and intimate end of married couples was enshrined in Canon 1013 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law. *Casti Connubii* had clearly ranked procreation and mutual aid as primary and secondary ends of both of marriage and of sexual union.[65] This was later again confirmed by Pope Pius XII in his allocution to the Association of Italian Catholic Midwives/Obstetricians.[66] Thus, traditionally the Church saw marriage as an institution primarily meant for procreation, the structure of which was evident in revelation and in natural law, and where the marital behavior was controlled by the biological aspect of sexuality. The mutual aid of the spouses and their Christian perfection was considered only the secondary function of marriage.[67] The consideration of procreation as the primary end came to serve as the sole or major criterion for assessing the morality of conjugal union, contraception, use of condoms against AIDS, obtaining semen for fertility test through masturbation, homosexuality, etc.

However, this understanding was substantially changed with the Council. According to Bernard Häring, Vatican Council II through its document *Gaudium et Spes* (47-52) transformed the Catholic understanding of marriage more significantly than any other event in its history, "because it viewed marriage and family as lived, historical realities that are decisive for personal well being."[68] It viewed the two-fold purposes of marriage – "conjugal love" and "the responsible transmission of life as requiring harmonization.[69] Thus the Council affirms both the ends of marriage without any hierarchical ordering between them. It also affirms the fact that "Marriage to be sure is not instituted solely for procreation; rather, its very nature as an

unbreakable compact between persons, and the welfare of the children, both demand that the mutual love of the spouses be embodied in a rightly ordered manner, that it grow and ripen."[70] The council then adds that "Therefore, marriage persists as a whole manner and communion of life, and maintains its value and indissolubility, even when despite the often intense desire of the couple, offspring are lacking."[71] God himself had recognized that "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. 1:28).

The Council stresses that marital love is an "eminently human one," which "involves the good of the whole person, and therefore can enrich the expressions of body and mind with a unique dignity." This love, which merges "the human and divine," "God has judged worthy of special gifts, healing, perfecting and exalting gifts of grace and of charity."[72]

Humanae Vitae (1968) follows *Gaudium et Spes* by abandoning hierarchical language regarding the unitive and procreative ends of the conjugal act, emphasizing their inseparable unity in each and every sexual act.[73] A similar change can also be noticed in the 1983 Code of Canon Law which has replaced the 1917 Code's definition of marriage as a contract where the rights over one another's body is exchanged for the purpose of procreation, with a combination of covenant and contract language where the partner's consent to a partnership of the whole of life. Unfortunately, unlike in the documents discussed above, the evolution in the language of the Code of Canon Law has been slow and does not seem adequate enough.[74]

4. Other Developments in Moral Theology

Although not directly or significantly influenced by the Council there are other areas pertaining to moral theology that were influenced by modernity. A few of them are the Church's commitment to social justice and human rights, the Church's view on war and capital punishment, etc. Because of space constraints, here, I shall limit myself to saying something on the Church's commitment to social justice and human rights.

Commitment to Social Justice and Human Rights

Affirmation of the inherent dignity of every human person 'created in the image and likeness of God'is the foundation of Catholic social teaching. It also has its Biblical foundation in the words of Jesus who says, "Whatever you did for the least of my brethren, you did for me" (Mt. 25:40). It tries to articulate the implications of the dignity of the human person in interpersonal, socio-political and structural realms of human life. It is based on the principles of human solidarity and inter-relatedness as a human community. Other values and principles upheld by the Catholic social teachings are respect and protection of human life at every stage of life, equality, the right to association, participation, subsidiarity, protection of the poor and the vulnerable, protection from all forms of exploitation, stewardship, common good, and so on.

In general we cannot say that Vatican II added much new to the issue of social justice, because the issue was quite intensely discussed from the 19th century, at least from the time of Pope Leo XIII. His encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) was a trigger in the Church's vigorous engagement with the issue of social justice. Yet, probably, with Vatican II, the Church began to see and feel the challenge of social justice more clearly, engaged the issue more intensely or passionately and lived its commitment more directly, openly and courageously. The Synod of Bishops in 1971 says emphatically: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world appear to us [the Church] as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."[75]

Apart from the Biblical mandate, articulation of formal Catholic social teaching begins with *Rerum Novarum* (1891) of Pope Leo XIII, where he addresses the subhuman conditions brought about by the industrial revolution, and condemns the abuses of liberal capitalism and socialism, especially the Marxian class struggle. Defending the church's moral authority to promote justice in public life, he claimed that the state has an obligation to protect workers and their rights. Most of the social encyclicals that were published subsequently were to mark various anniversaries of *Rerum Novarum*,

right up to Pope John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* in 1991. These later encyclicals (after *Rerum Novarum*), *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) of Pope Pius XI, *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963) of Pope John XXIII, *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and *Octogesimo Anno* (1971) of Pope Paul VI, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) and *Centesimus Annus* (1991) of Pope John Paul II were all primarily to confirm and deepen the earlier teachings, especially of *Rerum Novarum*.

In *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pope Pius XI is quite harsh on the abuses of corporate capitalism. In *Mater et Magistra*, Pope John XXIII focussed on the extremes of poverty in the world and the widening gap between the rich and the poor nations. *Pacem in Terris* is addressed to all people of good will and emphasizes the various rights of workers – legal, political and economic rights, and the right to work and the right to a just wage. In *Populorum Progressio*, Paul VI addresses international development issues and the growing struggle between the rich and the poor nations. In *Octogesimo Anno* Pope Paul speaks about political action in order to achieve economic goals. In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,* Pope John Paul II follows Pope Leo's critique of liberal capitalism and collective socialism and talks of the structures of sin that must be transformed. He also spoke of a preferential option for the poor, in order to have justice in the world. Finally, in *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II draws lessons from the sudden and unexpected collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe.

One of the significant changes that have taken place in the Church's teaching on social justice, perhaps, is to envision social change from below, the poor themselves as agents of social change, rather than expecting and waiting to see the state and the rich being benevolent agents to bring about justice for the poor which was the traditional approach. Thus the trickle-down theory of economics which was for long the norm gave way to Liberation Theology in Latin America, and themes like structural sin, preferential option for the poor, solidarity, etc. became preferred terms, made famous by the Roman Synod on Justice in the World in 1971, and in Paul VI's encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1974). The church now prefers to teach that ours is a faith that does justice, and that we need to have a preferential option for the poor, an option that works for changing

unjust socio-political and economic structures, and where the poor themselves become the first agents of change. Moral theologians have begun to see reason in an inclusive theology where the issues voiced by "the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized - all those considered 'nonpersons' by the powerful," yet considered "God's own privileged ones" by the prophets, are addressed.[76]

The other issues that received attention of moral theologians are issues of ecology, the role of the laity and women, especially in decision making bodies within and without the Church, etc. Moral reflection also has begun to take place among the neglected or even officially silenced groups, like the married and divorced, people with gay and lesbian orientations,[77] etc. Moral theology is cautiously listening to such here-to-fore unheard or under-heard voices from the peripheries. Pope Francis is keenly listening to these voices and is taking important initiatives in these lines which need appreciation and support.

5. Moral Theology after Vatican Council II

We can see a huge influx of theologians into the field of Moral theology after Vatican II. One of the reasons for this, as James Keenan points out, is the losing of the clerical nature of moral theology. Many lay people began to study and do research in the field.[78] Some of the early giants in moral theology, some of whom also sailed through the Council years and were not mentioned earlier, could be mentioned are Josef Fuchs (1912–2005) , Richard McCormick (1922- 2000), James Gustafson (1925-), Alfons Auer (1915–2005), Louis Janssens (1908 – 2001), Klaus Demmer (1921-), Bruno Schüller (1925-2007), Franz Bockle (1921-1991), Kevin Kelly, (1933-), Charles E. Curran (1934-), etc. Outstanding among the second (present) generation theologians are James F. Keenan, Lisa Cahill, David Hollenbach, Kenneth Himes, Margaret Farley, Dietmar Mieth, Joseph Selling, and numerous others. It would not be just on my part to try to write anything in detail here on these stalwarts.[79] Therefore, I shall divert myself to say something on moral theology and moral theologians in India.

Moral theologians in India could be called second generation theologians.[80] Most of them had their doctoral dissertations done in

European theological faculties. However, they have contributed much to the moral theological reflections in India. Some of them are George Lobo, Soosai Arockiasamy, Felix Podimattam, Thomas Srampickal, George Therukattil, Clement Campos, George Kodithottam and John Chathanattu.[81] I know that I am not making an exhaustive list of moral theologians in India which in the present scenario would be quite long and I would not be able to do justice to such an endeavor.

George Lobo (1923-1993), the scholar, teacher, writer is among the most outstanding moral theologians India has produced. After completing his doctorate from the Gregorian University, Rome, in 1962 he began his teaching career at the Jesuit Theological College in Kurseong, which continued in Delhi as Vidyajyoti. In 1980 he joined the Faculty of Theology at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune where he remained till the end.

His field of work was the renewal of Moral Theology after Vatican II, the application of moral principles for Christian and professional life, and also the social teachings of the Church. Through his nine books and numerous articles in national and international journals he endeavored to bring moral theology up-to-date and beneficial to the ordinary people who found much help in them. Some of his books like *Christian Living According to Vatican II* (1980) were so popular that they went into several editions. His other books were *Current Problems in Medical Ethics* (1974), *Renewal of the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (1981), *The New Marriage Law* (1984), *Moral and Pastoral Questions* (1985), *New Cannon Law for Religious* (1986), *Canon Law for the Laity* (1987), *Human Rights in Indian Context* (1991) and *Church and Social Justice* (1993).

Readers appreciated in his writings the clarity of his thought, his capacity to blend many perspectives, and his ability to deal with a variety of important themes of moral and pastoral theology. He not only attempted to present a new commentary to the Canon Law but tried to place various issues within the theological and pastoral contexts. He provided in his writings lucid answers to many questions in the area of pastoral moral theology.

Soosai Arockiasamy (1937-2012) was another multifaceted personality. He was a professor of moral theology at the Vidya Jyoti College of Theology in Delhi, and was also its principal. He was the editor of *Vidya Jyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* for many years, and was consulter to the Federation of Asian Bishop's Conference (FABC). He was also the President of the Association of Moral Theologian of India (AMTI). As Srampickal rightly points out, "His interest went beyond the confines of moral theology into wider socio-political areas. He was a forefront fighter for human rights, solidarity with the poor and religious harmony. He always worked for contextualized and inculturated theology."[82]

He has authored/coauthored eight books and over 70 articles. Some of his books are *Liberation in Asia: Theological Perspectives* (ed.) (1987), *Responding to Communalism: The Task of Religions and Theology* (ed.) (1991), *Social Sin: It's Challenges to Christian Life* (ed.) (1991), *Information on Human Development* (1998), and *Life for All: Ethics in Context*. True to the spirit of Vidyajyoti, to the creation of which he himself too contributed much, he "not only taught justice but also fought for it along with others in the streets"[83] of Delhi. He has been an inspiration not only for generations of students and colleagues but also to other moral theologians of India.

Felix Podimattam, a student of Bernard Häring, is undoubtedly one of the most celebrated moral theologians in India. Although originally a fundamental moral theologian who wrote his thesis on the theme "The Relativity of Natural Law," through more than four decades of teaching, theologizing and writing he mastered the various fields of moral theology, and has contributed much to the Church and to the field of moral theology in general. Through his 135 books he has created history by entering into the *Limca Book of Records*, on October 4, 2013, as the person who has authored the most number of books in moral theology in the world.[84] He has written on varying subjects such as sexuality, bioethics, celibacy, priesthood, religious life, ecology, human rights, issues of women, and so on. He has been quite vocal against discrimination against women in the Church and society, and has published a six-volume work titled *In Praise of the Woman* (2009).[85] He has another remarkable contribution in a 10-voume work on *Bio-Medical Ethics* (2014), and another five

volume sequel on religious life and spirituality. Yet, his most remarkable and the latest contribution is a 20 volume work on the Decalogue titled *The Ten Commandments in the Law of Christ* (2013).

In his writings he "emphasizes the sacredness of life in all its forms." They also "show a harmonious blending of the traditional wisdom with its emphasis on fundamental Christian values as well as the findings of modern sciences like psychology, sociology and anthropology."[86] His writings clearly portray his encyclopedic knowledge on varied subjects he dealt with. His approach is "Christocentric and pastoral at the same time." Therefore, what we see in his writings "is not moral rigidity, but a basic interior orientation to God in the person of Christ and he pays close attention to the internal dispositions and motivations of the believer."[87] Another quality that he has displayed is his ability to "compare and integrate, as far as possible, the visions and views of other religions."[88]

Thomas Srampickal is another senior moral theologian in India who is known for his depth of knowledge and his effort in creating an 'Indian moral theological ethos,' a moral theology that is contextual, reflecting important issues that face India. He too through his long teaching career that spans about four decades, and through his research and publications has influenced generations of students, clergy and lay people. "According to him, in the Post-Vatican II period, though moral theology in India began to get out of its slumber and resigned-mentality, it has not yet made an appreciable impact on the Indian theological horizon or created an 'Indian moral theological ethos'."[89] Therefore, he insists on the need for evolving a common moral vision and approach in India focusing on important issues like social justice and human rights. His areas of special interest are fundamental moral theology, psychology, justice and human rights. In his book *The Concept of Conscience in Today's Empirical Psychology and in the Documents of the Second Vatican Council*,[90] his brilliance in interdisciplinary approaches is clearly visible. He has authored/co-authored three books and over 40 articles, mostly in moral theology and a few in psychological issues in priestly formation. In his writings and life he "insists on promoting moral realism rather than idealism, listening to the faithful, well-reasoned and nuanced teaching, fostering personal responsibility and acknowledging the

evolving character of moral theology as essential for the renewal and healthy growth of the discipline."[91]

George Therukattil has always been a vocal proponent of one of the themes dear to the heart of the present Pope (Francis), compassion. He is a multifaceted and dynamic personality who is well versed in moral theology and philosophy. Being at the Chair of Christianity in the Mysore University, he has influenced a much more diverse group than many other moral theologians in India whose immediate influence have been in and through seminary campuses.

