

## WHY ORTHODOXY IN A PERSONALIST AGE?

Perhaps it would prove helpful to this body if I tried to outline the basic presupposition of this paper as clearly as possible at the very beginning. That presupposition is the following: as I understand the nature of the present theological movement, the most important and the most difficult question at issue for theologians is just how one may critically vindicate the very possibility of theological language. It is because of that conviction that I have taken the liberty of reformulating the question which the committee has assigned me in the direction of those presuppositional issues. For I believe that an analysis of the question posed, viz., "Why orthodoxy in a personalist age?" leads one to a recognition—on a properly theological level—of precisely those presuppositional difficulties. In short, if the question is posed—as I presume it is—as a properly theological concern rather than as psychological, sociological or cultural one, then the *theological* presuppositions of the question should be explicated before any *theological* resolution of the question is suggested.

For that reason, then, the paper is divided into two principal sections. A first section will argue for a reformulation of the question posed on the basis of the presuppositions which would seem to be operative in the question itself. The second section will offer four theses or propositions suggesting the nature of the suggested response to the reformulated question.

### I. THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE QUESTION: "WHY ORTHODOXY IN A PERSONALIST AGE?"

The polarities suggested by the title may seem initially clear but, as the dozen different interpretations that may be given to the title may well suggest, they need not be at all. The question is, therefore, what is the meaning to be accorded the phrase "why orthodoxy" and how does it relate to the meaning accorded the phrase "in a personalist age." My suggested reformulation of the question is as follows: "What is the truth-status of religious experience and language (including, although not exclusively, any specific doctrinal and theolog-

ical explications of that experience) for an historically conscious inquirer?"

The reason for that reformulation, if I may be pardoned some necessary repetition, is to allow for the explication of the theoretical issues at stake in the question posed. The nature of such presuppositional inquiry is as follows:

a) In the first aspect of the question "Why orthodoxy," I would argue that the *theoretical* issue at stake for any religious inquirer in any tradition is not initially his relationship to a particular doctrinal tradition but rather his relationship to the truth-claim of religious experience and language itself. It is quite true, I realize, and quite defensible to have this question posed (as Newman, for example, posed it in his life-long struggle with the issue) by defending what Newman himself admirably named the "doctrinal principle" as factually necessary for religious experience. Yet what the "doctrinal principle" (and *a fortiori* all specific doctrines)<sup>1</sup> implies theoretically, I believe, is a far more basic and general phenomenon, viz., the claim to truth about the nature of the ultimate and the whole which religious experience and language as such would seem to imply. And this latter formulation of the question can be posed in initially purely philosophical terms.<sup>2</sup> In a later section of this paper I shall try to spell out my understanding of some of the major philosophical attempts to explicate that question. For the moment it will be sufficient to recall that any analysis of religious experience and language need not *historically* (as it does not, for example, in some of the uses of Wittgenstein's paradigm of language-games as applied to religious language)<sup>3</sup> but does need *theoretically* to explicate that claim to

<sup>1</sup> For example, Karl Rahner's retrieval of several aspects of the Roman Catholic doctrinal tradition can only be adequately judged on the basis of one's earlier judgment upon the degree of success to be accorded his argument for the truth-status of "transcendental" revelation, especially as the latter is thematized in *Hearers of the Word* (Herder & Herder, 1969); cf. also Karl Rahner-Karl Lehmann, *Kerygma and Dogma* (Herder & Herder, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> The word "initially" is meant to indicate that the question whether philosophy is an *Aufhebung* of religion or vice-versa should not be decided in advance by theologians.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., for example, the different uses of Wittgenstein's paradigm in the helpful collection, *New Essays on Religious Language* (Dallas High, ed.) (Oxford, 1969). For High's own position, cf. Dallas M. High, *Language, Persons & Belief* (Oxford, 1967), esp. pp. 164-85 and pp. 187-201.

truth of such peculiar language. It is that meaning that I believe an analysis of the meaning of "orthodoxy" not merely suggests but demands. It is that meaning, moreover, which I understand such contemporary and distinct analysts of religious experience and language as Donald Evans in *The Logic of Self-Involvement* or Leslie Dewart in *Foundations of Belief* attempt to resolve.<sup>4</sup> And it is that meaning which, from a philosophical point of view, the traditional Roman Catholic understanding of the doctrinal principle as employed in theology implies in its rejection of what it names (to employ the traditional paradigms) fideism and rationalism. For no matter how ecstatic or vestigial one's own religious experience may be, an analysis of the meaning of that experience cannot but pose the truth-claim question to it. And, by asking that question, however more profound a revision of the nature of truth may be needed,<sup>5</sup> it means, initially at least, negatively that religious experience and language is *not* fully explicable upon the basis of psychological, sociological or cultural criteria and, positively, that a referent other than the subject's own experience is present in the authentic religious experience whether that referent be named "The One," "The Whole," "The Sacred," or "God."<sup>6</sup>

The question then which "orthodoxy" or, *a fortiori*, Neo-Orthodoxy has historically posed towards all liberalisms and personalisms (e.g., Karl Barth vis-à-vis the "Liberals"; or *Lamentabili* and *Pasceudi* vis-à-vis the "Modernists")<sup>7</sup> and which—from a theoretical viewpoint—an analysis of religious language and experience implies

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Donald Evans, *The Logic of Self-Involvement* (Herder & Herder, 1969); Leslie Dewart, *The Foundations of Belief* (Herder & Herder, 1969).

<sup>5</sup> As the most obvious example, what probative force is to be accorded Heidegger's critique of the Western truth-as-correlation tradition and his suggested reformulation of truth as "disclosedness," cf. *Being & Time* (SCM, 1962), pp. 256-74.

<sup>6</sup> Intrinsic to such a task would be the phenomenological analysis of the levels and relationships of these various thematizations of the "religious experience."

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted, however, that neo-Orthodoxy is a more complex and important alternative theological position precisely insofar as "neo-Orthodoxy" involves a self-critique of liberalism whereas "orthodoxy" represents merely a rejection of the problematic itself. As Wilhelm Pauck is often quoted as remarking to his students: "Liberalisms give rise to neo-orthodoxies; orthodoxies give rise merely to more orthodoxies."

is the question of its truth-status. Furthermore, I would suggest, logically one need not be committed to any particular doctrinal tradition, on the one hand, nor to a purely Western notion of truth as correlation, on the other, to recognize the legitimacy of posing that question to any and all claims to religious experience. And if that be so, then what precisely does one mean by "truth"? For if one means by "truth" as applied to religious language *at least* that the phenomenon is not fully explicable in purely psychological, sociological, economic or cultural terms then just what is the extra-subjective referent of such experience and what is the truth-status to be accorded that referent?

However, the history of theology suggests that a ready answer may be made to the truth-status question, viz., that such religious experience and language receives its extra-subjective justification from authority. Either the authority of God's Word in the Scriptures or the authority of his Word in a specific doctrinal tradition or in the magisterium (or-a) etc. But just here, I believe, is where the dilemma of contemporary theology in contrast to its patristic, medieval, reformation or even early modern predecessors comes to full expression. The nature of the dilemma is admirably summarized in the correlative phrase of the question "in a personalist age?"

What, then is the meaning of such "personalism" and what problems does it pose for the traditional authoritative response to the truth-status claim of religious men? My suggested formulation of the theoretical presupposition of contemporary personalism is the following: that the real issue involved is the emergence of historical consciousness into the Western consciousness and the resultant problematic status of all classical traditions and authorities. I should also like to suggest that this phenomenon "historical consciousness" may be helpfully differentiated upon at least three levels of increasing theoretical complexity. Correlatively, the question of the truth-status of religious claims may be asked (and historically has been asked) upon any one of the three levels but is most usefully formulated as a theoretical question upon the third level alone. The reason for this differentiation of levels of the phenomenon of historical consciousness is, I hope, a valid one: for the key to any question or, *a fortiori*, to any answer is the horizon of the questioner himself, and the key to

a successful theoretical response is a highly differentiated horizon for both answers and questions. Indeed the alternative to such a differentiated consciousness is posing a question of confusing character. In recent theology, for example, the question, *Is God Dead?*, followed by the response yes or no reached whatever resolution the debate allowed only after critics were able to differentiate the nature of the question (e.g., Vahanian's question as a cultural analysis) and thereby of the response (e.g., Van Buren's acceptance of one understanding of the verification principle).