He has authored three books and over 20 articles in moral theology and has a number of short write ups in popular weeklies and magazines. His short, yet informative articles dealing with moral issues in *Truth of Light*, a Christian weekly from Kerala, have enriched many faithful, priests and religious alike.

Clement Campos, John Chathanattu and George Kodithottam are among the other senior moral theologian who have contributed to moral theology in India. **Clement Campos** takes into account the cultural diversity and social inequality that is prevalent in the country and makes a host of issues like globalization, environmental degradation, lack of health care in the country, discrimination based on gender, caste and religion, religious violence and human rights violations, etc. the object of his moral theological reflection. He emphasizes the need for a dialogical approach in the face of varied socio-political, cultural, religious and economic situation prevailing in India to develop a moral theology that is truly contextualized, Indian, authentically human and socially liberative.[92]

John Chathanattu pays much attention to issues of social justice and human rights. He "argues that an Indian liberative inculturation must run to concrete economic questions and structural issue of marginalization."[93] According to him, in the face of institutionalized violence and marginalization of the poor, the low castes, minorities, and the abysmal record of human rights violations in Indian society, Indian moral theologians must turn to the language of human rights and human dignity.

George Kodithottam is a resourceful moral theologian who divides his time between pastoral work and seminary teaching. Also, he is another moral theologian-pastor who is after the heart of our present Pope Francis, "who smells the sheep." His ethical reflections are maturely blended between pastoral concerns and cultural sensitivity. He has been very

resourceful and inspiring not only to his 'sheep' in his pastoral field and to his students but in a very special way to his colleagues and to the members of the Association of Moral Theologians of India (AMTI) whose annual conferences he attends unfailingly, where he also becomes an important resource person.

While there are a few more moral theologians who belong to older generation whose names are not taken here for lack of space there are many more young and promising moral theologians who are all mostly caught up in seminary teaching and administration, and yet are contributing much to the development and flourishing of an inculturated and liberative moral theology. Let us hope that their 'tribe may increase and multiply' for the Church and the world.

Conclusion

Moral Theology is one of the areas that has really blossomed in the modern period. The fact that moral theology that once dealt primarily with confessional practices has diversified itself into areas that touch almost every aspect of modern life, such as bioethics, medical ethics, sexual ethics, social ethics, environmental ethics, media/communication ethics, cyber ethics, etc. alone speak of the developments in the field. It is impossible to speak of all the aspects of the development that modernity has brought into moral theology. My attempt here has been to sketch some of the important people and events that have made significant contribution to moral theology, and some of the important developments that have taken place because of them. Again, as James Keenan rightly points out since the present scenario in moral theology is marked by the non-clerical, non-seminary settings, with a large number of lay persons entering the field, it is almost impossible to pick and choose just a few. This is the reason why I chose to speak briefly only on Indian moral theologians in the post-Vatican period. I have attempted also to give a bird's eye-view of the developments in moral theology in modern times.

Notes:

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2. James Hitchcock, *Catholicism and Modernity: Confrontation or Capitulation?* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 75.
3. Hitchcock, *Catholicism and Modernity: Confrontation or Capitulation?*, 75.

4. James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century: From Confessing Sins to Liberating Consciences* (New York: Continuum, 2010).
5. John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1989), viii.
6. John A. Gallagher, *Time Past, Time Future: An Historical Study of Catholic Moral Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 270.
7. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 5.
8. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 5.
9. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 5.
10. George V. Lobo, *Moral Theology Today: Christian Living According to Vatican II* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1999), 8.
11. James F. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," *Theological Studies* 74 (2013): 165. Originally from Thomas Slater, *A Manual of Moral Theology for English-speaking Countries* (London: Benziger Brothers, 1906), 5–6.
12. George V. Lobo, *Moral Theology Today: Christian Living According to Vatican II* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1999), 6.
13. Richard McCormick, "Moral Theology 1940-1989: An Overview," *Theological Studies* 50 (1990): 3.
14. George V. Lobo, *Moral Theology Today: Christian Living According to Vatican II*, 8-9.
15. See Felix Podimattam, *An Introduction to Moral Theology* (Delhi: Media House, 2008), 35.
16. Fritz Tillmann, *The Master Calls: A Handbook of Morals for the Layman*, trans. Gregroy J. Roettger (Baltimore: Helicon, 1960) 4-5.
17. See Felix Podimattam, *An Introduction to Moral Theology*, 36.
18. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 167-168.
19. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 168.0
20. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 90-91.
21. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 91.
22. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 70.
23. Gérard Gilleman, *Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology* (Westminster, M.D: Newman Press, 1964), xxviii-xxix.
24. Gérard Gilleman, *Primacy of Charity*, xxxiv.

25. James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 72.

26. Gérard Gilleman, *Primacy of Charity*, 188; James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 74.

27. Terence Kennedy, "Epistemology and the Human Sciences: Michael Polanyi's Contribution to the Reshaping of Moral Theology," *Tradition and Discovery: The United Kingdom Review of Post-critical Thought* XX, no. 2 (1993-94): 11. (Available online at https://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/TAD%20WEB%20ARCHIVE/TAD20-2/TAD20-2-fnl-full-pdf.pdf (Downloaded on Sept. 21, 2014).

28. Bernard Häring, *Embattled Witness: Memories of a Time of War* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), vii.

29. Bernard Häring, *Embattled Witness: Memories of a Time of War*, 23-24.

30. Terence Kennedy, "Epistemology and the Human Sciences...," 11.

31. Terence Kennedy, "Epistemology and the Human Sciences...," 11.

32. *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 67.

33. Bernard Häring, *The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity*, I: *General Moral Theology*, trans. Edwin G. Kaiser (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1966), vii.

34. James F. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 170.

35. Bernard Häring, *The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity*, I, 61.

36. James F. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 171.

37. James F. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 171.

38. *Optatam Totius* (October 28, 1965) no. 16.

39. See Charles Curran, "Bernard Häring: A Moral Theologian Whose Soul Matched His Schola rship," *National Catholic Reporter* (July 17, 1998), http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/1998c/071798/071898h.htm (downloaded on Sept. 26, 2014).

40. James F. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 174.

41. Bernard Häring, *The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity*, I, 99.

42. James F. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 173.

43. See Charles Curran, "Bernard Häring: A Moral Theologian ...."

44. See Charles Curran, "Bernard Häring: A Moral Theologian ...."
45. James F. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 177-178.
46. Robert Blair Kaiser, *The Politics of Sex and Religion: A Case History in the Development of Doctrine 1962–1984* (Kansas City, MO: Leaven, 1985) 154; Robert Blair Kaiser, *The Encyclical that Never Was: The Story of the Pontifical Commission on Population, family and Birth, 1964-1966* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1987), 198; James F. Keenan, "Vatican II and theological ethics," 178.
47. *Obtatam Totius* (Oct. 28, 1965), 16.
48. *Obtatam Totius* 16.
49. See George V. Lobo, *Moral Theology Today*, 19-20.
50. See George V. Lobo, *Moral Theology Today*, 14.
51 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Writings in Time of War*, trans. by René Hague, (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), 64.
52. See James T. Bretzke, *A Morally Complex World: Engaging Contemporary Moral Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004), 239.
53. James T. Bretzke, *A Morally Complex World*, 239.
54. *Gaudium et Spes* (Dec. 7, 1965), 25.
55. *Gaudium et Spes*, 61.
56. George V. Lobo, *Moral Theology Today*, 20-21.
57. As quoted in George V. Lobo, *Moral Theology Today*, 21.
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59. See *Gaudium et Spes*, 26; and *Dignitatis Humanae*, 2.
60. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.
61. *Gaudium et Spes*, 17.
62. See George V. Lobo, *Moral Theology Today*, 281.
63. *Gaudium et Spes*, 16.
64. *Dignitatis Humanae*, 3.

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66. See Pope Pius XII, "Nature of Their Profession: Allocution to Midwives," October 29, 1951. Available at http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P511029.HTM. See also Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford: Tan Books, 1974), 462.

67. See Margaret Monahan Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship: Real and Rational* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2002), 23, 28.

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69. See *Gaudium et Spes*, 51.

70. *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.

71. *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.

72. *Gaudium et Spes*, 49.

73. Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 12.

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75. Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, 1971, no. 6.

76. David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 81.

77. See John Coleman, "The Homosexual Revolution and Hermeneutics," in Gregory Baum and John Coleman, eds., *The Sexual Revolution* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd 1984), 55-64; and Mary Hunt, "Transforming Moral Theology: A Feminist Ethical Challenge" in Fiorenza and Collins, *Women: Invisible in Church and Society* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1985), 84-90.

78. James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 142.

79. A good description on the thinking and writings of these theologians are provided by Keenan. See James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology*, 142-222.

80. Why I call them second generation theologians is that most of them, except George Lobo, are post-Vatican theologians. Even

George Lobo's contributions are post-Vatican (his first book - *Current Problems in Medical Ethics* - appearing in 1974).

81. This in no way is an exhaustive list. Specially mentioning these names are also in no way to belittle others. Thomas Srampickal in one of his recent articles has provided some information on most of these moral theologians. See Thomas Srampickal, "Moral Theology in India: A Historical Overview" in *New Horizons in Christian Ethics: Reflections from India*, ed. Scaria Kanniyakonil (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2014), 36-38. My attempt here is to add to the information he has already given.
82. Thomas Srampickal, "Moral Theology in India: A Historical Overview," 36.
83. See Thomas Srampickal, "Moral Theology in India: A Historical Overview," 37.
84. See "Theologian-Author Sets Limca Record," *Ucan News* (October 7, 2013). Available at http://www.ucanindia.in/news/theologianauthor-sets-limca-record/22208/daily.
85. See "Theologian-Author Sets Limca Record."
86. "Theologian-Author Sets Limca Record."
87. "Theologian-Author Sets Limca Record."
88. "Theologian-Author Sets Limca Record."
89. See Shaji Kochuthara, "Report on National Workshop on 'Moral Theology in India Today'" held at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram (DVK), Bangalore, India from July 12-15, 2012 at http://www.catholicethics.com/conferences/bangalore/report.
90. Thomas Srampickal, *The Concept of Conscience in Today's Empirical Psychology and in the Documents of the Second Vatican Council* (Innsbruck: Resch, 1976).
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Karl Rahner's Efforts for a Relevant Christianity

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Abstract: Karl Rahner is a theologian who struggled with, and alongside, a Church that was struggling to reconcile deeply held faith convictions with the changed times. This article attempts to describe some aspects of that struggle.

Key words: task of theology, Heidegger, Marechal, Aquinas, Vatican II, pluralism, dialogue

The efforts of Karl Rahner have touched many aspects of theology concerning persons, their relationship to God and pluralism along with the issues they raise. Rahner has influenced much of Catholic theology in the twentieth century and played an important role both in Vatican Council II as well as in its aftermath. The editors of the volume *Karl Rahner in Dialogue, Conversations and Interviews 1965-1982* point out that Rahner's theological views on questions and issues changed over a period of time, but "his architectonic view of the faith remained unchanged."[1] Rahner came from a middle class, Catholic family that had schooled him well in the faith but without any pretensions of introducing him to discussions about philosophical or theological questions. When he joined the Jesuits on April 20, 1922, he was introduced to Neo-Scholasticism by his professors but did not feel challenged by them to look for new avenues in philosophical or theological research. Two persons were responsible for the stimulus that influenced his thinking and led him to discover a new way of 'doing' theology: Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Joseph Marechal (1878-1944). He says:

> Naturally, there are interesting people outside my order and the Church whom I've met and who have indeed made a certain impression on me. Martin Heidegger should, of course, be mentioned first of all...Certainly, I learned a variety of things from him, even if I have to say that I owe my most basic, decisive, philosophical direction, insofar as it comes from someone else, more, in fact, to the Belgian philosopher and Jesuit, Joseph Marechal. His philosophy already moved beyond the traditional neoscholasticism. I brought that direction from Marechal to my studies with Heidegger and it was not superseded by him.[2]

In this article, an effort is made to describe some aspects of Rahner's thinking that some parties in the Church found difficult to reconcile with the Catholic theology as propounded in ecclesiastical institutions. He appreciated the Catholic doctrine and faith that he received from his family and which he prized till the end of his life. In making this effort, no attempt is made to provide an *apologia* to explain his quintessential reflections as set down in his rejected doctoral thesis *Spirit in the World*.[3] Nor will this be an occasion to justify or reject the claims made in the revised edition of *Hearers of the Word* brought out by Johannes B. Metz.[4] *Hearers of the Word* deals with the link between philosophy and faith as this affects the human phenomenon in history.[5]

Rahner considered himself to be a theologian: "I myself aim to be a theologian and really nothing else; simply because I am just not a philosopher, and am under no illusions that I could ever be one."[6] He did not see himself as a traditional theologian ensconced in the world of academics and it was not his intention to disparage philosophy.[7] His overall purpose was to communicate the message of Christianity and he felt the need to produce a new genre of theological writing—the "first level of reflection."

We get a remarkable glimpse as to what Rahner was attempting to do when we read through his lecture notes put into book form:

> This book, therefore, proceeds from the conviction, and it will try to confirm this in the process, that between the simple faith of the catechism on the one hand, and on the other the process of working through all of the disciplines [sociology, history, phenomenology and philosophy of religion, exegesis, biblical theology and systematic theology] we mentioned and many more besides, there is a way of giving an intellectually honest justification of Christian faith, and this precisely on the level that we called the "first level of reflection".[8]

Rahner contrasts this level of reflection with another level of reflection where "the scientific expert in theology" would be called to elaborate his theology "in an explicit and scientifically adequate way with all the questions and tasks of these disciplines."[9] Acknowledging the formidable task undertaken by the theologian, Rahner asks the reader to "remember that he ought to listen more to what I wanted to say than

what I actually did say."[10] How did Rahner see his task as a Catholic theologian?

(a) Rahner the Catholic Theologian

On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, Rahner was interviewed by *Herder Korrespondenz* and affirmed that his "theology is reflection on the data that was always readily available in sound scholastic theology."[11] In the same interview, he said that he "tried to ferret out the inner power and dynamism which is hidden in scholastic theology." (p 17) On being asked how he would define himself against the background of conservatism during the period from Pius X (1903-1914) to Pius XII (1939-1958), Rahner replied as follows:

> I am a Catholic theologian who attempts in absolute loyalty to the magisterium of the Church to rethink Catholic teaching...There are, of course, positions of the magisterium that are not definitive. It can err and issue a statement that can be criticised or reformulated...Catholic theologians not only can, but must criticize nondefinitive statements of the magisterium and develop ever more profound interpretations of the dogmas that have already been defined. Here there is a great deal of freedom, and it must remain so.[12]

In the pre-conciliar atmosphere of Vatican II where the *Idem semper* (the same forever) attitude was cultivated in matters of church doctrine, and where the doctrine of "creeping infallibility" was attached to many magisterial pronouncements, Rahner's efforts to "develop ever more profound interpretations of the dogmas" must have been very disturbing.[13]

While admiring the genius of Thomas Aquinas, Rahner felt that the theology of Aquinas had been reduced to being no more than a commentary on the *Summa Theologiae* by the teachers of theology who used it as a textbook. In fact, the theology taught in the Roman schools consisted of twenty-four theses which reflected what was contained in the *Summa*.[14] Such theology fostered conservatism in the Church's thinking and created an impression of the Church having an establishment theology that a student studying theology—normally the student doing ecclesiastical studies—had merely to accept. He offers a reason why this happened:

> Up to Pius XII—just look at *Humani Generis* (1950)—there prevailed in the Church the strange idea that there had been a history of dogmas and their development, but now we are at last in possession of concepts that could not be improved. If such an idea is deeply impressed on the psyche through a shock, as, for example, in the nineteenth century through the Enlightenment, it is quite understandable that the return to a progressive thinker like Thomas could lead to conservatism.[15]

In contrast, the Second Vatican Council fostered methods of teaching and scientific approaches that obviated the need of Thomas' *Summa* being used as a mere textbook of theology.[16]

According to Rahner, a theology for the contemporary world should possess four characteristics:[17]

1) It should be pluralistic and hence many theologies would exist. "This pluralism...raises new questions about the relationship of theology to the magisterium and to the common creed of the Church..."

2) It would need to be more immediately missionary and mystagogical. "...with Christian faith losing its social basis and support and becoming more a faith that is rooted in the personal decision and conviction of the individual, theology will have to serve faith in a new way. By mystagogical I mean bringing the *fides quae* or what we believe into the closest possible unity with the *fides qua* or the act of faith itself, and thus showing what the tenets of faith actually mean for the individual and for society."

3) It would have to be demythologizing, that is "expressing Christian faith in such a way that it can really be assimilated by contemporary people," while being bound to the (Christian) tradition.

4) Such theology would have to be transcendental in so far as "it will bring out more clearly the role of the knowing subject in all of our objective knowledge, including our knowledge via faith and theology."

(b) The Starting Point of Rahner's Theologizing

The Christian message calls a person in his or her historical journey of life. The existential situation of the human phenomenon does not begin with a situation that is the focus of philosophy alone, the domain of reason, and only then by theology, the domain of faith and revelation. "It [the Christian message] summons man before the real truth of his being. It summons him before the truth in which he remains inescapably caught, although this prison is ultimately the infinite expanse of the

incomprehensible mystery of God."[18] As a consequence, a person's self-understanding that is historically situated takes into account his/her total life's experience, part of which is the experience of Christianity. Rahner explains his position as follows:

> Even the most basic, self-grounded and most transcendental philosophy of human existence is always achieved only within historical experience. Indeed, it is itself a moment in human history, and hence we can never philosophize as though man has not had that experience which is the experience of Christianity...A philosophy that is absolutely free of theology is not even possible in our historical situation. The fundamental autonomy of this philosophy can only consist in the fact that it reflects upon its historical origins and asks whether it sees itself as still bound to these origins in history and in grace as something valid, and whether this self-experience of man can still be experienced today as something valid and binding. Conversely, dogmatic theology also wants to tell man what he is, and what he still remains even if he rejects this message of Christianity.[19]

Since it is Rahner himself who identifies Heidegger as the person who has influenced him in his theologizing, we may ask how. Attending Heidegger's seminars for two years (1934-1936), Rahner speaks about how he participated in those seminars, and about the protocol of reading a summary of a previous session with "some fear and trepidation" possibly because his own research was theological: "purgatory, the nature of the sacraments, the Trinity, and so on," in contrast to Heidegger's own philosophy. He also explains in some detail the influence of his two "mentors"—Marechal and Heidegger:

> Heidegger's philosophy that was characteristic of the years 1934 to 1936 was quite distinct from his later philosophy. The Heidegger that I learned was the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, the Heidegger of the battlecry, perhaps even the Heidegger of metaphysics. That was the Heidegger with whom I learned to think a little bit, and for that I am grateful to him. Insofar as it is philosophical, my theology does not really show the systematic and thematic influence of Heidegger. What he communicated was the desire to think, the ability to think. Then, of course, up to a certain point, influenced by my early interest in Marechal, I studied what is called, in a very vague and general sense, existential philosophy or existential theology but which, strictly speaking, was not necessarily linked

with Heidegger. I would say that Martin Heidegger was the only teacher for whom I developed the respect that a disciple has for a great master. That had little to do with individual questions or individual formulations of my theology. I would say that Heidegger had little influence on my philosophy or even my theology, although I am really extremely grateful to him.[20]

Heidegger claimed that through the periods of history of philosophy the meaningfulness of being had been forgotten and he wanted to retrieve what had been lost in that history. As understood in the thinking of Martin Heidegger, existence is restricted to the human phenomenon; man is the "shepherd of being". This is so because only in the case of a human person is it possible for him/her to reflect on him/herself and know the 'other'. Explaining "existence" in the thought of Martin Heidegger, John Macquarie says:

> ...in Heidegger and other traditionalist writers, the word [existence] is restricted to the human existent. This does not imply any unreality on the part of other beings, but draws attention to the fact that the human being stands out (ex-sists) as the only being that is open to and responsible for what is. Similarly, the German word *Dasein*, usually left untranslated in English writings, traditionally stood for any kind of existence, but is restricted in Heidegger to the human existent. Of the adjectives derived from 'existence', *existential* refers to the universal structures of human existence, while *existentiell* refers to the unique, particular existent.[21]

If one were to ask how exactly Heidegger entered into Rahner's theological explorations, he would say the following:

> ...it is not specific doctrines that I have taken from Heidegger, but rather a style of thinking and of investigating which has proved most valuable. This may be described as a method or approach by which one does not examine dogmatic truths *merely* as evidence derived from positive sources, but one seeks to construct a synthesis. One takes the various dogmatic Richmond, (1968) 1973, pp 61-62. See also Karl Rahner's and Herbert Vorgrimler's Theological *Dictionary*, (Translated by Richard Strachen), edited by Cornelius Ernst, O.P., p 160: "In the philosophy of M. Heidegger, and similarly in the 'philosophy of existence' in general, the concept of existence is confined to man, since man is that privileged

> entity which possess the understanding of being, that is, understanding of itself, of its 'there-ness' and of being in general. Hence human existence displays the real ingredience (sic!) of being; and therefore all philosophical enquiry into the nature of being must begin with the analysis of this existence (Theological anthropology).propositions and reduces them to certain fundamental principles. In that way an internal, coherent body of dogmatic truth is established.[22]

Perhaps the real point of departure in Rahner's theologizing is to be found in what he refers to as Transcendental Anthropology. For human experience is not seen as antecedent to or logically prior to the divine presence in the human, but because of the datum of revelation as seen in the person of Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, a person can gradually be brought to awareness of God's presence already present in that same experience. In fact, Rahner's *Spirit in the World* that seeks to interpret Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* I, Question 84, Article 7 "Can the intellect actually know anything through the intelligible species which it possesses, without turning to the phantasms?" establishes the a-priori conditions for revelation to occur:

> Man concerns Thomas the theologian at the point at which God manifests Himself in such a way that He is able to be heard in the word of His revelation: "from the viewpoint of his soul." In order to be able to hear whether God speaks, we must know that he is...If man is understood in this way, he can listen to hear whether God has not perhaps spoken, because he knows that God is; God can speak, because He is the Unknown.[23]

(c) Rahner's Transcendental Anthropology

Rahner's understanding of the human phenomenon begins with the supposition that the human being as created is already a person in whom the Spirit of God is at work. In fact, the human phenomenon should not be considered solely by itself if the fulfilment of men and women is realized through God's self-communication—grace:

> ...right from the outset the human being is not only radically, unequivocally open to God as the absolute mystery, surrendering to it, but also because the dynamism of God's self-communication, what we call grace, Holy Spirit, is also at work from the outset. Thus, if and to the extent a person once experiences this inner offer of grace and historically objectifies it in a continuing process

which, finally, is precisely identical with human history, then a person is already in the realm of revelation and theology—a theocentric theology.[24]

For Rahner, such an understanding is the starting point for understanding and speaking about nature and grace which is not quite the case with the usual teaching concerning these topics in theological anthropology:

> ....grace appears there as a mere super-structure, very fine in itself certainly, which is imposed upon nature by God's free decree, and in such a way that the relationship between the two is no more intense than that of a freedom from contradiction...[25]

This starting point of Rahner was elucidated in *Spirit in the World* where he interprets Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of the "turning to the phantasms":

> By spirit I mean a power which reaches out beyond the world and knows the metaphysical. World is the name of the reality which is accessible to the immediate experience of man. How, according to Thomas, human knowing can be spirit in the world, is the question which is the concern of this work. The proposition that human knowing is first of all in the world of experience and that everything metaphysical is known only in and *at* the world is expressed by Thomas in his doctrine of the *conversion* and of the intellect's being constantly turned to the phenomenon, the doctrine of the "conversion of the intellect to the phantasm."[26]

Writing the Foreword to this work of Rahner ("An Essay on Karl Rahner"), Johannes B. Metz says:

> *Spirit in the World* uses a Thomistic metaphysics of knowledge explained in terms of transcendental and existential philosophy to define man as that essence of absolute transcendence towards God insofar as man in his understanding and interpretation of the world respectfully "pre-apprehends" (*vorgreift*) towards God.[27]

This point of departure in Rahner's transcendental philosophy seemed to imply a "mixing" of the natural and supernatural in the human phenomenon and, if so, would be at odds with a certain school of interpretation where God's free action of creation is later followed by the (traditional) free gift of grace. The following quotation from Rahner may explain how he proceeds in his theologizing:

> Our actual nature is *never* 'pure' nature. It is a nature installed in a supernatural order which man can never leave, even as a sinner and unbeliever. It is a nature which is continually being determined (which does not mean justified) by the supernatural grace of salvation offered to it. And these 'existentials' of man's concrete, 'historical' nature are not purely states beyond consciousness. They make themselves felt in the experience of man. By simple reflexion on himself, in the light of natural reason, he cannot simply and clearly distinguish them from the natural spiritual activity which is the manifestation of his nature. But once he knows from revelation that there is an order of grace, not due to him and not belonging to the necessary constitutives of his being, he becomes more cautious. He must allow for the fact that much of his concrete experience which he is almost automatically tempted to attribute to his 'nature' may perhaps in fact be the effect in him of what he must recognize as unmerited grace in the light of theology.[28]

It is not philosophical speculation by itself that brings Rahner to recognize unmerited grace in a person's experience; it is because he is a member of the Church that is the enduring and public witness to the historical event of Jesus Christ. An individual's recognition of unmerited grace would occur "in the light of theology" because of the community of the Church that preserves the *memoria Christi* in its teaching, its sacraments and its life. Rahner describes the Church as follows:

> ...it is the concrete appearance of this message of Jesus, and because it is the community of those who believe in Christ and who entrust their existence in its entirety to him...the Church is the mediator and guarantor of my life in unity and solidarity with God. To this degree I can call the Church my mother. Obviously this has nothing to do with the infantile attachment to the Church or with a clerical identification with all that goes on in it.[29]

There are many aspects to Rahner's theology and it is possible to deal with only some of these since taking all of them and describing their significance in the overall architectonic view of the faith of Rahner would lengthen this article prohibitively. At this stage, it will help to consider some conflicts that Rahner's efforts occasioned within the Church.

(d) Conflict of Interpretations in Rahner's Theology

While in his publications, Rahner may have received critical appraisal of his theology and thinking, he was never condemned for saying something that denied an essential tenets of the Catholic faith. At times, the censor appointed by his religious superiors may have disallowed a publication as, in 1951 when he was forbidden to publish "Problems in Contemporary Mariology". In 1954 his reflections on "The Many Masses and the One Sacrifice" seemed to be at variance with what Pius XII held and the pope took issue with him. The upshot was that Rahner's superiors forbade him to discuss the matter concerning concelebration and in 1962 Rahner was instructed to send all his intended publications to Rome for censorship. It was in 1962—and seven months into Vatican Council II—that the censorship was withdrawn.[30]

Rahner's participation in Vatican II

Cardinal Koenig of Vienna took Rahner as his adviser to Vatican II and Pope John XXIII appointed Rahner as a *peritus* at the Council. Rahner's stature in the commissions set up to formulate and present the different schemas in the council hall was immense. Yves Congar attests to it in the following jottings when he had ample opportunities of working with Rahner in the different commissions:

> (Concerning schema XVII which was Card. Suenens' responsibility in the council)
>
> Discussion of the text resumed. Fr. Rahner monopolised the discussion once again. He is magnificent, he is brave, he is clear-sighted and deep, but, in the end, he is indiscreet.[31]
>
> (Concerning *De Populi Dei*)
>
> Rahner, as always, monopolised the dialogue. He is marvellous, but he does not realise that where he is there is no room left for anything else.[32]
>
> (Concerning the question of Tradition)
>
> Rahner said to me: Danielou gets on my nerves in the extreme by his habit of taking up, one minute later, as his own, an idea expressed by someone else, and that he had, at first, dismissed...This is certainly true, but it must irritate Rahner more

than others because of his particular personality and because he is so intellectually honest.[33]

Rahner and the International Theological Commission (ITC)

Set up by Pope Paul VI in 1969, the ITC was presided over by the head (Cardinal Franjo Seper) of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and was meant to help the different dicasteries in Rome. It had a term of 5 years (May 1969-August 1974) and included Rahner among the 30 theologians who constituted the commission when it was first set up. Rahner resigned after the first term because he felt that the CDF and Seper were not willing to discuss important theological issues with the ITC.