The phenomenon named "historical consciousness," therefore, might be differentiated upon three levels of increasing complexity in order to allow the question of the truth-status of religious claims to be recognized on any level but properly posed as a theoretical question only upon the third level.

Those levels are the following:

On a first level, here named the "life-world" level, the actual lived experience the "attunement," "dwelling-in," "instinct," "mood," "feelings"—of contemporary historical consciousness as personalist is a sufficiently familiar phenomenon. Indeed it is as familiar to most of us as today's newscast or the last issue of most of our religious journals. It involves the full range of contemporary demands for personal freedom, autonomy, uniqueness, spontaneity and maturity vis-à-vis all "establishments" and all traditions. On that level, the question posed by the committee is probably most helpfully formulated in terms of the need for radical and widespread incorporation of these ideals within all traditional structures (e.g., the demands for due-process in Roman Catholic clerical circles). With such demands I suspect that most of us are in basic sympathy but also suspect that most would agree with me that the theoretical issues posed for theology by historical consciousness not only are not resolved on that level of lived-experience but are not even helpfully formulated there.

On a second level, a more properly methodological and hence theoretical understanding of the implications of the phenomenon of historical consciousness occurs. For, at least since the nineteenth century, theologians have become aware that these demands of historical consciousness include the demand for the development of critical and empirical methods to study *all* historical phenomena

(including all authoritative traditions).<sup>8</sup> Indeed, in the scholarly labor of the last century ranging from biblical studies to conciliar and magisterial studies, the implications of such a methodology for the truth-status of all religious claims has emerged for all traditions with startling and sometimes shaking clarity. For one need accept neither Ernst Troeltsch's method nor his conclusions to realize that the problem which a commitment to such methodologies involves (a problem historically called relativism) affects every historical claim to ultimate truth including every historical expression of religion. On this level, the question posed by the committee is most properly posed as a methodological question on the nature of the relativity accorded all historical phenomena by the development of empirical historico-critical methods.

The third level of historical consciousness is more properly stated as explicit philosophical reflection upon the philosophical implications of both the "lived-experience" of level one or the methodological developments of level two. In recent thought the most obvious expression for the results of such reflection is the recognition of the historicity of the inquirer. The most obvious example of such reflection is Heidegger's explicitly ontological reflection upon lived experience as ontologically historical in *Being and Time* (level one)<sup>9</sup> and Hans-Georg Gadamer's explicitly ontological (in fact Heideggerian) reflection upon the implications of historical methodology in *Wahrheit und Methode*.<sup>10</sup> In short, the classical task of philosophy—i.e., a radicalization of inquiry via ontological reflection upon the basic, essential and universal presuppositions of such inquiry—is employed towards a non-classical problem, viz., the intrinsically temporal and historical nature of man's *being* as being. The implications of such an approach for theological inquiry are yet to be fully determined. At the very least, we can state that if such reflection be correct, then no theologian—however orthodox or however unsympathetic to the lived-experience of contemporary historical consciousness (level one)

<sup>8</sup> For an excellent survey of this development as well as helpful analysis of the ethical demands placed upon the historically conscious theologian, cf. Van Harvey, *The Historian & the Believer* (Macmillan, 1966).

<sup>9</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, (op. cit.) esp. pp. 244-56.

<sup>10</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Mohr, 1965), esp. pp. 240-50 and the entire last section (pp. 361-513).

or to the implications of empirical studies upon authoritative sources (level two)—can feel free to avoid the implications of the philosophical explication of any and every human being as an historical being and any and every historical phenomenon precisely as an historical phenomenon. For it is at this level of reflection where the full theoretical implications of historical consciousness comes into its clearest focus. At this level of reflection alone one realizes what the discipline (viz., philosophy) which traditionally provided a “trans-historical” possibility (viz., metaphysics) for theology is now itself rendered problematic by its explication of the problem of historicity as intrinsic to all reflection in the discipline itself. To be more precise, the expression “is rendered problematic” is not meant here to imply that philosophical reflection is rendered impossible or useless. On the contrary, philosophical reflection, as basic and foundational reflection upon basic and universal structures and presuppositions, I shall submit, is rendered all the more necessary. However, such reflection is not able to lay claim to its trans-historical character in the relatively non-problematic manner of classical metaphysics insofar as the ontological nature of man’s being as being (including, therefore, the philosopher or the theologian’s being) is recognized to be and explicated to include an intrinsically temporal-historical character.<sup>11</sup> To summarize, what I have called the third level of historical consciousness is more properly a philosophical explication of the presuppositions of the first two levels. As philosophical, it shares the peculiar task (and peculiar possibility) of classical philosophy to allow reflection upon the basic presuppositions of either lived experience or scientific inquiry. As contemporary, it fulfills its classical task by explicating the ontological structure of any and every man (whether in his lived experience (level one) or his employment of contemporary empirical methods upon human, historical phenomena (level two) as intrinsically (i.e., ontologically) temporal and historical.

The implications of this philosophical reflection for the problematic at hand are not difficult to explicate, viz. (1) I understand the task of the theologian to be disciplined inquiry upon religious ex-

<sup>11</sup> For an excellent summary of this problem from the philosophical viewpoint cf. Emil Fackenheim, *Metaphysics & Historicity* (Marquette, 1961).

perience and language (including, of course, the explicaton of a particular experience and language into doctrinal and theological expression); (2) I understand the fundamental task of the Christian theologian to be disciplined inquiry upon the basic presuppositions of Christian religious experience and language and upon the basic presuppositions of all inquiry into such phenomena.

I understand, therefore, the basic task of a contemporary Christian theologian to be disciplined inquiry upon the basic presuppositions (e.g., as the conditions of possibility) of explicitly contemporary (i.e., explicitly historically conscious) religious experience and inquiry. As such his deepest theoretical need becomes the need to explicate the fundamental nature of his own and his tradition's historicity and its *intrinsic* relationship to the claim to a trans-historical truth which his own religious experience and language may involve and which the Judaeo-Christian religious tradition would seem to involve.<sup>12</sup> He may most helpfully do so, I have suggested, by raising such questions as "Why Orthodoxy in a Personalist Age?" not upon the lived-experience level or upon the methodological level alone but on the level of explicitly ontological reflection upon the basic presuppositions of religious lived experience (as orthodox or as personalist) and upon ontological presuppositions of historical methodologies (as "dogmatic" in the classically orthodox sense or as "personalist" in the empirical-methodology sense).<sup>13</sup> If this argument be cogent, then

<sup>12</sup> That is, insofar as the Judaeo-Christian tradition is to be interpreted as intrinsically theistic and insofar as the Christian tradition is to be interpreted as claiming a theistic character to its originating experience of Jesus as the Christ. I understand both these presuppositions as fundamental to the Christian tradition and as involving both historical and trans-historical claims. The latter, it is true, may require reconceptualization but not, I believe, elimination; cf. for example, the suggested reformulations for Christian theism from a Whiteheadian and Heideggerian viewpoint respectively in Schubert M. Ogden, *The Reality of God*, pp. 1-71 and pp. 144-64.