> ...in its actual work, not its ideas, the International Theological Commission is more or less ineffective. Where the guilt exactly lies remains to be seen. No Roman commission has ever asked the Theological Commission for advice. It stews, if you will, in its own juices. It deals with problems and speaks about them in more or less praiseworthy ways, but that's about it.[34]

Since every account of the faith begins with a particular understanding of the context, the account will be coloured by the context. For Rahner, the idea of Christianity needed to be validated in a world that had travelled twenty centuries since Jesus Christ and had found now that the traditional ideas as expounded in Neo-Scholasticism were unable to speak meaningfully on God, organized religion and ethical stances. Rahner's efforts in anthropology were often seen as a capitulation of the divine to the human.[35]

However, Rahner is very clear about respecting and preserving the divine mystery of God in his theology and elaborating an anthropology that does justice to this mystery:

> Now in the jargon of theologians I belong to the 'anthropocentric' theologians. In any ultimate sense that is nonsense. My aim is to be a theologian who says that *God* is the most important reality there is, that we exist to love him in a self-forgetting way, to adore him, to exist for *him*, to leap out of our own domain of existence into the abyss of the incomprehensibility of God. It is obvious that a theologian has to say that it is the *human being* who,

related ultimately to God, must forget self for God. In this sense one can never do theology anthropocentrically enough.[36]

Pluralism in the Church

In addition, Rahner's point of departure offered a substantial basis both for admitting religious pluralism in the Church as also for the idea of a World Church:

> Today the Church lives in a pluralistic society, and it has a worldwide job; it has become in the course of the last century a world-Church. Consequently, theology has the job of a dialogue with the contemporary person's understanding of self and the world; that means an interdisciplinary dialogue with the contemporary sciences as well. Beyond that it has the job of being a worldwide theology, that is, not only a theology suited to European and North American cultures, but it must develop theologies of the different cultures and situations in the world. At least it must develop a Latin American, East Asian, and African theology.
>
> That also means, of course, that contemporary theology must be a theology that itself develops as well as accepts the modern scientific methods and the results coming from them.[3737]

Karl Rahner in Dialogue

Rahner had already been speaking of the Catholic Church in diaspora.[38] In the series *Theological Investigations*, Volume XX, Rahner develops not only his ideas about a World Church but suggests structural changes in the Church.[39] Salvation outside the Church as outlined in *Lumen Gentium* 16 and *Gaudium et Spes* 22 would be the practical way in which a person could be saved even when he/she did not belong to the visible Church. This could be cogently defended from the perspective of Rahner's theological anthropology. Such theology would call for a new conception of the Church's mission in the world, something which was unacceptable to highly placed officials in the Church since this would change appreciably the way in which the *missio ad gentes* had been conceived. In the past, the Church had relied on the "donor model" to exercise its apostolic mission where it offered sacramental grace to those who were seen as totally bereft of it. Rahner's theological anthropology would suggest that the apostolic mission of the Church be seen as that of recognizing the saving presence of God outside the Church as Vatican II

has, in fact, affirmed. The "breaking of idols" is perhaps Christianity's present mission. It will be a mission carried out with hope in the future where God's self-communication will be recognized in the different religions with which Christianity enters into dialogue.

On the other hand, Rahner's doctrine on the "anonymous Christian" which he did not forsake till the end of his life was challenged by progressives in the Church. To those who felt that Rahner was imposing a nomenclature on an unwilling "opponent" there is an anecdote found in his writings that bears retelling:

> ...Nishitani the well-known Japanese philosopher, the head of the Kyoto school, who is familiar with the notion of the anonymous Christian, once asked me: What would you say to my treating you as an anonymous Zen Buddhist? I replied: certainly you may and should do so from your point of view; I feel myself honoured by such an interpretation, even if I am obliged to regard you as being in error or if I assume that, correctly understood, to be a genuine Zen Buddhist is identical with being a genuine Christian, in the sense directly and properly intended by such statements. Of course in terms of objective social awareness it is indeed clear that the Buddhist is not a Christian and the Christian is not a Buddhist. Nishitani replied: Then on this point we are entirely at one.[40]

Rahner would also like the statements from the pope to affirm clearly the type of acceptance they demand; he would like the pope to indicate clearly the relative degree of binding force which a teaching of the Church entails.[41] Such an expectation would militate against creeping infallibility and the presumption that whenever Rome speaks a matter has been decided no matter if it is defined as of faith or whether it is the personal theology of an individual.

Finally, as indicated in footnote 16, Rahner was in fact very much in line with the *aggiornamento* heralded by Pope John XXIII who appointed him a *peritus* in Vatican II. Rahner's efforts gave rise to a process of theologizing that capitalized on human experience as present in a context and recognized in the person the God-given ability to reflect and discover the presence of the divine in the world. When asked to summarize his theology about two years before he passed away, he said the following:

> I would plainly and simply say that I am a Catholic Christian, I am attempting to reflect on my faith and relate it to the questions, needs and difficulties which confront me as a man and a Christian...But in general, I really have endeavoured to pursue a theology that looks to concrete proclamation in the Church, to dialogue with people of today. Perhaps some will believe that this is just the opposite of what I have done, for there are, of course, many people who say that my writings are not understandable, that I write sentences that are too long, and so on. I believe, however, that the pastoral concern of proclaiming the Christian faith for today has been the normative aspect of my work.[42]

One can say that the "turn towards the subject" entered into Rahner's theological enterprise; he did not find this approach disconcerting nor did he perceive this point of departure as inimical to Catholic faith and dogma. Throughout the length of this article, there are sufficient quotations from Rahner himself indicating that his theological anthropology was a fruitful constant in his elaborating not only a theology of the human person but also of his Christology. Distaste for his point of departure from some Christian circles could not be seen as a clear denial of Catholic faith and dogma even by those who disagreed with Rahner's theological anthropology. What Rahner achieved was to illustrate the need for pluralism in the Catholic Church's thinking and its theology. The Church with the present Pope Francis is reaping the fruits of Rahner's efforts.

Notes:

1. Paul Imhof, Hubert Biallowons (editors), Harvey D. Egan (translator), Crossroad, New York, 1986, p. 5.
2. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue...*, Interview with Leo J. O'Donovan, for *America* magazine, Munich (March 10, 1979).
3. (Translated by William Dych SJ), Herder and Herder, New York, 1968. (Original Edition: *Geist in Welt*, Munich, 1939.)
4. (Translated by Michael Richards), Herder and Herder, New York, 1969. (Original Edition: *Horer des Wortes*, Munich, 1963.)
5. "The present work, which falls into the category of 'fundamental-theological anthropology,' is concerned with an idealistic piece of

philosophical enlightenment in matters of faith, something that seems the more urgent in our times as the basic relation of man to history loses more and more ground to the categorical pre-eminence of science and technology as an ideal system of epistemology, and as the modern individual first of all looks upon the founding of existence and his own perplexity in the face of it, in a historical context, with scepticism or incomprehension." Johannes B. Metz in the preface to *Hearers of the Word*, p viii.

6. *Theological Investigations* (TI), Volume XVII, (Translated by Margaret Kohl), "19. Some Clarifying Remarks about my Own Work," New York, 1981, p 243.

7. TI, Volume XVII, "19. Some Clarifying Remarks about my Own Work," p 244: "The philosophy of expert, specialised scholarship becomes a philosophy that is existentially empty and ineffective. Itself moving in circles round its own axis, it moves no one else at all."

8. *The Foundations of Christian Faith, An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, (Translated by William V. Dych), New York, 1978, p xii.

9. See footnote 8.

10. TI, Volume XVII, "19. Some Clarifying Remarks about my own Work," p 248.

11. *Faith in a Wintry Season, Conversations and Interviews with Karl Rahner in the Last Years of His Life*, edited by Paul Imhof and Hubert Biallowons, (Translation edited by Harvey D. Egan), "2. Grace as the Heart of Human Existence,"New York, 1990, p 16.

12. *Faith in a Wintry Season...*, "20. The Future of the World and the Church," Interview with Giancarlo Zizola, Rome (1982), p 155.

13. "creeping infallibility" implies attributing a sense of infallibility to any papal pronouncement even when the claim to its being infallible is absent.

14. TI, Volume XIII, (Translated by David Bourke), New York, 1975, "1. On Recognizing the Importance of Thomas Aquinas," pp 9-10.

15. *Faith in a Wintry Season...*, "4. The Importance of Thomas Aquinas," Interview with Jan van den Eijnden, Innsbruck (May 1982), p 58.

16. TI, Volume XIII, (Translated by David Bourke), New York, 1975, "1. On Recognizing the importance of Thomas Aquinas," p 4.

17. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue,* "5. The Church's Responsibility for the World," Interview with William V. Dych, S.J. for *America* magazine, New York (October 31, 1970), pp 49-50.

18. *Foundations of Christian Faith,* p 24.

19. *Foundations of Christian Faith, p 25.*

20. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue,* Interview with Peter Pawlowsky for Radio Austria, Vienna,(July 11, 1980), "45. On Becoming a Theologian," p 257.

21. John Macquarie: *Martin Heidegger*, Makers of Contemporary Theology, Richmond, (1968) 1973, pp 61-62. See also Karl Rahner's and Herbert Vorgrimler's Theological *Dictionary*, (Translated by Richard Strachen), edited by Cornelius Ernst, O.P., p 160: "In the philosophy of M. Heidegger, and similarly in the 'philosophy of existence' in general, the concept of existence is confined to man, since man is that privileged entity which possess the understanding of being, that is, understanding of itself, of its 'there-ness' and of being in general. Hence human existence displays the real ingredience (sic!) of being; and therefore all philosophical enquiry into the nature of being must begin with the analysis of this existence (Theological anthropology).

22. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue,* "1. A Theologian at Work," Interview with Patrick Granfield, Washington, D.C., (October, 1965), p 13.

23. *Spirit in the World,* p 408.

24. *Faith in a Wintry Season,* "2. Grace as the Heart of Human Existence," Interview with *Herder Korrespondenz* on the occasion of Rahner's seventieth birthday, Munich, (February 1974), p

25. TI, Volume I, "9. Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace," p 298. Refer also to pp 300, 303 and 307.

26. (See footnote 3), *Spirit in the World,* Author's Introduction, p liii.

27. *Spirit in the World,* p xvi.

28. TI, Volume IV, (Translated by Kevin Smyth), London / New York, 1974, "7. Nature and Grace," p 183.

29. *Faith in a Wintry Season*, "19. Our Relationship to the Church," Interview with the Catholic student community of Munich, Munich, (November 1983), p 145.

30. William V. Dych, *Karl Rahner*. Collegeville, 1992, p 11.

31. Yves Congar, p 380.

33. Yves Congar, 815.

34. *Faith in a Wintry Season*, "2. Grace as the Heart of Human Existence," Interview with *Herder Korrespondenz* on the occasion of Father Rahner's seventieth birthday, (Munich, February 1974), p 34.

35. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue*, "33. For an Open Church," Interview with Christian Modeln for West-German Radio, WDR, Cologne (February 21, 1979), pp 201-202: "...I am convinced that a true Catholic theology of liberation can and must exist. (I gladly confess to having been a theologian of late European individualism.) I can only rejoice when a theology develops in Latin America which is built up on the experience of community, on the grassroots experience of the Church, on the socio-political task of the Church."

36. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue*, "47. Christianity on the Threshold of the Third Millennium," Interview with Hans Schopfer for the Swiss magazine, *Civitas*, Fribourg, (January, 1981), pp 267-268.

37. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue*, "56. Theological Thinking and Religious Experience," Interview with Rogelio Garcia-Mateo and Peter Kammerer for *Entschluss* (1982), p 324.

38. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue*, "2. Questions about Today's Church and World," Interview with Eugene C. Bianchi, for *America* magazine, New York (June 12, 1965), pp 26-27.

    Also,"29. The Church must have the Courage to Experiment," Interview with Ignaz Kessler and Joachim Widera, editors of *Saarbrucken Zeitung*, *Saarbrucken* (July 14, 1978).

39. *Concern for the Church*, (Translate by Edward Quinn), New York, 1981.

40. *TI*, Volume XVI, (Translated by David Morland), New York, 1979, "13. The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation," p 219.

41. *Karl Rahner in Dialogue*, "34, A theology of the Church that seeks to serve," Interview with Meinold Krauss for South-German Radio (SDR), Stuttgart, (April 14, 1979).

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Gandhi's Critique of Modernity

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Abstract: In Gandhi, we find a severe critic of modern civilization. It is interesting to note that many of the criticisms of modernity raised by contemporary Western thinkers have already been raised by Gandhi earlier. He exposes the inconsistencies of modernity and its lack of spiritual depth. It creates violence and reduces wisdom to rationality. Gandhi's dislike towards modern civilization extended to all its aspects: modern technology, machine, western social institutions, particularly those pertaining to law and medicine. This paper would present the Gandhian views on modernity.

Keywords: Modernity, Western Civilization, *Swaraj*, Culture, *Swadeshi*

Western culture began in Ancient Greece and developed in the Roman civilization till the start of the middle ages. Its continued progression fructified into the Scientific and Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment, the American Revolution, and thus to what is today the modern civilization. Modernity embodies a set of beliefs and practices that shapes both individual and collective lives. It has often been seen in terms of the ideas of liberty, equality, progress and rationality. Later on these concepts get expressed in the two political doctrines of liberalism and socialism.[1] Since its inception modernity has been spreading all over the world with or without colonial conquest. In some places and at sometimes it has been welcomed as providing a whiff of fresh air and a liberating force that frees us from oppressive traditions. However, it is also perceived by its opponents as inimical to cultural freedom and material well-being, and hence to be resisted. In other words, it has virtually divided the world and many nations in the world into two camps: protagonists and antagonists. In Indian context we find the mainstream response to be rich in complexity and variety, though there may be some who took extreme positions.[2]

Since Gandhi's Education was in London, he was aware of modern western culture. He is critical of modernity for a number of reasons, but above all for its lack of spiritual depth and reducing wisdom to rationality. His opposition to modernity is rooted in the perceived conflit of values that he held dear and what he saw was embodied in modern culture. But before proceeding to Gandhi's critique of modernity, we start the discussion by analysing three basic terms viz., pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity which would frequently occur in the paper.

Pre-modern, Modern, and Postmodern

In plain language, the term 'tradition/premodernity is used to indicate the way of life of any people/group institution/association which goes on from generation to generation without being marked by any radical change.[3] Pre-Modern European society was overtaken by three major intellectual revolutions viz. the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment. In historical terms, it refers to the European society as it existed prior to 16th/17th century. Similarly, the simple meaning of modernity is taken to be the recent developments as against what existed in the past. Herein the emphasis is on the radical change rather than on continuity in terms of values, world view, customs and technology etc. To put it more succinctly, it symbolises the changed and new way the people think, live and act. Once again, in historical terms, it refers to the transition of the European society from medieval times to the modern times that occurred from the seventeenth century onwards. Essentially, modernity came to be associated with the rise of concepts like secularism (this worldliness as against the other worldliness), instrumental rationality and its concomitants, scientific and technological revolutions, democracy with its emphasis on life, liberty and fraternity of the people, the instillation of the state as the final arbiter of human affairs, and the egocentric concept of man with primary emphasis on his self-interest.

The entire process started in the wake of the Renaissance around 14th /16th century. Some of the important figures were Pietarch, Dante, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and others. Renaissance was marked by a process of revival of art,

music and literature based on classical pattern of Roman and Greek tradition. The process was refined and strengthened by other two revolutions of Reformation and Enlightenment.[4] Reformation was related to the movement led by Martin Luther for radical reform in the Roman Catholic Church. It led to the emergence of the Protestant sects within Christianity. Enlightenment refers to a new intellectual movement in 17th /18th century Europe, which underlined the centrality of human reason, scientific knowledge, individualism and firm faith in the concept of continuous progress and rejection of traditional belief-system. It had its intellectual roots in writings of Descartes, Locke and Newton and its prominent exponents included Kant, Goethe, Voltaire, Rousseau and Adam Smith.

Post-modernity/post-modernism refers to another intellectual movement, which has come up in the later part of the 20th century. Basically, it marks a point of distinct departure from the modernist project both in terms of their intellectual foundation and institutional set-up. Post-modernist thinkers have their own views on art, literature, architecture and criticism including literary criticism; its prominent proponents are Robert Venturi, Jean Baudrillard, Jean Francois Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Jean Bernard Leon Foucault, J. Habermas and others. They are greatly distrustful of the grand narratives/grand theories/ ideologies.[5] The post-modern thinkers have their own views on hermeneutics and they believe that there is no fixed meaning in a text. Hence, reading a text is more like tracing the 'process of constant flickering rather than counting the beads in a necklace'. This is so because meaning in any text is not fixed and as such it could not be nailed down.[6]

Zygmunt Bauman traces the inherent pessimism of the post-modern approach to the Holocaust, taken as an outcome of modernity. Essential elements of modernity, i.e., positivism, scientism and instrumental rationality acted as facade for the use of extreme and arbitrary violence against indigenous societies and cultures that did not adapt to the Western ideas of progress. In propagating the creed of 'progress', modernity came out with its destructive consequences.[7]

In today's world, man with consolidated effect of modernity, is understood as a rational autonomous individual endowed with free will. He is completely individualistic, self-centred, egoistic, screaming for more and more power, wealth and social status. He is nowhere near the spiritual meaning of life. MacIntyre in his discussion of the contemporary scene observes:

> ...modernity partitions each human life into a variety of segments, each with its own norms and modes of behaviour. So work is divided from leisure, private life from public life, the corporate from the personal. So both childhood and old age have been wrenched away from the rest of human life and made over into distinct realms.[8]

Ramin Jahanbegloo adds:

> Moreover, the social dynamics no longer demands conduct in which human relationships are informed by virtues. Modernity which brought freedom from the authority of various non-secular traditions went too far and liberated the hidden greed lying curled up in the human heart. In this culture of greed-satisfaction, rational violence plays a role in the process of ideological brainwashing and the marginalization of those who refuse to surrender to power relations of dominant epistemic discourse. In short, the modern dynamic of civilizing process has created a close link between the modern individual personality and the political formation of the modern state.[9]

Attack on modernity has come from various sources. Karl Marx considered it to be an ideology of the capitalist system which is sought to be made palatable by means of ideas like dignity of individual, democracy, secularism etc. Hannah Arendt is a socio-political critic of modernity. In her *Origins of Totalitarianism* she seeks to show how at the heart of modern society lies a contradiction[10]. On the one hand it swears by democracy, but on the other, by destroying the traditional glue that holds individuals together, it produces free floating, rootless individuals who are vulnerable to manipulation by authoritarian regimes which give them a spurious sense of meaning[11]. Some sociologists call this

phenomenon "homelessness in cosmos" due to religious crisis occurred in the present era[12].

Gandhi's Views on Modernity

In considering Gandhi's response to modernity two points need to be noted. First, since modernity arose in the West and came to India from the West, some of his comments on Western civilization are actually comments on modernity. Consider the following example:

> While the mission schools of other denominations very often enable the natives to contract all the terrible vices of the Western civilization, and very rarely produce any moral effect on them, the Natives of the Trappist mission are patterns of simplicity, virtue and gentleness. It was a treat to see those saluting passers-by in a humble yet dignified manner." [13]

Second, there is no doubt that Mahatma Gandhi was a sever critic of modernity. In Gandhiji's own words "Hind Swaraj is a severe condemnation of modern civilization".[14] On the other hand, to consider him only as a critic of modernity may not bring out the richness of his response. This is evident by the fact that there are conflicting interpretations of his stance towards modernity. Some people construe Gandhi as a social-conservative,[15] while others like Ashish Nandi call him a critical traditionalist.[16] Some go to the other extreme of calling him a modernist who made modernity acceptable by putting it in the garb of tradition.[17] According to this view, Gandhi gave a new meaning to the very idea of tradition while juxtaposing it with modernity.[18]

Gandhiji's dislike towards modern civilization extended to all its aspects. Modern technology, machine, western social institutions, particularly those pertaining to law and medicine, were criticised the most by Gandhi. Most of all, what he disliked about modernity was its violence. According to Satish Jain,

> On the one hand Gandhiji's commitment to non-violence was of a very high order and on the other he saw embodiment of violence in every feature of modernity. If in the value-system of a person non-violence figures very high and his characterization of a particular social order or civilization is such that violence figures in it in a prominent way then the

evaluative judgment of that social order or civilization being unacceptable follows immediately; without any recourse to analysis within a complex framework.[19]

For Gandhi modern civilization is based on inconsistent views[20]and it suffers from several limitations. For Gandhi, the normative structure of the society is an imperative. He believes values interwoven in every feature of the social order, whether it was technology, institutions or the consumption pattern. He was critical of everything which he thought might be unfavourable to the value-system which he believed in. In all probability his opposition to modern technology springs from his intuitive feeling that the value system he believed in was not compatible with modern technology. He disapproves most Western institutions because he feels they are inconsistent with his value system. For him, modernity is based on hedonistic values and a social order based on hedonistic values cannot sustain itself.[21]

Modernity lacks moral and spiritual depth[22]. It creates violence and reduces wisdom to rationality. The core of Gandhian philosophy revolves around spirituality. As a critic of modernity, Gandhi presents traditional, spiritual and cultural values as a solution. He says, 'the tendency of the Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being [whereas] that of the western civilization is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless; the former is based on a belief in God'[23]. For Gandhi, traditional and moral values are the essential part of any civilization. But for modernists the centre of study is individual. Although, Gandhi too accepts individual, God is the core of his philosophy. He too was influenced by the notion that the universe is governed by a mysterious power and men are only a part of it. Gandhi says, 'Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, political, social and religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service to all. And this cannot be done except through one's country. I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of the humanity.'[24]

He also says: 'The more I observe, the greater is the dissatisfaction with the modem life. I see nothing good in it. Men are good. But they are poor victims making themselves miserable under the false belief that they are doing good. I am aware that there is fallacy underneath this. I who claim to examine what is around me may be a deluded fool.'[25]

For Gandhi, modern civilization is corrupting the moral and spiritual fabric of society. Western civilization is more inclined towards materialistic life with the help of science and technology. But Gandhi's philosophy always tries to define the development from ethical and moral perspectives. Gandhi wanted to build a society based on the fundamental values like love and humanity. Like Jesus Christ, he used to say "kill sin, not the sinner".

By propounding his philosophy on essentially good human nature, Gandhi intended to reject the modern concept of individual-centric state. For him, the ultimate objective of all political institutions is to flourish an individual's inherent qualities. When modern economic system is revolving around selfishness, profit-making etc., Gandhian philosophy argues about development of all or *Sarvodaya*.

Although Gandhi was a critic of modernity, he also borrows important principles from modernity. Two such concepts were those of "autonomy" and "freedom". But he saw the need to tame them by re-conceptualizing these notions. Gandhi challenges modern technology because he believes it diminishes "autonomy" and "freedom" and it destroys "self-governance". But he also challenges the Indian traditions, for example, untouchability, because he finds that it hinders autonomy. Gandhi says: "We have become pariahs of the Empire, because we have created "pariahs" in our midst"[26]. Gandhi fights for the right of untouchables as citizens though he never advocates the removal of *Varnashrama* as a mode of social organization. Because his aim is not to abolish the concept of *Varnashrama*, which according to him is useful to awaken the Hindus about the limits of their traditions, their responsibilities toward their

fellow citizens and to prepare them for a '*swaraj*' or autonomous society.[27]

Mahatma Gandhi says, there are two fallacious propositions in Western civilization: that might is right and the survival of the fittest. Those who have propounded these two maxims have given a meaning to them. They have said "might is right", that means, physical strength is right. Some of them have also combined intellectual strength with physical strength, but Gandhi would replace both these with heart-strength. Mere intellectual or physical strength can ever replace the heart-strength[28]. It appears that Western civilization, therefore, is naturally disruptive, whereas Eastern civilization combines.[29]

Mahatma Gandhi saw modern civilization as immoral. He says,

> The tendency of the Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being but that of the Western civilization is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless; the former is based on a belief in God. So understanding and so believing, it behoves every lover of India to cling to the old Indian civilization even as a child clings to the mother's breast.[30]

He goes on to say,

> This civilization is unquestionably the best, but it is to be observed that all civilizations have been on their trial. That civilization which is permanent outlives it. Because the sons of India were found wanting, its civilization has been placed in jeopardy. But its strength is to be seen in its ability to survive the shock. Moreover, the whole of India is not touched. Those alone who have been affected by Western civilization have become enslaved. We measure the universe by our own miserable foot-rule. When we are slaves, we think that the whole universe is enslaved. Because we are in an abject condition, we think that the whole of India is in that condition. As a matter of fact, it is not so, yet it is as well to impute our slavery to the whole of India. But if we bear in mind the above fact, we can see that if we become free, India is free.[31]

It is a known fact that in every social system there is multiplicity of values. It is highly unlikely that any significant value

would be completely absent from any social order. Different social orders cannot be meaningfully compared merely in terms of the presence or absence of a set of values. When different values are contradictory, individuals and societies need to resolve these conflicts in some way. One society might accord a particular value to a large domain of predominance while another society a relatively small one. The principle which determines the domain of every value is essentially the most important constitutive element of a civilization. For Gandhi, "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty."[32] It is clear from Gandhi's opinion that the modern civilization placed the idea of bodily comforts on too high a pedestal.[33]

Gandhi was also a critic of the modern reliance on machinery. But the point of his criticism was that it affects the livelihood of people. Writing in Harijan on polished versus unpolished rice Gandhi says:

> In my writing on cent per cent swadeshi, I have shown how some aspects of it can be tackled immediately with benefit to the starving millions both economically and hygienically. The richest in the land can share the benefit. Thus if rice can be pounded in the villages after the old fashion, the wages will fill the pockets of the rice-pounding sisters and the rice-eating millions will get some sustenance from the unpolished rice instead of pure starch which the polished rice provides. Human greed, which takes no count of the health or the wealth of the people who come under its heels, is responsible for the hideous rice-mills one sees in all the rice-producing tracts. If public opinion was strong, it would make rice-mills an impossibility by simply insisting on unpolished rice and appealing to the owners of rice-mills to stop a traffic that undermines the health of a whole nation and robs the poor people of an honest means of livelihood. But who will listen to the testimony of a mere layman on the question of food values? I, therefore, give below an extract from The newer knowledge of Nutrition by Mr. Collum and Simmonds which a medical friend, to whom I had appealed for help, has sent with his approbation.[34]

Gandhi rejected capitalism because of his repugnance to a system where stress is given to profit maximization at the cost of human labour; machines are valued more than humans and where automation and mechanization is preferred to humanism. In criticizing modernity, Gandhi followed Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, Emerson and other writers. Gandhi's critique of modernity and the West largely originated from the writings of these Western scholars.