<sup>13</sup> Heidegger's mode of analysis in *Being & Time* may once again be cited as representative of ontological reflection upon the intrinsic historicity of "level one"; Gadamer's employment of Heidegger's ontology in reference to the ontological nature of understanding involved in historical interpretation (cf. *Wahrheit und Methode*, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-501 and the entire last section) may be cited as the outstanding example to date of ontological reflection upon the intrinsic historicity of "level two."

we should agree with the radicality of Schillebeeckx' statement that "the present day crisis in theology is a crisis in metaphysics" and with Rahner's call for the development of a new discipline which he names "a formal-fundamental theology," or with Lonergan in his recent attempt to develop what he calls a "foundational" theology.<sup>14</sup> More to the point of this paper, however, if this argument be cogent then the most difficult question at the third level of reflection becomes just how does one most adequately formulate the question itself. And the degree of adequacy of one's formulation will be determined by its ability to differentiate and explicate the full dimensions of the problem in an explicitly philosophical manner. For these reasons, then, I hope I have not acted out of hand by reformulating the issues suggested by the committee's question "Why Orthodoxy in a Personalist Age?" into my formulation "What is the truth-status of religious experience and language (including, although not exclusively, a particular doctrinal and theological explication of that experience) for the historically conscious inquirer?" In summary, I have suggested that the theoretical issue at stake in any discussion of "orthodoxy" is the nature of the truth-status of any religious claim and that the theoretical issue at stake in any discussion of "personalism" as either lived or as methodologically employed is the explicitly philosophical recognition of the historicity of any human inquirer (including the theologian) or any historical phenomenon inquired into (including the religious).

If the problematic is thus defined, what are the possibilities of its resolution? The following four theses do not pretend to be a full resolution, yet they do indicate, however tentatively, the nature that such a future resolution might take.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted, however, that Lonergan has clarified what he does and does not imply by the term "foundational theology" in his "Response" to his critics in the first volume of the Lonergan Congress papers (to be published, Spring 1971). For my own earlier interpretation and critique of his position, cf. my essay in the same volume, "Bernard Lonergan's Foundational Theology, An Interpretation and A Critique." The final clarification of Lonergan's meaning will, of course, have to await the publication of his work-in-progress, *Method In Theology*.

II. IN AN ATTEMPT TO SUGGEST A RESPONSE TO THAT  
FORMULATION OF THE QUESTION, THE FOLLOWING  
FOUR THESES WILL BE PROPOSED AND  
DEFENDED:

*Thesis 1: The question of the truth-status of religious language may find its initial defense in the "intellectualist hermeneutic" developed by the transcendental method of so-called "transcendental Thomism." The test-case for this contention will be an interpretation of the role and nature of judgment and hence of truth-as-correlation in the intellectualist tradition as represented by the work of Bernard Lonergan.*

In this first thesis, at least three terms bear initial clarification, viz., "intellectualist hermeneutic," "transcendental method," and "transcendental Thomism." First, the phrase "intellectualist hermeneutic" is employed to indicate the explicitly interpretative function (viz., of Aquinas) which the transcendental Thomists have been engaged upon. The qualifier "intellectualist" is employed to differentiate their efforts from the "conceptualism" of the later interpreters of Aquinas; i.e., the conceptualist (e.g., Billot on Aquinas' Trinitarian analogy) is concerned primarily with the end-products of intellectual inquiry (viz., concepts and their logical interrelationships) rather than with the source and origin of all concepts, viz., the dynamic and "insightful" nature of the human intellect itself.<sup>15</sup> The qualifier "intellectualist" is also employed to differentiate this hermeneutic from those hermeneutics (e.g. Gadamer's) which explicitly relate the function of understanding to that of lived-experience itself, or more accurately, the function of a specific scientific intellectualism to the life-world of the culture from which it emerged.<sup>16</sup>

Secondly, the phrase "transcendental method" is employed to indicate that the major philosophical approach of intellectualist interpreters is the explication of the "conditions of the possibility"

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word & Idea in Aquinas* (Notre Dame, 1968), esp. pp. vii-xv.

<sup>16</sup> For an unusually clear analysis of this problematic, cf. Dreyfus-Todes, "The Three Worlds of Merleau-Ponty," *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XXII, pp. 559-65.

of all contents of human knowledge via an explication of the acts of consciousness grounding those contents.<sup>17</sup>

Third, the phrase "transcendental Thomism" is employed to indicate that transcendental method may be articulated as an adequate hermeneutic tool upon several texts of Aquinas. The texts chosen represent an explication of man's being-in-the-world-as-a-knower and hence are open to such explicitly transcendental interpretation.<sup>18</sup> The legitimacy of the thesis itself may best be examined by analyzing a specific example of the defense of the truth-status of religious language as employed by a major figure in the tradition of "transcendental Thomism," viz., Bernard Lonergan. The most important question to be discussed therein is the nature of truth for Lonergan both in itself and in its application to Christian religious experience and language. The latter factor is most helpfully determined by an examination of Lonergan's defense of the Roman Catholic doctrinal interpretation of the Judaeo-Christian religious experience as that defense is articulated in his work *De Deo Trino* and in his critique of Leslie Dewart's work on dehellenization.<sup>19</sup> The former and more properly critical factor is most helpfully discussed by briefly recalling Lonergan's technical explication of the nature of judgment as a virtually unconditioned.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, his analysis of the dynamism of human questioning reveals four differentiated, functionally interdependent and indeed self-structuring levels of inquiry (experience, understanding, judgment, and decision). The original data (the "religious" experience) provokes a whole series of questions: psychological, sociological, anthropological, philosophical, and theological. But before analyzing any of those specifications,

<sup>17</sup> For a general survey, cf. Otto Mück, *The Transcendental Method* (Herder & Herder, 1968).

<sup>18</sup> For the clearest example of this presupposition, cf. Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (Herder & Herder, 1968) where the text of the *Summa Theologiae* I, 84, 7 is analyzed transcendently. The presupposition of Rahner's attempt in this work would seem to be that this text of Aquinas (as an adequate thematization of man's-being-in-the-world-as-knower) is *ipso facto* adequate to man's-being-in-the-world-as-such.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "The Dehellenization of Dogma," *The Future of Belief Debate* (Herder & Herder, 1967), pp. 69-93.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (Longmans Green, 1957), pp. 271-81 and pp. 319-39 for this entire section.

one should recall that the question impels one to a second level of the cognitional process: All the questions for intelligence (what? why? how often?) provoke insights and concepts on the level of understanding. But the questions for reflections (it is so? is it verified? is it true?) provoke the further and quite distinct kind of "critical insights" called judgments. For it is on this third level alone that there emerge the notions of truth and falsity, of certitude and probability, of yes or no. On this level, there arises the personal commitment that makes one responsible for one's judgments: for on this level there come the utterances that express one's affirmations or denials, one's assents or dissents, one's agreements or disagreements. In a word, one expresses oneself. With La Rochefoucauld (if less cynically), everyone really understands why "Everyone complains about his memory, but no one of his judgment."

Accordingly, in the short section, "The General Form of Reflective Insight," lies much of the strength of the entire argument of *Insight*. In Lonergan's terms, the grasp of the sufficiency of evidence for a prospective judgment is a grasp of that judgment as a virtually unconditioned. The meaning of each part of the phrase is critical. "Virtually," first of all, refers to the fact that there are conditions for the judgment but that such conditions are fulfilled. In short, the inquirer is not dealing with a "formally" unconditioned, (i.e., a judgment which has no conditions at all) but with a "virtually unconditioned," involving three principal elements:

- (1) a conditioned,
- (2) a link between the conditions and the conditioned, and
- (3) the fulfillment of the conditions.

Hence, any prospective judgment (e.g., Am I understanding this argument, Do I grant the possibility of "religious" experience?) will be a virtually unconditioned (and thereby a grasp of the evidence as sufficient) if:

- (1) It is conditioned: but the very fact of the actuality of question *for reflection* (Am I understanding?) shows that it is. For the posing of the question itself indicates a conscious recognition of the need for evidence that will insure a reasonable pronouncement.

- (2) the conditions are known and (3) they are fulfilled (e.g.,

Am I alert at present? Have I understood the context and meaning of the question? Am I detached and disinterested in my inquiry? Am I asking the question in an already differentiated intellectual pattern of experience? And not in any merely undifferentiated state?<sup>21</sup> Do I realize the meaning of the word "virtually"? Am I seeking a matter-of-fact judgment or an absolutely necessary one? etc.,) Do I realize that the very meaning of reflective insight is the power of my own rationality to make precisely that move?

Lonergan's explicitation of this universal reflective process as the movement of a prospective judgment from a conditioned to a virtually unconditioned by means of a grasp of the (usually) myriad conditions and their fulfillment is meant to be not some *deus ex machina* ("illumination," "intuition," "vision") to save the epistemological day, but rather a relatively simple explanation (i.e., explicitation) of the matter-of-fact (not absolutely necessary) behavior of all rational activity. In other words, if the critical inquirer grasps that the correct question for reflection, in each case, actually constitutes the conditions, then he may further grasp that behind, within and grounding the "link," the fulfillment of the conditions is the very power of human rationality itself.

It is precisely this aspect of Lonergan's thought, moreover, which justifies the astute observation of another interpreter of his thought, Langdon Gilkey that Lonergan "has imbibed the empirical, the hypothetical, the tentative. Yet within it he has a structure that breaks the back of relativism."<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, and more to the point of our present discussion, precisely this aspect of Lonergan's thought provides his critical argument on the need for and nature of the doctrinal principle (i.e., the truth-status question) in religious experience. I realize that much more could be said here. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that this formulation of Lonergan's critical principle (viz., as the truth-status question presupposed by any doctrinal tradition and any religious language) is a more helpful formulation than one which attempts to

<sup>21</sup> The use of the vocabulary "differentiated" and "undifferentiated" is post-*Insight*: it expresses Lonergan's own use of Piaget's vocabulary to express the need to differentiate what is called in *Insight* the "intellectual pattern of experience" from other patterns (especially the "dramatic pattern").

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Time Magazine*, Vol. 95 (April 20, 1970), pp. 58-9.

explicate a particular doctrinal tradition, however defensible the latter may be.<sup>23</sup> For whatever the merits or limitations of Lonergan's thought on the specifically Roman Catholic doctrinal tradition,<sup>24</sup> it seems to me that the argument he advances on the need for such a truth-as-correlation status for thematic religious experience and language is sound precisely insofar as his argument in *Insight* for the necessary dynamism of the human intellect from experience (including religious experience) through understanding and conceptualization to judgment and his correlative critical and technical explication of the nature of that judgment as a virtually unconditioned is sound. I believe (and have given my grounds for that belief in my interpretation of Lonergan's work)<sup>25</sup> that both presuppositions (viz., the invariant structure and dynamism of human consciousness and the nature of the judgmental level of that consciousness as adequately explicated as a virtually unconditioned) are sound and—in Lonergan's precise sense of "self-appropriation" of one's rational self-consciousness in *Insight*—personally verifiable and verified. As such Lonergan has, I would argue, provided the intellectualist tradition (especially as represented by Lonergan's own principal mentors, Aquinas and Newman) with a contemporary, historically-conscious critical vindication of the epistemological soundness of that tradition's insistence upon the need to defend the claim to truth-status of religious experience. He has done so by analyzing the classical *locus* of that claim, viz., human judgment and its relationship to understanding and experience. In his later post-*Insight* work, it is also true, Lonergan has begun to analyze more fully and more adequately the nature of this religious experience as *experience* by attempting to relate the intellectual "conversion" of *Insight* to what he calls contemporary moral and religious "conversions."<sup>26</sup> But such factors are still tentative in Lonergan's work so that the fuller development of

<sup>23</sup> As, for example, in Lonergan's *De Deo Trino: Pars Analytica* (Roma, 1961), pp. 5-14; pp. 83-113.

<sup>24</sup> I have tried to formulate my understanding of those merits and limitations in the article "Bernard Lonergan's Foundational Theology: An Interpretation and A Critique," *loc. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Cf. David Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*, (Herder & Herder, 1970).

<sup>26</sup> This vocabulary and its meaning is worked out in technical detail in Lonergan's forthcoming *Method In Theology*.

the intellectualist tradition for the purpose of our second thesis might best be approached by analyzing the development of Karl Rahner on the further questions suggested by that thesis.

*Thesis 2: The question of the truth-status of a religious language finds more adequate expression when the phenomenological method is employed in an explicitly metaphysical fashion in order to uncover the relationship of thematic (especially scientific) statements to pre-thematic lived-experience (here religious experience). The test-case of this contention will be an interpretation of the developing thought of Karl Rahner on the nature of the "historicity" of the theological inquirer.*

First, then, a general description of the meaning of this thesis may be in order before specifying it in Rahner's thought. One of the major contentions of several schools of contemporary thought is that the relationship between understanding and lived experience (the life-world) must be determined before an explicitly transcendental deduction of ontological structures can be adequately explicated.<sup>27</sup> Such a contention is not, in fact, confined to the school of post-Husserlian phenomenology as the wording of the thesis might suggest.<sup>28</sup> It may, in fact, be discovered in varying ways in the "revised subjectivist principle" of Whitehead or even in the emergence of ordinary language concerns in more recent British linguistic philosophy. But for present purposes it will prove most helpful to formulate the question in explicitly phenomenological terms both because recent phenomenology as a philosophical method has devoted major attention to the question of the relationship between scientific expression and the symbols and gestures of the life-world and because most phenomenologists continue to formulate the question of that relationship in

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 169-219.

<sup>28</sup> The same basic point (differently formulated) may, for example, be found in the "more comprehensive" notion of "experience" developed in the modern Anglo-American philosophical tradition; cf. John Wild, *The Radical Empiricism of William James* (Doubleday, 1969), esp. pp. 359-417 and John Smith, *Experience & God* (Oxford, 1968), esp. pp. 21-46. For an extended analysis of the possible relationships between the Anglo-American and the phenomenological traditions on this point, cf. Calvin Schrag, *Experience and Being: Prolegomena to a Future Ontology* (Northwestern, 1969).

explicitly ontological terms.<sup>29</sup> The most simple way to express this fundamental insight is the following: the principle of understanding in its most rigorously thematic (i.e., scientific) forms, if analyzed phenomenologically (i.e. in terms of the intentionalities involved) forces one to recognize the ontologically *prior* character of man's being-in-the-world-as-such to his being-in-the-world-as-a-knower. Before we understand at all we are already and always in-a-world. We "dwell" there; indeed, our bodily presence, our moods, our feelings and the multi-dimensional gestures and symbols which incarnate and explicate that primordial dwelling bear ontological priority to the being-in-the-world-of-man-as-understander-and-knower. Hence, if we wish to explicate adequately the ontological structure of man's being-in-the-world (above all that being as historical and as temporal)<sup>30</sup> we must first give attention to a phenomenological analysis of man's-life-world itself and then to the relationship of the scientific "world" to that ontologically prior world. Hence to be adequate to man's actual being we cannot shorten the investigation of that being by formulating the transcendental question in the classically transcendental manner, i.e., in direct relationship to man's-being-as-intelligent-and-rational. The question at issue here is a simple but quite basic one, viz., which phenomena must be investigated if one is to investigate man's being and what mode of analysis is most adequate for such an investigation? The responses of most phenomenologists since Heidegger and the later Husserl to these questions are well known: viz., 1) that the "life-world" must receive extensive investigation in order to establish both its ontology and the ontological nature of the scientific world; and 2) that an examina-

<sup>29</sup> This judgment is borne out by an analysis of at least the major figures treated in Herbert Spiegelberg's *The Phenomenological Movement* (2 Vols.) (Nijhoff, 1969). For an excellent summary article on the ontological dimensions of the question, cf. Edward Schillebeeckx, "Towards A Catholic Use of Hermeneutics," *God, the Future of Man* (Sheed & Ward, 1968), pp. 1-51.

<sup>30</sup> Note, for example, that Heidegger's analysis of man's historicity in *Being & Time* is dependent upon his earlier analysis of man's everyday being-in-the-world as contrasted to Rahner's more intellectualist thematization of man's historicity in *Hörer des Wortes* (München, 1963), pp. 150-205, as dependent upon Rahner's earlier analysis of man's being-in-the-world-as-knower (pp. 47-91).

tion of the structures of human consciousness as intentional (i.e., every conscious act is a consciousness of an intentional object) in an explicitly phenomenological manner is the most helpful way to achieve this end.