Gandhi says: "Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilisation; it represents a great sin".[35] However, by 1919 his views on machinery do begin to change right up to 1947, as he gradually comes to concede some positive aspects like time and labour saving, even as he warns against the negative ones of concentrating wealth and displacing workers.[36] He was aware of how machinery can dehumanise and technology alienate, and he extends his critique to the professions of medicine and law.[37] The poor hardly benefit from these professional services, though they are often their victims. He criticizes these professions in *Hind Swaraj* with a suggestion for their nationalisation.[38]

Gandhi wanted enrichment of all cultures amongst each other without losing their identity. He was outraged by what modernity had done to the world, in terms of unemployment, monotony and war. Further, its primary commitment to money through control of the market ensures that large numbers of people are kept in poverty. 'Money is their God'[39]. The English in India 'hold whatever dominions they have for the sake of their commerce.... They wish to convert the whole world into a vast market for their goods.'[40]

Modernity worries him because of its devastating effect on human beings. His 1925 speech says:

> Do not for one moment consider that I condemn all that is Western. For the time being I am dealing with the predominant character of modern civilization, do not call it Western civilization, and the predominant character of modern civilization is the exploitation of the weaker races of the earth.[41]

Gandhi's *Khadi* Movement was actually an attempt to identify with the poor masses. In the words of *Siddhartha Shome,*

> Gandhi's anti-modernity and his perceived glorification of poverty should be seen in the particular context of the Indian independence movement and in light of its particular needs. In today's very different context, invoking Gandhi to criticize modernity or to justify poverty does not make any sense whatsoever. In my view, had Gandhi lived today, he himself probably would not have been a "Gandhian" in the sense being anti-modern or pro-poverty.[42]

We need to identify and preserve the precious elements of Indian culture. "This implies an inquiry into the structure and working of each of our major institutions such as family, school, the university, etc. and an insistent demand for their reform from the standpoint of modernization of India. Indian universities and colleges may become vital centres of a modern Indian culture. They can play an active role in the blending the old Indian traditions in the modern society for its benefit".[4]

Conclusion

For Gandhi, the normative structure of society is central to its sustainability. He was critical of everything which he thought diluting the value-system which he believed to be superior. In all probability his opposition to modern technology stemmed from this. His disappointment with Western institutions had its roots in his conviction that they are bound to lead to a system which is inconsistent with the value system he thinks appropriate. We shall conclude by quoting S K Jain, "Gandhi's critique of modernity is non-trivial as implicit in it is the idea of non-sustainability of a social order which places hedonistic values on the highest pedestal. In according centrality to the normative structure of the society, Gandhiji stands apart from his contemporaries who accorded centrality to science or science-based technology."[44]

Notes:

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The Impact of Modernity on the Study of the Bible

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Abstract: Since the reading and study of the Bible was an integral part of societal existence at least in the Western hemisphere, the general change of perception ensuing from modernity would undoubtedly affect the biblical field too. In fact, the critical study of the Bible in the last couple of centuries or so can be readily seen as closely linked to modernity. Careful analysis of the biblical text, untramelled by the restrictions imposed by Church-authority, can be seen as a spin-off from the Protestant Reformation. In the early days of this critical effort, focus was mostly trained on the Old Testament books. Attention to the language of the OT (Hebrew) and the steadily spreading archeological discoveries in areas where the biblical drama was played out, gave momentum to the study of the Bible. The birth of the Historical-critical Method was another landmark development.

In time scholars would turn their attention to the New Testament. The search for Historical Jesus signalled the advent of the critical study of NT. Following on it were many inter-related developments, culminating in the application of the Historical-critical Method to the study of the NT by such stalwarts as Rudolph Bultmann and others.

Key words: biblical criticism, Reformation, documentary hypothesis, historical-critical method, historical Jesus, synoptic problem, Rudolph Bultmann, demythologizing.

Introduction

As a concept "modernity" is somewhat elusive. Commentators point out that a series of inter-related historical processes and cultural phenomena that took place in Europe in the post-traditional, post-medieval historical period contributed to its gradual emergence. Growing industrialization, steady growth of urban centres, the French Revolution, the rise of rationalism, the glorification of science, the development of the nation-state, the movement towards capitalism

and market economy and the increasing sway of secularization are but a few of the developments mentioned in this context. Despite being notionally amorphous, no one really doubts that modernity has been enormously influential in almost every aspect of human life, society and nature. Changes in the approach to the study of the Bible have to be seen against this backdrop.

One of the major results of the political and intellectual currents that intersected with the Enlightenment was the loss of certainty and the realization that certainty can never be established, once and for all.[1] Since up until then the Bible was seen as a major source providing certainty on many matters, the new development predictably affected the approach to that document. The guarantor of certainty was no longer God, the Bible or the Church, but human subjective judgment.[2]

Many scholars consider the Protestant Reformation as a kind of benchmark event while discussing the changed approach to the Bible. One of Martin's Luther's basic contentions was that the evangelical substance of the biblical faith cannot be contained in the habituated, accustomed and reductionist reading of the Church theology that made God simply an integral part of the Church-administered system of salvation. He insisted on emancipating the biblical text from Church interpretation. His characteristic affirmation of "sola scriptura" contained an insinuation that biblical interpretation had been too tightly controlled by the magisterium of the Church for its own ends, for defending dogmatic positions meant to serve the interests of an institutionalized Church. Many of Luther's followers in the subsequent centuries wanted to open up the treasures of the sacred writings without paying any attention to the restrictions imposed by Church authorities. The result was an enthusiastic pursuit of critically analyzing the text of the scriptures.

What one can affirm with a great deal of conviction is that the critical study of the Bible that has been carried out in the last couple of centuries is closely linked to the progress of modernity. Here "critical" need not be understood in the more common sense of "passing unfavourable judgment". "Critical" is best understand here as "involving careful analysis" of the biblical text with the help of literary tools designed by academic experts to study ancient texts.[3]

The ultimate aim of such study is to uncover all those circumstances that obscure the meaning of the biblical text so as to render it ever more comprehensible to the present-day reader.

Against that background what I shall attempt in the following pages is to provide a brief, if somewhat impressionistic, sketch of the strides made by experts in various fields related to biblical studies. Their collective effort has made the scientific study of the scriptural text ever more refined and ever more fit to serve its avowed goal of ensuring an enhanced understanding of the biblical word. That sketching will be done in two moments: first concerns the exegetical study of the Old Testament and subsequently the itinerary followed in the field of New Testament studies will be traced.

1. The Critical Study of the Old Testament

1.1. The Beginnings

The 46 books of the Old Testament have been in existence for well over 2000 years.[4] Although from very early days of the Church there were individuals who pointed out that there were obvious discrepancies in the biblical narratives,[5] not much attention was given to such views. Most people believed that the biblical books were of divine origin and what they contained was reports of events that were not affected by the culture and social setting of the places where they happened. Hardly any attention was paid to the role of individual authors in the composition of the books. It was around the middle of the 17th century that things began to change.

There are experts who point out that subsequent to the Reformation a number of fresh intellectual currents arose which directly or indirectly influenced an alterative approach to biblical studies. The overall impact of these currents was the conviction that the Bible can and should be subjected to careful analysis as a piece of literature produced by the human mind. This approach, however, did not always mean a rejection of its status as "Sacred Scripture" or ruling out that it was a vehicle of divine revelation. No doubt there were radicals who took that position, but the vast majority of those who tried their hand at the scientific study of the Bible continued to respect its defining character as God's word in human language.

Any narration dealing with the progress of the critical study of the Bible will involve the listing of a series of names of scholars and their specific contributions. Those scholars put across what they discovered from study and research as hypotheses and theories. These were taken by their contemporaries and by succeeding generations of scholars as points of departure for further studies. Thus we have a continuum of views and positions.

It is held by many that the modern era of biblical criticism was initiated by the three-volume work of the French Oratorian priest Richard Simon (1638-1712), entitled *The Critical History of the Old Testament*. He suggested that unwritten traditions which circulated in communities as oral traditions were later made into written narratives. Although his views were severely criticized by many scholars of his time, his efforts were later evaluated as path-breaking. It was from his approach that a branch of biblical criticism known as "Textual Criticism" (applying of grammatical and literary standards to the biblical text) developed.

1.2. Attention Paid to the Language of the Old Testament

Focus on the literary and the grammatical features of the biblical text led to greater attention being paid to the Hebrew language. Earlier, Hebrew was considered as a unique and sacred language that is beyond the scope of critical analysis. But now scholars began to subject the biblical narratives to literary scrutiny. The monumental work of W. Gesenius (1786-1842) in this area has had great influence on 19th century biblical criticism. His chief contribution was drawing up a comprehensive history of the Hebrew grammar. He then published a Hebrew Dictionary in 1810 which was considered a landmark achievement. It went through 17 editions and still remains a valuable tool for the study of the OT.

Another German scholar who made a great contribution to the advancement of OT criticism in its early stage was J.D. Michaelis (1717-1791). He made use of his expertise in oriental languages, in philology, geography and archeology to give a more exact interpretation to biblical stories and offered it in a book of 13 volumes! It was around this time that a French physician, J. Astruc, came up with the groundbreaking proposal that variations in divine name in Genesis was the result of using two distinct set of notes as

sources for its composition. Although Astruc's proposal did not win much support among his contemporaries, it led to the eventual rise of the documentary theory (that several distinct documents lie behind the Pentateuch narratives) which remained the focus of OT studies in the 19th century centred on the Pentateuch.

1.3. Differing Approaches

There were two distinct tendencies existing side by side in this early stage of OT criticism. There was in the first place the approach of scholars who looked at the OT narratives with a critical eye yet retained the orthodox viewpoint that the biblical books are indeed the storehouse of genuine spiritual values. There was, on the other hand, those who espoused a more rationalistic approach in looking at the biblical text—although containing elements of divine revelation—as a product of human effort. It was against this background that another prominent German scholar, J.G. Eichhorn (1752-1827) attempted a synthesis between orthodoxy and rationalism with his idea of historical-critical analysis. This approach caught the imagination of many scholars of the time and eventually became the method that dominated the next two centuries of biblical studies. His point of emphasis was that the OT was a unique source of information about antiquity. In his view theological preoccupation in interpretation had severely restricted the full understanding of much of what the OT offered. He used the historical and geographical factors to evaluate the text and draw out the spiritual values of the doctrines the book presented. His pioneering work, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (original in German), became a trend-setter. In this three-volume work, Eichhorn discussed in detail the contents, redaction and the authenticity of the text.

His main focus was on the Pentateuch and his research into these books paved the way for the famous documentary theory (that the historical books of the OT resulted from the combining of materials from various sources or documents) which in the following centuries was further refined and re-stated.

1.4. Birth of the Historical-Critical Method

The increased attention paid to the literary and the historical aspects of the text came to dominate the OT research towards the end of

the 18th century. This gave impetus to the development of the renowned "Historical-Critical Method" in the 19th century. Many consider the German scholar W.M.L. de Wette (1780-1849) as the real founder of this method. He envisaged the method as a combination of literary and historical criticism. Essentially it meant answering the basic question: how did the biblical stories come into existence and how did they assume their particular literary form? So, the attempt was to study the content of the text under the aspects of language, composition and origin. By using auxiliary sciences such as philology, archaeology and geography, the method tried to uncover the author's life, ideas and milieu, thus looking at the sacred text as any other historical document. De Wette considered two steps as essential to study the biblical text. Firstly, use all possible grammatical and rhetorical tools to uncover the message of the text. Secondly, look into the historical circumstances—the milieu of the author, the ideas, thoughts and concerns that weighed on him—to establish the text's origin. He also insisted that true exegesis must keep clear of dogmatic assumptions because a priori theological or dogmatic positions, according to him, will affect the objectivity of the analysis.

Philosophical ideas of the time also contributed to the progress of the historical-critical method. Notable among such ideas was the dialectical analysis of history promoted by the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831). The thesis-antithesis-synthesis pattern which Hegel proposed as the operative paradigm of human progress influenced the thinking of the exegetes of the historical-critical school. However, Hegel's position that Christianity is the absolute religion or the final stage of the dialectical process led to the OT being seen as a secondary text, inferior to the NT.

The historical-critical approach was further advanced by the efforts of the German orientalist, philologist and theologian H. Ewald (1803-1875). His highly regarded work in German, *History of the People of Israel* (1843-55), attempted to unlock the history of Israel with a secularistic key. The point he tried to establish was that among all ancient peoples, it was the people of Israel who tirelessly strived after the goal of achieving a true and perfect religion. Hence, he maintained, that the history of the people of Israel is a religious history.

1.5. The Documentary Theory

Thinking along these lines J. Wellhausen (1844-1918) proposed a comprehensive theory to explain the composition of the historical books of the OT. It was called the "Documentary Theory". His proposal had far-reaching consequences as it influenced all fields of biblical research and continues to affect discussions on biblical matters even to the present. Wellhausen maintained that there were four main documents that functioned as sources for the narratives of the first six books of the Bible (the Hexateuch). These are called J (for Jahwist), E (for Elohistic), D (for Dueternomic and P (for Priestly traditions, in that order for their antiquity. Wellhausen also contended that the material of the prophetic literature was in existence before the historical books took shape as distinct compositions. The Documentary Theory received wide scholarly approval and it was enthusiastically taken up as a tool for further research.

Basing himself on the findings of Wellhausen, B. Duhm (1847-1928) took up the prophetic literature for study and analysis. His book, *The Theology of the Prophets* (1875), proved to be greatly influential for the research on prophets in the following years. His point of emphasis was that the generations of prophets progressively introduced the concept of ethical monotheism into the religious thinking of Israel. According to Duhm, morality was the force behind the development of Hebrew religion.

1.6. The "History of Religions" School

A related development that had much bearing on the biblical research of the 19th century was the search for the history of ancient religions. The discipline that dealt with this matter came to be known as "history of religions". Basically it was an effort to look into ancient religions detached from theological premises and from supernatural revelation. Rationalism, that climaxed during the period of Enlightenment, was the inspirational force behind this move. The goal was to unearth facts unaffected by philosophical or theological interpretations. Like the rest of the religious phenomena of ancient times, biblical religion also was subjected to such analysis. Advances in the fields of archeology, anthropology and ethnology along with the discovery of fragments containing religious literature of the Near East provided great impetus to this branch of studies. One of the positive results that the fervour to study the ancient religious phenomena generated

was that it provided new insights into the intellectual, cultural and religious exchange among the peoples of the Near East, including Israel, thereby providing a more accurate pictue of the context in which various elements of the biblical faith took shape.

When we look at the balance-sheet of the 19th century biblical studies, what emerges as a major element is that the historical-critical method of analyzing the Bible had established itself firmly in scholarly circles. However, there also were scholars who raised voices of caution against certain positions adopted by the protagonists of this method. For instance, the purely rationalistic approach to the interpretation of the biblical text was resented by many. So too, many found the complete sidelining of the supernatural element in the stories of the Bible overly radical and untenable.

As mentioned above, the field of biblical research was almost exclusively dominated by Protestant scholars well up to the end of the 19th century. A few Catholic scholars such as R. Simon, J. Astruc were known for their early initiatives. But the Catholic preoccupation with submission to the authority of the Church made the Catholic scholars to remain with marginal issues and safe questions, failing to deal with the essential biblical problems that were being raised by other exegetes. A major departure from this trend was made by the work of the French Dominican M.J. Lagrange (1855-1938). He boldly sided with many of the positions adopted by the leading exegetes of the period and insisted on the legitimacy and relevance of studying the Bible using the historical-critical method. The work of A. van Hoonacker (1857-1933) also had landmark significance as far as the history of Catholic biblical research is concerned. Such events as the publication of Leo XIII's encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (1892) and the establishment of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (1909) provided new impetus to -Catholic biblical scholarship.