Given that understanding of the meaning of this thesis, it may seem at first glance that the thought of Karl Rahner is ill-suited as a test-case for its adequacy. Blondel's attempt at a philosophy of action,<sup>31</sup> for example, may seem a more legitimate example of this insistence. I agree that at first glance that may well seem to be the case: for that fact is that Rahner's two earliest and "foundational" works *Geist im Welt* and *Hörer des Wortes* are transcendental in an explicitly intellectualist sense. But as I hope to be able to demonstrate textually elsewhere, a reading of Rahner's full corpus (and especially vols. VI through VIII of the *Schriften*)<sup>32</sup> reveal precisely the issue at stake here. Perhaps a summary indication of the nature of that shift will prove sufficient for present purposes. First, it is true I concede, that Rahner more often argues the case for what I have labeled here the primordially of lived experience over the principle of understanding in more explicitly theological terms than he does in explicitly philosophical terms (as he did argue his earlier intellectualism in his first two works).<sup>33</sup> Yet I know no adequate way of formulating the implicit philosophical presuppositions of those later theological positions or, even more crucially, of formulating the constant refrain in the later *Schriften* on *Erfahrung*, (indeed for a mystagogical experience of God in a philosophically pluralistic world) than to label that insight precisely the one at issue here, viz., the ontological primordially of lived experience over understanding. Moreover, the continued employment of Rahner's transcendental

<sup>31</sup> Cf. James M. Somerville, *Total Commitment: Blondel's L'Action* (Corpus, 1968), esp. pp. 53-63; pp. 353-71.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *inter alia* Karl Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie* (Zurich, 1966), pp. 91-104; pp. 545-55; VIII (Zurich, 1967), pp. 66-88, pp. 88-111.

<sup>33</sup> For example, either Rahner's reformulation of the theological notion of "mystery" in the essay in volume four of the *Investigations* or his still later formulation of the theological notion of hope (e.g., in *Schriften*, Vol. VIII, pp. 561-80) would both seem to imply a need for an ontological analysis of man's-being-in-the-world-as-such (i.e., prior to his being-in-the-world-as-knower)—an analysis not provided, in my judgment, by Rahner's two earlier foundational works, *Geist in Welt* and *Hörer des Wortes*.

anthropology even in his later works need not call this interpretation into question—for the interpretation at stake here (as the next theses will clarify) is not that one should not raise the transcendental question in an explicitly metaphysical way (e.g., here the question of the *truth-status* of the experience and language under discussion). The issue is, rather, that the metaphysical question is raised most adequately in the context of an already achieved phenomenological analysis of understanding and lived-experience and their correlation. In short, I take Rahner's later theological positions to imply that such philosophical analysis is demanded in order to be faithful to the full presuppositions of man's being. I further take that concern to indicate that Rahner need not negate (although he would have to reformulate) his earlier strictly intellectualist account of man's historicity.

Indeed, if I may be permitted to return for a moment to the other major representative of transcendental "intellectualism," viz., Bernard Lonergan, I know no clearer way to express the intention of this second thesis than to recall what struck me as Lonergan's single most significant remark at the recent "Lonergan Congress," viz., "The forthcoming *Method In Theology* is meant to be a philosophy of action in Blondel's sense."<sup>34</sup> To which I would like to add only that, in that sense, Lonergan's forthcoming work *Method In Theology* is properly labeled (as many interpreters have labeled it) *Insight 2*.<sup>35</sup>

*Thesis 3: The first two theses allow for a clearer explication of the nature of the intentionalities involved in present theological inquiry as historically conscious of its commitment to the TRUTH of religious experience as itself informed by the three "modalities" of historical temporality, viz. past, present and future. The test-cases for the historical consciousness of the authenticity of each modality of temporality for the present moment will be the following: for the past, the revived notion of the authenticity of tradition (Gadamer);*

<sup>34</sup> The quotation may be found in the "interview" with Lonergan held at the time of the Congress (to be published).

<sup>35</sup> That is, insofar as *Method in Theology* will assume the thematization of "intellectual conversion" in *Insight* and further the discussion by an extended analysis of "moral" and "religious" conversions.

*for the present, the revived notion of the authenticity of present experience ("relevance" etc.); for the future, the revised notion of the demands of the future upon the present (the "ortho-praxis" of the eschatological theologians).*

This thesis is meant to be a summary of the first two theses in terms of the notion of the historicity *implied* in the first two theses. In brief, the thesis attempts to explicate what I earlier named the third level of historical consciousness (or "personalism") by explicating the nature of the historicity of the theological inquirer into religious origins. It has become common ground among theologians and philosophers, I realize, to argue that time (and history as man's time) cannot be described as a series of atomic moments, a series of *nows*. Rather every moment (whether lived or reflected upon) has the intrinsic constitution of a past intentionality retained in memory and of a future intentionality as, at least, the present's projection of its possibilities and, at most, (as the eschatological theologians hold) as the genuine openness of the present to the radically new (i.e., to that which cannot as yet even be projected—except proleptically for the Christian believer). This understanding of how all three modalities of time (past, present, future) enter into every "now" has become so commonly shared by theologians that one often forgets to reflect upon the implications of this insight for the nature of the historicity of the theological enterprise itself. Indeed, the specific example of such forgetfulness is just the issue exposed by the question "Why Orthodoxy in a Personalist Age?" Or, more exactly, why should any contemporary man, conscious of his commitment to the modern search for critical and personal autonomy, responsibility, freedom and maturity allow himself to be related to a religious tradition (viz. the Judaeo-Christian) which would seem to imply an extrinsically authoritative norm upon all his present and future possibilities and upon all his interpretations of the past?

That question, at least since the Enlightenment's fullscale attack upon the Judaeo-Christian religious tradition's claim to authority, is, I believe, at the heart of contemporary cries for "relevance" and "personalism." For the core of the personalist insistence upon autonomy is its insistence upon the liberating possibilities of critical

reason and personal love vis-à-vis all traditions, especially all explicitly normative religious ones.<sup>36</sup>

Yet in precisely this crucial area of modernity, the contemporary (as distinct from Enlightenment) understanding of historicity may aid rather than hinder tradition's claims upon modernity. For central to the investigation of the nature of contemporary historicity lies the profound theoretical recognition (spelled out most adequately in Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode*)<sup>37</sup> that the Enlightenment attempt to negate the Judaeo-Christian tradition without realizing its own continued continuity with and debt to that tradition is a mistaken one. For, if every present moment is really *not* an atomic moment but rather includes as intrinsic to its very presentness the modality of the past, then it becomes necessary for any thinker, however personalist or even revolutionary, to determine the exact nature of the past's present influence upon the present in both its positive and negative aspects.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, whatever be the final resolution of the question of the truth-claim of past Christian tradition towards the present, at least one alternative is clearly eliminated as a genuine alternative, viz. any position (e.g., Fabro's) which would argue for a nonproblematic relationship of the Christian tradition to our present moment.<sup>39</sup> For the fact remains that many (myself included) consider modernity's demand for full critical reflection upon all traditions and its commitment to realizing the possibilities of free, mature and responsible personal and communal autonomy an *ideal* that is radically in harmony with the demands of the human spirit itself

<sup>36</sup> For a clear expression of this insistence, cf. Carl Braaten, *The Future of God: the Revolutionary Dynamics of Hope* (Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 29-32.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode, op. cit.*, esp. pp. 250-90.

<sup>38</sup> It is important to note that a recovery of the ontological structure of "tradition" in one's present historicity does not argue for a non-critical acceptance of "tradition"—as, for example, Jürgen Habermas has insisted vis-à-vis Gadamer.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. the encyclopedic argument against most modern philosophies and theologies as implicitly or explicitly "atheistic" in Cornelio Fabro, *The Problem of Atheism* (Sheed & Ward, 1968).

and with the Christian faith's demands for radical personal (here intellectual and moral) conversion. Behind and beneath the tendency to cant and sloganizing in the call for "relevance" lies a recognition of the peculiarity of our theological moment, viz., the realization of the demands upon every thinker, however committed to a particular tradition, to allow the present moment's call for personal critique and commitment find critical entry in all his thinking—including his thinking about his relationship to the past-as-present-now, i.e., to "tradition." For if what Lonergan has admirably named the transcendental imperatives, viz. "Be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be loving, develop and, if necessary, change," may be labeled one possible explication of the positive nature of the demand of the present moment upon all past traditions, then one cannot but recognize that anyone so committed cannot but have an initially problematic stance towards any tradition which would challenge that drive for autonomy with any "extrinsic" norm.<sup>40</sup>

To summarize: on the one hand, any "personalist" insistence upon the pure autonomy of the present moment may prove to be inadequate as an analysis of the truth-claim of the Christian past upon the Christian present. On the other hand, any "orthodox" insistence upon the ease with which one may accept a past tradition fails to recognize the true legitimacy of the present moment's ideal of critical autonomy.

Yet all that I have said thus far in attempting to delineate the nature of the contemporary theologian's historicity could, I realize, be said to be representative of the initial stages of contemporary theological historicity (i.e., the stage represented by such classic struggles as liberalism and modernism vs. orthodoxy; Bultmann vs. Barth; Rahner vs. Von Balthasar) without necessarily being representative of the more recent recognition among theologians that the principal temporal influence upon our theological present is the future—and the future, it must be added, not merely as our present

<sup>40</sup> Those "transcendental imperatives" are explicated technically by Lonergan at length in his forthcoming *Method in Theology*. They may (as some commentators have noted) read as if they were easy slogans but the fact is that their role is to signalize experiences common to modernity and a way (viz., transcendental explication) of thematizing those experiences.

theological project (development) but as radically new (liberation). Indeed, if that criticism were offered to my discussion thus far I could not but agree with it. For, in my judgment, the major factor I find cogent and probative in the recent eschatological "theologies of hope and/or revolution" is the argument that the peculiarity of our present historical moment is the recognition that neither past traditions nor present concerns should be primordial for anyone conscious of the common future or common disaster toward which our present history is inexorably leading.<sup>41</sup> Hence one must attempt to heighten one's consciousness of the primacy of those future concerns upon our present. Correlatively, as Christian theologians one may be encouraged (or more theologically accurate, hopeful) about such future-consciousness when one recalls the future-orientation of Jewish and Christian eschatology.

However, the eschatological theologians may well have allowed the consciousness of the future to enter more radically into our present historical consciousness but they have hardly resolved the problematic posed here (i.e., the relationship of personalism and orthodoxy or, as I prefer, of historical consciousness and the truth-claim of the Judaeo-Christian religious tradition). Indeed, with the singular exception of Wolfhart Pannenberg, they have not, to my knowledge, even posed that later problem as a major aspect of their enterprise.<sup>42</sup>

As such, their future-oriented positions may enrich but they do not resolve our problematic. Instead they remain curiously non-problematic in their relationship to their respective traditions, whether it be the Lutheran tradition of Carl Braaten, the Calvinist tradition of Jürgen Moltmann, or the Roman Catholic incarnationalist tradition of Johannes Metz.<sup>43</sup>

To summarize the conclusions of this third thesis, one might say

<sup>41</sup> *Inter alia*, cf. Johannes B. Metz, *Theology of the Word*, (Herder & Herder, 1969), esp. pp. 98-125; pp. 13-56.

<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Pannenberg remains singular among such theologians for his clearly positive interpretation of the Enlightenment; cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus, God & Man* (Westminster, 1968), esp. pp. 21-38.

<sup>43</sup> Cf., for example, Langdon Gilkey's trenchant criticism of Moltmann's position on this point in *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), p. 87, fn. 18 & p. 175, fn. 15.

that a heightened consciousness of the "historicity" of the present theological moment may allow for (1) a recognition of the problematic but real relationship of one's religious tradition to one's present theological consciousness; (2) a recognition of the need for but possible inadequacy of the principle of personal autonomy as *the* single interpretative principle of the present theological moment; and (3) a recognition of the need for a heightened consciousness of the demands of the future upon our personal, communal, traditional and contemporary theological moment. In summary, reflection upon our historicity as contemporary Christian theologians may well show us the legitimate need to differentiate the structure, the nature and the claims of each modality of temporality (past-present-future) before we (explicitly) formulate the truth-status question of our Judaeo-Christian religious tradition for such a contemporary historically conscious inquirer.<sup>44</sup> It is the question of such a truth-status formulation in such a context, moreover, which shall be the concern of our fourth thesis.

*Thesis 4: If the former notion of the nature of the historicity of the present theological moment be acceptable, then the principal concern of the theologian becomes the need to find the most adequate formulation of the QUESTION of the nature of the TRUTH-STATUS of his own historically conscious religious (including doctrinal and theological) language. Various formulations (e.g. the "transcendental," the Heideggerian et al.) will be explicated and their possibilities and limitations suggested. Special attention will be accorded the claim of Paul Ricoeur that a self-authenticating "second naivete" is possible for the contemporary inquirer into all religious traditions—which possible self-authentication might be achieved by formulating the present theological moment in the explicitly hermeneutic fashion that "The symbol gives rise to thought and thought is always informed by symbol."*

<sup>44</sup> It should be emphasized that, if the position outlined here is basically accurate, it would demand a full philosophical explication of "levels one" and "two" before the ontological structure of the theologian's historicity outlined in this third thesis could be adequately explicated. In short, I recognize the intrinsic limitations of this "thesis" format—however, if the very *need* which these theses suggest is judged acceptable then the present purpose of this position will be more than satisfied.

But an understanding of one's own historicity (as articulated in thesis three) does not decide the *truth* of religious experience and language, especially as explicitly authoritative a language as traditional Christianity's. For that task one must turn elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> But where? The history of theology clearly illustrates that it is to "authorities" one should turn, i.e., the authority of God's Word either in the Scriptures, or in both the Scriptures and traditions, or in the "magisterium." But the original reflection on historicity makes that latter authoritative theological solution (of whatever tradition) problematic. For our authorities too have a history—and that history is being interpreted and its authoritative stance revised through the continued use of the methods of the historical sciences. And any theologian who does not wish to face the implications of that fact (viz., possible relativism and historicism; certain finitude and historicity) is best advised not to engage in such reflection upon his historicity and his tradition. Or, as an alternative, he should develop a systematic position conscious of but theologically contemptuous of those very implications—as in the extraordinarily consistent *Nein!* of Karl Barth's systematics or the less theologically impressive but even more effective *No!* of that semi-Barthian magisterialism familiar to Roman Catholic theologians since at least *Lamentabili*. Indeed it is precisely in this context of historicity that the contemporary constructive theologian must, I believe, turn to philosophical reflection for a possible resource. The move, to be sure, is hazardous and the outcome is far from clear. But the move should be taken. Why? Obviously I cannot argue the point effectively (if at all) in less than a fully developed book, but at least a few reasons can here be affirmed.

These reasons must perforce be more suggestive and descriptive than probative and explanatory. But if their very suggestiveness is a genuine one, then perhaps the more probative presentation they would demand would not seem either as alien or as remote a task as many contemporary theologians would seem to suggest. Consider,

<sup>45</sup> I have taken the liberty in parts of this section to employ here aspects of an earlier formulation of the problematic developed in an article for *Criterion* (Autumn, 1969) entitled "Prolegomena to a Foundational Theology," pp. 12-15.

then, these parallels between the two disciplines, philosophy and theology:

(1) The peculiarity of both theology and philosophy (at least in their major contemporary expressions) is that *the* subject matter of the discipline is the central problematic of the discipline itself.<sup>46</sup> In short, neither philosophy nor "foundational" theology can afford to assume an unexamined given (as can chemistry) but rather have as their principal task their own self-understanding as disciplines intending to deal with the ultimate and the whole.

(2) Both philosophical and religious meaning can be understood as, in a crucial way, authoritative, i.e., as self-questioning and possibly self-authenticating speech. The minimal sense to be concluded from this statement is the following: that the authenticating claims of religious and philosophical statements are determined by and within the experience and speech itself and by no other criteria. As such, both may include (dialectically, not dogmatically) their own "authority."

(3) Both disciplines, at least in their major expressions, can and do consider the meaning they seek as intending a more than finite transcendence. As such it remains at least an open question whether or not the philosophical or religious event can be fully explained on strictly historical grounds.