1.7. The Form Criticism

Despite its wide acceptance in scholarly circles, many researchers were becoming increasingly aware of certain inherent inadequacies of the historical-literary approach to the study of the Bible. The approach had succeeded in parcelling the narratives of the Bible into their component parts, but towards the end of the 19th century, analysis had come to a kind of standstill. It was against this

background that the German scholar Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932) came up with the method known as form criticism. Gunkel readily granted the contribution of the literary method and was appreciative of it, but his contention was that its focus was exclusively trained on the written stage of the sacred texts, whereas in reality these texts had a long pre-literary stage. This early stage and the developments during this stage had to be subjected to serious analysis in order to arrive at a more accurate interpretation of the biblical stories.

According to Gunkel the aim of exegesis should be to understand the sacred writers and their work. This can be attained only by supplementing the literary analysis of the written text with an in-depth study of the pre-literary and oral traditions from which written documents eventually emerged. He was realistic in admitting that it was impossible to ascertain beyond doubt the authorship and the dates of composition of the OT books. Yet, he maintained, one must distinguish between the secondary context in which an author gave a written form to a particular text and the original context in which its pre-literary form took shape. The Hebrew people were used to expressing their thoughts in formal, conventional categories or genres like dirges and folk legends. To determine the form in which a story originated, it was necessary to know the life situation in which it arose.

Gunkel's efforts offered a corrective to the literary-historical method and remedied certain of its deficiencies. What he proposed was an exegesis that did not stop with a detailed analysis of the text, but one that offered insights into the complex process that led to the composition of a written text in the particular form in which it is available in the biblical books. He emphasized the fact that biblical books are expressive of a sublime religious experience. As against the dominant position of the majority of 19th century scholars who denied the scientific reliability of the biblical books and who maintained that myths were all over the pages, Gunkel held that although the sacred authors made use of mythical elements, there were no pure myths in their writings. For him myth applies more to the manner of expression than to the contents.

In a certain sense the method of Form Criticism that Gunkel initiated gave new direction to biblical studies of the 20th century. The emphasis on oral tradition and the employing of the findings from archeological and literary research of the Near East were greatly helpful in arriving at the life situation that gave birth to much of the OT narrative material. The groundbreaking work of great scholars such as M. Dibelius and R. Bultmann in the area of New Testament was in a certain sense built on the efforts of Gunkel.

Form Criticism was enthusiastically embraced by a number of outstanding scholars who came after Gunkel. The names of H. Gressmann (1877-1927), G. von Rad (1901-1971), M. Noth (1902-1968) and A. Alt (1883-1956)—all Germans—deserve special mention. By applying themselves to areas such as the influence of the Near Eastern neighbours of Israel on its religious tenets (Gressmann), the irreplaceable relevance of key events such as the exodus, the conquest of the land and Sinaitic covenant on the preservation of oral traditions and their eventual conversion into written narratives (von Rad), the centrality of the Israelite tribal federation for the positing of the OT history (Noth) and the composition of the biblical legislative material (Alt), they made stellar contributions to the advancement of the scientific study of the OT in the 20th century.

1.8. Biblical Criticism beyond the German Borders

Although for most part the dominant part in biblical criticism was played by many generations of German scholars, there also were experts from other language groups who made substantial contributions. There were French and British scholars who took the critical study of the Bible beyond the German borders. Here it becomes relevant to mention the Scandinavian School of OT criticism. Although basing themselves on the findings of scholars such as Wellhausen and Gunkel, the members of the Scandinavian School opened up new pathways in the scientific study of the Bible.

1.9. Two Approaches: Historical and Theological

When we look at the state of OT criticism as it progressed in the 20th century, two approaches can be perceived. Continuing with the historical proposals of the 19th century, some scholars focused

on the history aspect. They tried to present the OT literature as reflecting the history of the development of its core religious experience. Archaeological discoveries were very helpful for the confirmation or otherwise of many of the positions biblical researchers adopted. Although some scholars insisted that biblical narratives cannot be reliable sources of history, even they acknowledged the fact that sacred traditions did contain historical information. One important scholar who deserves special mention when discussing the historical approach to the OT is W.F. Albright (1891-1971), an archaeologist of great brilliance. He maintained that although scientific history is not to be found in the biblical records, when evaluated in the light of archaeological findings, they can provide historical information about the Hebrew people.

The second approach that is discernible in the scholarly efforts in the field of OT study has its focus trained on its theology. In a certain sense we can say that while in the 19th century studies history dominated, in 20th century the focus was shifted to theology. Different researchers tried to present the theology of the OT from different perspectives. The Belgian Catholic scholar P. van Imschoot, for example, tried to lay out the OT theology using the framework of the traditional categories of dogmatic theology such as God in himself, God in relationship to human beings, their nature and destiny, sin, salvation, etc. On the other hand, the German scholar, W. Eichrodt, insisted that it is incongruous to fit OT theology into the framework of dogmatic theology. His contention was that the concept of covenant provided organic unity to the theology of the OT books. The notion of an alliance between Yahweh and Israel, which actually goes back to the days of Moses, lies at the heart of Israel's religious faith. Others like G. von Rad maintained that restricting the OT God-talk to a single centre is not a sustainable approach. His view was that many theologies can be found in the OT narratives.

1.10. The Involvement of Catholic Scholars in OT Criticism

Evidently the field of biblical study was dominated by Protestant scholars. The Church's vehement stand against what was described as "the heresy of Modernism" effectively blocked the Catholic scholars from pursuing the study with equal enthusiasm as their

Protestant counterparts. However, there were some genuine efforts at critical study on the part of Catholic exegetes.

The publication of Pope Pius XII's encyclical, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), is considered a landmark event in the scientific study of the Bible by Catholic scholars. Before the trailblazing encyclical, commendable efforts were made by scholars such as J. Touzard, who, taking up Wellhausen's lead in the area of documentary theory for the composition of the first six books of the OT, offered an outstanding study on this part of the biblical literature in 1919, and A. Bea, who, through his painstaking research on the sources and traditions used in the composition of the first five books of the Bible, produced a book on the Pentateuch in 1933. Bea became a strong defender of using critical methods for the study of the Bible as well as of the freedom of Catholic scholars to engage in such scientific study.

Mentionable along with the work of such eminent individuals also are some events. First among them is naturally the founding of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome under the mandate of Pope Pius X in 1909. The Institute's starting of three scientific journals in 1920, namely, *Biblica, Orientalia,* and *Verbum Domini*, provided a forum for scholars involved in critical research to publish their findings and related views. Similar literary ventures came into existence also in France and Germany. For the English-speaking world, similar opening was made by the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* of the Catholic Biblical Association of USA, a periodical established in 1938.

Close on the heels of *Divino Afflante Spiritu* came another important document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1948. In the wake of the publication of these two documents, there was a radical change in Catholic approach to the study of the scriptures. They provided great impetus to the scientific study of the Bible using methods perfected by the relentless research work of committed scholars. Deserving special mention in this context is the work carried out by the scholars associated with the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem. Catholic research into the OT was greatly enhanced by the Dominican scholars like F.M. Abel, L.H. Vincent and R. de Vaux. Perhaps the best known achievement of the Jerusalem

School is the publication of the monumental translation known as *La Sainte Bible* (in French) and its English version *The Jerusalem Bible*.

Through such efforts Catholic scholars were now able to get rid of the image of backwardness that was seemingly associated with their exegetical work in the world of biblical scholars. In fact as things stand at present, in the area of the scientific study of the Bible, Catholics occupy the same place of honour as Protestants.

1.11. Recent Developments

There have been further developments in the study of the OT in recent years. The emergence of new methods such as rhetorical criticism, structural analysis, canonical criticism and the study of the Bible from the perspective of social sciences have opened new frontiers for OT study. To be seen along with such efforts is the feminist interpretation of the OT.

2. The Critical Study of the New Testament

2.1. Early Attempts

If we understand NT criticism as "careful analysis" of the books that form part of it, or more comprehensively as the scholarly study and investigation of biblical writings that seeks to make discerning judgments about these writings, we have to admit that it was in practice from the very early days of the Christian community.[6] For instance, Marcion, a second century heretical archbishop, insisted that all books of the Old Testament were Satanic in origin and so were not part of the Bible! He put together a Bible for Christians which was made of up of an edited version of the Gospel of Luke and 10 letters of Saint Paul. His effort, although a gross distortion, can be seen as a critical approach. Then we have the Church Father Origen (ca. 185-254) who offered helpful hints for the better understanding of the biblical books. Another great name of this early period was the brilliant theologian of the West, Augustine of Hippo (354-430), whose comments about the synoptic Gospels remained very influential for centuries.

2.2. The Beginning of the New Era

The real turning point in the scientific study of the Bible, as discussed earlier, was the 16th century event of the Reformation. Starting in

the wake of Reformation, it slowly gathered momentum. Enlightenment rationalism greatly influenced scholars in the 18th century. It was in the shadow of this development that the historical criticism of the Bible took shape. Basically historical criticism means the study of the Bible as a historical document, a body of literature that originated in a particular time at a particular place. The first scholar to use this method for the study of the NT was a French Oratorian priest by name Richard Simon (1638-1712). His three-volume work in French, *Critical History of the New Testament*, was a pioneering effort.[7] Following him, the German scholar J.D. Michaelis (1717-1791), advanced the method further and wrote the first historical-critical introduction to the NT.

One very important name in the history of NT criticism is that of H.S. Reimarus (1694-1768). It was he who first proposed the idea that there is to be a clear distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of the Gospels, who became the object of the Church's preaching. Reimarus was profoundly influenced by rationalism and its rejection of the supernatural. The famous quest for "Historical Jesus", which remains vigorously alive even today, was initiated by this German scholar. Obviously his position that the historical Jesus was a failed Jewish revolutionary out of whom the Church made the "Christ of faith" by inventing such doctrines as resurrection and parousia was arrived at through a historical-critical analysis of the NT writings.

2.3. Nineteenth Century Advances

The lead given by these early scholars was taken up by several biblicists in the 19th century. Two directions were perceptible in the research work of this period: establishing the historical value of the NT and clarifying its theological content. Among the many who advanced the study of the NT during that period there stands out a particular group called the "Tuebingen School". The name comes from the University of Tuebingen in Germany where many outstanding scholars taught and did research. The founder of the school was F.C. Baur (1792-1860). He applied the philosophical paradigm of thesis-antithesis-synthesis proposed by G.W.F. Hegel to the analysis of NT history. According to him, Paul's concept of freedom from law and the universality of salvation represented the

thesis. The antithesis was the position of Peter and the apostles who held on to the primacy of Judaism. There was intense contestation between these two groups resulting in much conflict and from it finally emerged as synthesis, the Catholic Church and the NT canon, around the middle of the second century. Although many of Baur's proposals were gradually abandoned, his influence on the study of the NT was immense. His student, D. Strauss ((1808-1874) was another brilliant representative of the Tuebingen school. In his *Life of Jesus* he gave a radical reinterpretation of the Gospel accounts of Jesus. To the already existing orthodox position of the supernatural dominating the life of Jesus and the rationalistic stance of ruling out the supernatural element, Strauss added the mythical dimension. According to him a very slim historical kernel of the life of Jesus was transformed and embellished by the faith of the Church.

The positions proposed by the Tuebingen School led to a kind of polarization among the NT scholars of the 19th century. There were people who adopted the orthodox view of accepting the Bible as sacred literature and hence opposing critical study of it and there were others who accepted the conclusions of the Tuebingen scholars uncritically to consider the claims of orthodox Christianity as mere fables. From this situation arose a moderate position among Britain's Cambridge scholars J.B. Lightfoot (1828-1889), B.F. Westcott (1825-1901) and F.J.A. Hort (1828-1892). They questioned many of the radical conclusions of Baur and others to establish a more balanced view of early Christianity and the composition of the NT literature. Among the three, Wescott and Hort are particularly known for the singular achievement of publishing a critical text of the NT, basing themselves on sound principles of textual criticism they had developed.

The refining of the Tuebingen position was carried out in Germany by A. von Harnack (1851-1930) and A. Schlatter (1852-1938). These scholars essentially proposed an approach that was less radical and so more appealing to the majority of NT researchers and students of the Bible in general.

A development that would prove to be very helpful to the study of the NT occurred around the middle of the 19th century. A number of papyri and manuscripts of ancient times were discovered

in this period. The analysis of these documents was capable of throwing new light on various aspects of the biblical question. One momentous discovery of this type was that of C. von Tischendorf. In 1859 he discovered in a monastery of Mount Sinai a very ancient biblical manuscript, including a complete set of NT books. In the following decades several papyri were found in Egypt. These were mostly popular writings written in *koine* (the common form of the Greek language spoken in NT times). The pioneer scholar who applied the knowledge gained through the study of these documents to the field of biblical research was A. Deissmann (1866-1937). Alongside with this, deepening knowledge of the world in which the NT originated, that is, advanced information on such factors as its history, geography, forms of government, religions, thought-forms and literary forms afforded immeasurable help to the project of the scientific analysis of the NT literature. At around the same time many scholars turned their attention to the study of apocalyptic literature. Today this type of writing is hardly used, but during the period in which the NT books were composed, the Jewish world was thoroughly influenced by the apocalyptic thought forms and literature. A scholar by name R.H. Charles (1855-1931) made a crucial contribution to NT studies by making exegetes aware of the various aspects of the apocalyptic form of literature.

Towards the end of the 19th century scholarly attention was turning to two crucial questions: the Synoptic Problem and the question of historical Jesus. These two were to become paramount concerns for the NT researchers of 20th century. The Synoptic Problem essentially treated the issue of similarities and dissimilarities among the first three Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. The scholar who drew particular attention to this fact was J.J. Griesbach (1745-1812). He pointed out that the material in the first three Gospels could be arranged in a synopsis. The historical Jesus question dealt with the reliability or otherwise of the NT accounts of the life and death of Jesus.