(4) Therefore, a central task of the constructive theologian becomes the need to determine the nature and the adequacy of the criteria of the various contemporary philosophical approaches and the fruitfulness of their method to the related questions of the truth (philosophical theology) and the relevant meaning (cultural theology) of theology at the present time.

This is, I realize, all too brief and rapid. And at the possible price of even greater fault, allow me to clarify, in still greater brevity, my own understanding of "foundational" theology:

On the first level, the "foundational" question could be expressed

<sup>46</sup> For a most helpful statement of this problematic from a philosophical viewpoint, cf. Thomas Prufer, "A Protreptic: What is Philosophy?," *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, II (Washington, 1963), pp. 1-19; *Idem.*, "Martin Heidegger: *Dasein* and the Ontological Status of the Speaker of Philosophical Discourse," *Twentieth Century Thinkers* (ed. J. K. Ryan) (Alba, 1965), pp. 159-75.

bluntly, but for technical purposes not too helpfully, somewhat as follows: why should any contemporary man, conscious of his responsibility to intelligence, freedom and personal maturity employ any religious language however revolutionary? On a more technical level, the most difficult question that emerges is the formulation of *the* question itself.<sup>47</sup> Indeed to that formulation all analysis should lead. From it all construction should follow. For the question, not the answer, is the central concern of any critical discipline. Upon its formulation depends the method and the categories—in a word, the “horizon” of all projected answers. For example, any theologian who has struggled with the earlier debates on the verification principle or, more recently, the falsifiability principle as applied to religious claims, will probably agree that if either Mr. Ayer or Mr. Flew is to remain unchallenged in his formulation of the question then the rest is largely skirmishing.<sup>48</sup>

Hence, four of my own assumptions on the “foundational” problematic can be expressed as follows:

First, a central theological question is just how one can most adequately formulate the *question* of the critical grounds for theology. In short, how does one most adequately justify a discipline which assumes religious meaning as meaningful and true, God-language as meaningful and true, and specifically Christian language as expressive of the truth of ultimate (religious) meaning in a unique—indeed, in some manner, a normative fashion? I see no way to avoid philosophical questions if one wishes to engage in that problematic.

Second, whatever particular formulation of the question be chosen, it must “explicitate” the criteria employed for the cognitive claims of such language (e.g., adequacy with experience, coherence, rigor, etc.).

Third, the foundational question itself must further “explicitate”

<sup>47</sup> This insight into the singular importance of the formulation of the question has, I believe, been most helpfully explicated by recent transcendental thinkers' emphasis upon the phenomenon of questioning itself as the starting point of philosophical inquiry; cf. especially Emerich Coreth, *Metaphysics* (Herder & Herder, 1968) and Bernard Lonergan, “Metaphysics As Horizon,” *Collection* (Herder & Herder, 1967), pp. 202-21.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Anthony Flew and Alasdair Macintyre, *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (SCM, 1955); A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth & Logic* (Gollancz, 1946).

the philosophical method employed to examine the presuppositions of theology. For example, the distinct questions: (a) What are the conditions for the possibility of religious language? (b) How may we dialectically mediate the immediacy of such experience? and (c) What is the ontological status of the speaker of religious discourse? imply, in their turn, a fundamentally transcendental, Hegelian, or Heideggerian method.

Fourth, from such originating clarifications, one hopes, a later more explicitly constructive Christology, eschatology, ecclesiology may emerge.<sup>49</sup>

Allow me then, to pose some questions to the possible limitations of some of the principal philosophical methodologies proposed in contemporary theology before suggesting the relative adequacy of one particular formulation, viz., Paul Ricoeur's. I realize in the questions that follow that a justification of my comments on each would require at least a lecture. In fact, I add them here only to allow for their discussion and to suggest the possible fruitfulness of the present way of posing the question.

My contention, then, is that the most difficult question facing the contemporary theologian is precisely the question of how to formulate the question of the truth-claim of religious experience and language for the historically conscious thinker. My present aim is merely to suggest what seem to me to be the differing possibilities and limitations of various contemporary philosophical and theological explanations of that question.

As a first example (as was suggested in thesis two), must one not ask if the classical transcendental formulation is adequate to the dimension of lived experience and its relationship to all *understanding*, including its most scientific forms?

As a second example, is the purely ontological Heideggerian formulation able to integrate the results of empirical and human *scientific* studies of man's-being-in-the-world?<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> It is true, of course, that one's eventual formulation of the Christological question, for example, is implicit in the original formulation. But true as that may be there remains further and distinct questions which would have to be explicated for each distinct set of theological questions.

<sup>50</sup> This would seem to be the major point of Paul Ricoeur's criticism of Heidegger's position in "Existence et herméneutique," *Interpretation der Welt* (Festschrift für R. Guardini) (Würzburg, 1965), pp. 32-51.

Third, is the classical non-critically formulated metaphysical formulation (for example, Cornelio Fabro's in *The Problem of Atheism*) able to be adequate to the radically temporal and historical nature of man's contingency?<sup>51</sup>

Fourth, is the Whiteheadian formulation able to be adequate to (as distinct from conscious of) the relationship of man's lived experience to the linguistic nature of that experience?<sup>52</sup>

Fifth, is the revised Hegelian principle of the mediation of universal history of Wolfhart Pannenberg able to relate itself *intrinsically* to the uniquely authoritative claims to universality of the apocalyptic tradition it employs?<sup>53</sup>

Sixth, is the revision of the notion of orthodoxy as orthopraxis recently developed by Kasper and Schillebeeckx able to develop a *philosophy* of action in order to be faithful to the truth-claims of the Judaeo-Christian religious experience and language?<sup>54</sup>

Seventh, is the Wittgensteinian formulation of the use of various "language games" adequate to *justifying* critically the peculiar claims to truth of Christian religious language?<sup>55</sup>

If the above examples represent the differing kinds and degrees of possible limitations in the formulations of some of the major differentiated and philosophically sophisticated methods available to the

<sup>51</sup> Indeed this limitation would not seem to be confined to Fabro but seems representative of other "schools" of Thomism, e.g., Gilson and Maritain—and probably constitutes the major reason for the sudden demise of Thomism among Catholic theologians.

<sup>52</sup> It is important to emphasize that Whitehead himself and the Whiteheadians are not merely conscious of the question of "symbolism" and its relationship to experience but, especially by means of the "revised subjectivist principle," emphatic upon the inadequacy of either the earlier empirical or transcendental traditions to treat that question. To my knowledge, however, the problems raised by Richard M. Rorty, "The Subjectivist Principle and the Linguistic Turn," in *Alfred North Whitehead: Essays on His Philosophy* (ed. George L. Kline) (Prentice-Hall, 1963) have not yet been responded to by the Whiteheadians.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg (ed.), *Revelation as History* (Macmillan, 1968), pp. 123-59; *Idem.*, "Hermeneutics and Universal History," in *History and Hermeneutic* (ed. Robert W. Funk) (Harper, 1967), pp. 122-53.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Edward Schillebeeckx, *God, The Future of Man*, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 35-8 and Walter Kasper, *Dogma unter dem Wort Gottes* (Mainz, 1965). For still clearer expressions of this position, cf. the papers of Kasper and Schillebeeckx at the forthcoming Brussels *Concilium* conference.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Dallas M. High, *Language, Persons & Belief*, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 185-213.

contemporary theologian, then *a fortiori* all undifferentiated formulations and responses to the contemporary theological crisis from "Deaths of God" through "Secular Cities" through "Dionysian Christs" and "Feasts of Fools" are foundationally inadequate. The latter, it may be true, can (and I believe do) deserve serious study by all theologians as significant gestures or symbols in our contemporary theological life-world but they can not claim to be foundational for contemporary Christian theology for they do not even differentiate the truth-status claim of their own perspective.