One scholar who made a great contribution to the clarification of the Synoptic question was K. Lachmann who proposed that Mark was the first among the written Gospels and that it functioned as a source for Matthew and Luke. C.H. Weisse tried to build on Lachmann's proposal and suggested that in addition to Mark, Matthew

and Luke used another common source, a very early collection of the sayings and teachings of Jesus. It was subsequently named as the "Q" source. It was from the insights of these two scholars that the classic "Two-Source Theory" would be formulated. What it establishes is that Mark was the first apostolic document. Matthew and Luke used it as a source along with "Q". Although of such crucial significance, unfortunately no copy of the "Q" document has survived. The researchers who gave the final refinement to the Two-Source Theory were H.J. Holtzmann (1832-1910) and B.H. Streeter (1874-1937).

Another issue that became an important subject of research was the linguistic origin of the NT material. Scholars were largely in agreement with regard to the Semitic and Greek influences on the NT. Continuing research on the Gospels revealed that behind the Greek text lay much that was of Aramaic character. The outstanding contributor to the findings in this area was G. Dalman (1855-1941). His contention was that Jesus most certainly spoke in Aramaic and so behind his words we can detect the original formulations in the Aramaic language. That position was affirmed by another scholar by name C.C. Torrey (1863-1956). Two other scholars who drew attention to the influence of the Aramaic factor were J. Jeremias (1900-1979) and M. Black (1908-1994).

2.4. New Surge in NT Criticism

The various approaches initiated and pursued earlier were vigorously continued in the 20th century. But what dominated the concerns of biblical scholars was the historical problems involved in the Gospel presentation of the figure of Jesus. Ultimately the question that sought an answer was: how far did the early Church's faith and proclamation colour the presentation of Jesus that we find in the Gospels?

As the Two-Source Theory of Gospel composition received wider and wider acceptance, the conviction that by carefully sifting through the information provided by the two primitive sources (Mark and Q)—which were very close to the earliest stage of the Jesus tradition—a more reliable figure of the historical Jesus could be arrived at. This led to the resurgence of the quest for the Jesus of history and a number of books on the life of Jesus began to appear already starting from the closing years of the 19th century. This

meant a revival of the quest for historical Jesus because with the great German scholar W. Wrede (1859-1906) and his strong intervention on the question had come to a kind of standstill. Wrede was the one who introduced the famous concept of "Messianic Secret". His contention was that the Gospel of Mark, despite its claim to being the earliest document of the type, was still a profoundly theological thesis and not a reliable historical narrative. Mark wanted to show not how human Jesus was, but how divine he was. Wrede contended that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah, and the Messiahship was something that came to be attributed to him by the early Christian community after his death. Because Jesus was never recognized as the Messiah by his immediate followers, much less by the Jews, the early Church had to find an explanation for it. They found the answer for it in the concept of the "Messianic Secret" (that Jesus deliberately kept silent about his Messianic identity which would be revealed only after his death and resurrection). Mark took up this concept and developed his Gospel story along these lines. Hence, Wrede concluded, we can never reconstruct the story of the historical Jesus from Mark or any other source. This was what brought about the stalemate.

It was the research of A.Schweitzer (1875-1965) that brought the quest for the historical Jesus out of the corner it had got into. Schweitzer insisted that the Messianic Secret was not an invention of the early Christian community but a conviction of Jesus himself. He demonstrated that what dominated the life and teachings of Jesus were the elements of the eschatological and the apocalyptic. In his reconstruction of the life of the earthly Jesus he found him to be a deluded fanatic who embraced his death to facilitate the imminent end of the present world order. Although Schweitzer's proposals about the life of the historical Jesus never won much scholarly support, his efforts led to a general recognition of the apocalyptic background and framework of the teaching of Jesus.

One particular school of thought that exerted much influence on NT study was the so called "History-of-Religions School". Basically it proposed that Christianity was one among the many religious phenomena in the Roman Empire. This school tried to establish that the doctrines and the cultic practices of early Christianity were profoundaly shaped by the popular mystery religions of the East.

According to their theory, the doctrine that Jesus brought about human salvation by his death resurrection was patterned on the Gnostic redeemer myth. R. Reitzenstein (1861-1931) was one of the chief representatives of the school. His linking of the ideas of Hellenistic and Eastern mystery religions on the one hand and Christian theological positions on the other had a deep effect on the subsequent research of scholars who studied the NT literature.The most influential scholar of the History of Religions School was W. Bousset (1865-1920). In his monumental work, *The Lord Jesus*, he traced the development of Christian thought up to the Church Father Irenaeus (ca. 130-202). According to him, Paul and his followers succeeded in transforming the primitive Christianity into a mystery cult. The History or Religions School is particularly relevant for the substantial influence it exerted on R. Bultmann and his followers.

In the 19th century scholars had made a great contribution to the study of the NT by throwing light on the sources that were used for the composition of the Synoptic Gospels. The identification of Mark and Q as the original sources and the formulation of the Two-Source Theory were great breakthroughs. But somehow NT research got stuck with this development as no way forward was immediately found. It was against this background that in 20th century the method of Form Criticism gained prominence. The question that led to this new method was: Is it possible to get behind the written documents, to the period between the events narrated and the first written records, the time when these stories circulated in the communities as oral traditions? Form Criticism deals precisely with this stage and the developments that took place then. It attempts to investigate and analyze the pre-literary, oral traditions that lay behind the written Gospels.

The inspiration for NT Form Criticism came from the great OT scholar H. Gunkel, whose efforts in the field of OT research was outlined above. Gunkel's insights were applied to the Gospel narratives by NT scholars. They distinguished three levels of life situations that influenced the shaping of the Gospel stories and their preservation in the written Gospels. First, the situation in the earthly life of Jesus; second, the situation and the specific needs of the early Church in which these stories were shaped and preserved; third, the context of a particular saying or story in the Gospel itself,

meaning what the author wanted to convey by including a particular episode or saying in his Gospel. In fact, one of the guiding principles of this method of NT study is that Gospels do not simply yield a consistent picture of the life of Jesus, but rather what they place before us are the reflections of the faith and life of the early Christian community.

The era of NT Form Criticism is believed to have been inaugurated by the publication of a landmark book, *The Framework of the History of Jesus*, in 1919. Its author, K.L. Schmidt (1891-1956), thus became a kind of pioneer in this field of research. His contention was that the Synoptic Gospels were mosaic-like compositions, made up collections of short episodes from the life of Jesus, which circulated in early Christian communities in independent form as oral traditions. The individual evangelist collected such stories and made them into continuous narratives, taking into consideration among other things, the particular needs of the community for which he was writing.

2.5. The Work of Rudolf Bultmann

The greatest protagonist of Form Criticism, however—and indeed the most influential figure of 20th century NT criticism—is the German exegete R. Bultmann (1884-1976). He taught at the University of Marburg in Germany, which because of him, became identified with the latest in NT research in the early second half of last century. His prolific research career, spread over nearly 50 years, inspired several generations of NT scholars, who took up positions both pro and contrary to his own. The dominant points of Bultmann's theory are: the concept of myth as the key to the interpretation of the NT; the non-Messianic character of the life of Jesus; the creative genius of the early Christian community and the pervasive influence of Gnosticism on the NT world. For him the evangelists had no interest in the earthly life of Jesus and so the Gospels have no merit as historical records. In any case—Bultmann would say—the Christ of faith proclaimed by the kerygma is the crucial fact. The historical Jesus was simply irrelevant to Christian Faith.

Building on the proposals of earlier scholars Schmidt and Dibelius, Bultmann gave further refinement to Form-critical method in his landmark volume, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (German

original in 1921). Another of his works of enduring value is *The New Testament and Mythology* (1941), the publication of which provoked a fierce controversy in scholarly circles. Bultmann's position on mythology in the NT was born out of his burning desire to devise a relevant hermeneutic for deciphering the message of the Gospels. By myth the great scholar did not mean an imaginary story or a fairy tale, but the use of imagery to express the supernatural in the language of this world. Bultmann's call for demythologizing the NT was inspired by a deeply pastoral concern, i.e., to make the saving message of the NT meaningful to the people of today.

2.6. Reaction to Bultmann

Bultmann's views attracted wide-ranging reactions, both positive and negative. Indeed, the extent of comments that his exegetical efforts generated is a clear indication of their immense popularity. Obviously the fundamentalist conservatism rejected him out of hand, while a good number of liberal and middle-of-the-road scholars found his views refreshingly helpful for the study of the NT.

In Germany itself, a number of scholars offered correctives to Bultmann's often unacceptable extreme scepticism with regard to most NT facts and the rejection of the historical element. Among them deserving of mention are such names as K. Barth (1886-1968), O. Cullmann (1902-1999) and W. Pannenberg (1928-). Similarly, British biblical scholars such as E. Hoskyns (1884-1937), V. Taylor (1887-1968), R.H. Lightfoot (1883-1953) and C.H. Dodd (1884-1973), while mostly accepting the positive contributions of Form-critical analysis of the NT, took a more conciliatory path and advanced the study of the NT.

Bultmann's views were vigorously pursued in scholarly circles by his disciples and followers. In fact, there is a phase in the history of NT exegesis that is known as "post-Bultmannian". They carried out research work on the various aspects of Bultmann's exegetical views. One area that was pursued with particular interest was his theoretical scepticism about the quest of the historical life of Jesus. For instance, a prominent disciple of Bultmann, E. Kaesemann, would counter his master's contention that the kerygmatic nature of the Gospel precluded any attempt to reach the historical Jesus from the Gospel confession of faith in the risen Christ. In Kaesemann's opinion if we separated the Christ of faith from the Jesus of history, we run the risk of reducing Christianity to a non-historical myth.

Other scholars like G. Bornkamm, H. Conzelmann, J.M. Robinson and G. Ebeling continued this line of thinking. Among these, Conzelmann is especially mentionable for the fact that he took the Form-critical approach to the next stage. In his *Theology of Saint Luke* (German original 1954), Conzelmann elaborated the whole idea of the embellishment and reinterpretation brought about by the individual evangelists.

2.7. Catholic Involvement in NT Criticism

What is described above as NT criticism has been almost exclusively the work of Protestant scholars. There were some Catholic initiatives taken to enter the field of critical study of the Bible by such scholars as M.J. Langrange (1855-1938) and A. Loisy (1857-1940) who made remarkable contributions to the discipline, but their lead was not seriously followed by other Catholic scholars. Indeed, the time between the career of these two stalwarts and the publication of the epoch-making encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), is known as "the dark days of Catholic biblical scholarship". As pointed out earlier, the magisterium's uncompromising stand against Modernism had severely restricted Catholic scholarship's engagement with the critical questions. The encyclical truly gave a boost to the biblical research among Catholics. But even stronger impetus was given by two other documents: the Pontifical Biblical Commission's "Instruction on the Historical truth of the Gospels" (1964) and the II Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum* (1965). Vatican II surely had a revolutionary impact on the approach to the Bible in Catholic circles. Some are of the opinion that many of the radical positions embraced by the Council, even in fields other than what concerns the study of the Bible, were made possible because of the subtle influence exercised by the enhanced knowledge on the biblical questions that came about through earlier critical study.

In the decades following the Council, the Catholic branch of the critical study of the Bible grew in leaps and bounds. The lead was given by the French school because French scholars had the formidable legacy of great minds like Lagrange and Loisy to draw inspiration from. There was then the help of the Ecole Biblique of Jerusalem and the journal Revue Biblique to count on. Belgian exegetes working from the University of Louvain also made substantial contributions. In Germany, too, Catholic scholars emerged from the shadow of backwardness in scriptural studies

and made their presence felt in an impressive way. Outside continental Europe, North American biblical scholars also became active and in a question of decades were able to stand shoulder to shoulder with their Protestant counterparts.

2.8. Contemporary Situation

NT criticism is hugely popular even in our times. While scholars continue to bring out new insights, students and other interested parties avidly receive them. Established methods such as *Textual Criticism*, *Source Criticism*, *Form Criticism* and *Redaction Criticism* continue to be used by innumerable researchers; new pathways are opened by such methods as Canonical Criticism, Rhetorical Criticism, Narrative Criticism, Socio-scientific Criticism and Feminist Biblical Criticism.

Another much discussed area of NT research today is the revived historical Jesus research. There are two tendencies in evidence. The first may be more aptly called the study of Christology. The attempt to attribute an explicit Christology to the lifetime of Jesus won much following in the late 20th century and many scholars continue to occupy themselves with research on it. The second tendency has received much media attention in our days. It represents a more radical approach to studying materials relating to Jesus and is known as *The Jesus Seminar*. A group of about fifty to seventy-five scholars under the leadership of American theorists R. Funk and D. Crossan are the pioneers of this initiative. As a result of their study they have established most of the Gospel material about Jesus as simple embellishments by the early Christian community.[8]

Conclusion

Living in a period that constitutes the early years of 21st century, we can say that Biblical criticism is at its flourishing best. The menacing onslaught of secularism has in no way reduced the growth of research on the biblical world, or on the person of Jesus and the earliest testimonies about him preserved in the NT books. It is true that the critical study of the Bible has induced needless scepticism in certain circles. Yet it has been enormously beneficial for a great number of people. Enhanced understanding of the biblical word—which responsible criticism almost always entails—can undoubtedly help the followers of the religiosity proposed by the Bible to live their calling in a more meaningful and committed way.

Notes:

1. Cf. Gerard Delanty, "Modernity," in George Ritzer (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (Maldon, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) ad loc.
2. Relevant in this context is the enormous influence of Rene Descartes' revolutionary approach of "methodic doubt".
3. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York, etc.: Doubleday, 1997) 20; also idem, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981) 3.
4. The reference is to the Catholic version. For the Protestant version the number is 39. I have taken the main points of the following narrative from Alexa Suelzer and John S. Kselman, "Modern Old Testament Criticism," in Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy (eds.),*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990)1113-1129.
5. Such as the two different accounts of creation (in chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis), two different names used for God (Elohim and Yahweh), an account of Moses' death appearing as part of a narrative purportedly written by him (Deuteronomy 34), etc.
6. For the main arguments followed in this section of the essay, cf. John S. Kselman and Roland D. Witherup, "Modern New Testament Criticism," in Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 1130-1145.
7. Cf. Brown, *Introduction to the NT*, 4.[8] For a brief yet incisive evaluation of the "Jesus Seminar" initiative, cf. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 819-829.
8. For a brief yet incisive evaluation of the "Jesus Seminar" initiative, cf. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 819-829

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