As an example of more extensive analysis, I should like to suggest the relative adequacy<sup>56</sup> of a recent formulation of Paul Ricoeur for the present question. That formulation emerges in Ricoeur's work in the volume *Symbolism of Evil*<sup>57</sup> (the second part of the second volume in his ambitious and yet-to-be-completed *Philosophy of Will*). Indeed, the context of his formulation's emergence is not without its own significance: for it represents the clearest example in phenomenology of a shift from eidetics to hermeneutics precisely by means of a critical investigation of certain historical Western symbolic understandings not merely of man's fallibility but of his capacity for evil. The formulation itself is a deceptively simple one, viz., "The symbol gives rise to thought and thought is always informed by the symbol."<sup>58</sup> But the implications of that formulation for the present problematic are multiple. In the first place, note how the correlation of thought and symbol is intrinsic, i.e., both factors must be related in each half of the formulation. Or, to formulate the matter in terms of our first two theses, either an analysis of scientific understanding (e.g., the intellectualist hermeneutic of transcendental

<sup>56</sup> It is important to emphasize the phrase "relative adequacy"; i.e., Ricoeur's position, in my judgment, does not fully resolve the problematic itself insofar as an ontology of "Being" is not established (nor, as I understand Ricoeur's position, is it claimed to be). His position remains relatively adequate, I suggest, insofar as it represents one of the most multi-dimensional developments in phenomenology, i.e., Ricoeur seems to be able to raise almost every new major question (e.g., language, symbol and recently structuralism) in *direct* relationship to his own phenomenological approach—witness the highly diverse problems represented in the essays in Ricoeur's recent *Le Conflit des Interprétations* (Editions du Seuil, 1969).

<sup>57</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil* (Beacon, 1967).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 347-57.

Thomism) or an analysis of the lived experience explicated in the gestures and symbols of the contemporary life-world (e.g., the phenomenological-theological hermeneutic of Rahner's later work) each intrinsically involves the other element (symbol or thought) as its correlative term. In the second place (as I argued in thesis three) precisely the ability to explicate the nature of both critical thought and the lived experience of symbolic expression as differentiated and as intrinsically related is alone adequate to the full dimensions of our consciousness of our present historicity.<sup>59</sup> In the third place, the formulation of the lived-experience level in terms of its *expression* in symbols does not force one into the search for a romantic empathy with past experiences.<sup>60</sup> Rather that formulation involves an explication of the linguistic dimension of all such experience as the single characteristic of the experience most readily open to critical analysis (as, for example, Ricoeur's own later work in hermeneutics finds itself impelled by the logic of its own critical position to come to terms with the claims, i.e., the possibilities and limitations of structuralism).<sup>61</sup> In the fourth place, precisely a recognition of the dual correlation of symbol and thought as expressive of our present historicity implies the possibility that the contemporaneous historically conscious interpreter of religious symbols and of critical thought upon those symbols (viz., the contemporary theologian) may experience and explicate the possibility of and indeed the possible need for what Ricoeur names the "wager" of the present moment.<sup>62</sup> For the present historical moment *may* allow the authentically critical mind to risk his thought upon the "wager" that the symbols of his religious tradition are fully serious symbolic expressions of a genuine religious consciousness (as, for example, as fully critical a mind as Karl Rahner's continually wagers in his practice of transcendental re-

<sup>59</sup> It should be emphasized that this formulation represents my own *interpretation* of the significance of Ricoeur's formulation for the problematic outlined in the first three "theses" rather than being Ricoeur's own articulation of the several dimensions of the problematic.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 3-24.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Paul Ricoeur, "New Developments in Phenomenology in France: The Phenomenology of Language," *Social Research*, XXXIV (Spring, 1967), pp. 1-30.

<sup>62</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-7.

trieval of various dimensions of the Roman Catholic doctrinal and theological traditions).<sup>63</sup> In the fifth place, the peculiarly contemporary nature of such a Pascalian wager is still more adequately explicated by Ricoeur as the possibility of the contemporary critical mind experiencing what he labels a "second naivete"<sup>64</sup> towards his tradition. Note, if you will, the implications of such a position. The position does not argue that "orthodoxy" as it is commonly understood (in present terms, as "first naivete") is really a viable option for the contemporary critical (and, precisely as such, historically conscious) theoretician. At the same time, it does not argue that a mere negation of the tradition is necessitated by a critical, historical consciousness. Rather it argues that, at the very limits of critical thought, a seemingly strange phenomenon may occur: viz., an experienced need for the ultimately-not-fully-thematizable (in theoretical terms) richness and comprehensiveness of a religious tradition's symbol system. Indeed, the impact of that need can tempt one (as it seems to have tempted several neo-Orthodox and neo-Thomist theologians) to attempt to negate one's prior commitment to critical thought to allow for a retrieval of the originating symbolic richness of one's religious tradition.<sup>65</sup> Yet one need not submit to this temptation, but may in fact recognize that the more adequate expression of the present historical moment is quite a different one, viz.: "The symbol gives rise to thought and thought is always informed by symbol."

<sup>63</sup> This interpretation of Rahner's achievement is, of course, not Ricoeur's but my own suggestion of a helpful way to understand the "retrieval" method employed throughout the *Investigations*.

<sup>64</sup> "Does that mean that we could go back to a primitive naivete? Not at all. In every way, something has been lost, irremediably lost: immediacy of belief. But if we can no longer live the great symbolisms of the sacred in accordance with the original belief in them, we can, we modern men, aim at a second naivete in and through criticism. In short, it is by *interpreting* that we can *hear* again." Paul Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, *op. cit.*, p. 351 (emphasis his).

<sup>65</sup> This caution would seem to be necessary when one recalls that Karl Barth, for example, initiated (in his original *Römerbrief*) a self-critique of theological liberalism (along with what might here be called a "second naivete" towards the Pauline tradition) only to seem to end (in the *Dogmatics*) in a far more negative attitude not only towards the limitations of theological liberalism but toward much of modernity itself. Somewhat similarly, Maritain begins with a critique of, *but also* a debt to Bergson, but ends his reflections (to date) as "the Peasant of the Garonne."

And precisely with that recognition of his present historicity the theologian *may* experience and explicate the possibility of a "second naivete" towards his religious tradition. For, precisely as involved in such a risk, the theologian commits himself to the complex task of interpreting his tradition's meaning and truth for contemporaneity.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, I suggest that such an understanding of the contemporary theological task sheds light upon various dimensions of the historicity of several contemporary theologies. It does so by establishing a contemporaneously meaningful explication of the traditional task of the Christian theologian, viz., *fides quaerens intellectum*; *intellectus quaerens fidem*. For the formulation performs that latter task by explicating the traditional formula in an explicitly contemporary (i.e., historically conscious) manner, viz., *fides quaerens intellectum* becomes "The symbol gives rise to thought," and *intellectus quaerens fidem* becomes "And thought is always informed by the symbol."

I recognize with regret and genuine apology that much more would have to be said before the possibilities and limitations of my suggested reformulation of the committee's question should win acceptance by this body. I trust that the discussion to follow may allow for just such a clarification of both the nature of the present interpretation and of its possibilities and limitations for our common task.

Indeed, my final point is a very simple one, viz., that the short-lived histories of contemporary theologies suggests to me at least that a continued postponement of the presuppositional questions

<sup>66</sup> It must be emphasized that, even if such a second naivete should occur, it cannot be employed as an excuse for not facing the remaining task ("The symbol gives rise to thought")—viz., the task of critically establishing the meaningfulness and truth of these symbols for modernity. In recent theology, for example, I believe that the first section (pp. 3-231) of Langdon Gilkey's book *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language*, *op. cit.* is principally representative of this task. ("The symbol gives rise to thought") whereas the second section, (pp. 231-471) and the major sections of his later book (esp. pp. 35-137) *Religion & the Scientific Future: Reflections on Myth, Science & Theology* (Harper & Row, 1970) are principally representative of the correlative task ("Thought is always informed by [or returns to] the symbol"). The present point is quite simply to insist upon the need for every contemporary theologian to attempt both tasks, as, in the interpretation given above, I have understood Gilkey to do.

tentatively explicated in this paper, does not, alas, eliminate their consequences upon all contemporary theologies. Hence, if my own paper is judged to be merely a ground-clearing operation for what may one day become a constructive theological solution of the full systematic dimensions of the committee's question, I shall not complain. For sufficient to the day is the question thereof.

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