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JOACHIM WACH AND THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION: A TEST OF HIS METHODOLOGY FOR THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS GENERAL APPROACH TO THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION

New York University PH.D. 1980

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Robert T. Georgia

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
School of Education, Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions
New York University
1980

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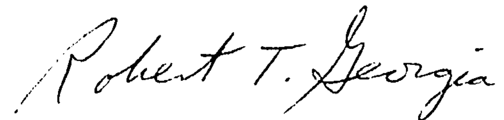

Robert T. Georgia

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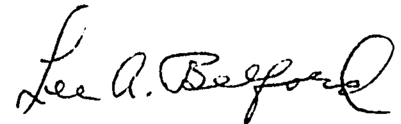

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
School of Education, Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions
New York University
1979

The purpose of this thesis is to test Joachim Wach's method for the comparative study of religious thought (CSRT) in the context of his general approach to the comparative study of religion (CSR).

Chapter I describes the prevailing uncertainty within CSR regarding methods appropriate to the task of the discipline. Wach's method for CSRT offers a possible solution to one aspect of the problem, namely, the need for methods by which to compare the "intellectual content" of religions.

In providing a brief review of the history and methods of CSR (including the phenomenological approach), Chapter II outlines the historical and conceptual context of the problem Wach was addressing. Chapter III delineates Wach's theory and method for CSR and CSRT. In Chapters IV, V and VI, Wach's method for CSRT is tested as an hypothesis by its application to the study of three disparate but historically important religions. An appraisal of the results of the study, together with recommendations for further use of the method, is offered in Chapter VII.

Much early CSR was concerned with a vain quest for the "origins" and "essence" of religion in general. The modern period of CSR, marked by a search for

appropriate methodology, begins with Max Müller and the Religionswissenschaft school. The task of contemporary CSR is to compare religions in meaningful ways, but appropriate methodologies for accomplishing this task have been lacking.

In his approach to the study of religion, Wach was concerned with the problem of understanding (Verstehen), the sociology of religion, and the search for universals. His major preoccupation was with methodology; he utilized and refined the techniques of phenomenology, typology, and comparison. In The Comparative Study of Religion he presents a method for CSRT based on Paul Tillich's method of "correlation" of philosophical questions and theological answers. In developing the method, Wach hypothesizes that all religions, in their varying modes and terminologies, seek to answer the same "basic and eternal" philosophical questions. He identifies twelve "universal" problems (based on ideas about theology, cosmology, and anthropology) which constitute his "basic and eternal" questions. The questions are seen as creating conceptual categories in which and by which religions, despite historical and cultural differences, may be compared.

Wach's method for CSRT is tested by its application to the study of Zoroastrianism, Advaita Vedanta, and Theravada Buddhism. In this process, the "intellectual content" of these religions (as derived from

expository works of selected authors) is restated in the form of answers to Wach's "basic and eternal" questions.

In an analysis of its efficacy, Wach's method, as applied, is subjected to the selected criteria of coherence and correspondence. Coherence is concerned with the "inclusiveness" and "logical fit" of Wach's questions as applied to the data of the religions; correspondence asks whether Wach's questions yield "equivalent categories" among the religions and whether the method possesses an "ability to demonstrate similarities and differences" between and among the religions. With certain noted exceptions, Wach's method is seen to satisfy the selected criteria. Based on the results of the study, a partial revision of Wach's "basic and eternal" questions is attempted.

In the evaluation, Wach's method is judged to be a useful contribution to CSR in that it favorably responds to the needs and requirements of the discipline as articulated by Wach himself and by other scholars and critics of CSR. The significance of Wach's method for CSRT is attested to by its utility as a methodological technique within CSR, its heuristic value for stimulating further research, its potential usefulness as a pedagogical device for teaching CSR, and its value for furthering mutual understanding among peoples of the world.

FOREWORD

On the cusp of the 1980s, American culture is marked by two characteristics of potentially great significance. One is the growing trend toward experimentation with foreign, particularly Eastern, forms of religion; the other is the deepening realization of the limits to nature's physical resources. The two may seem, on the surface at least, to represent unrelated orders of experience, and yet they may be understood also as two complementary and harmonious facets of a higher and developing awareness.

The decade of the 1960s witnessed an enthusiastic innovativeness, an embracing of all things strange and new, and the beginnings of America's flirtation with Transcendental Meditation, Tibetan mysticism, and consciousness-raising in its many varieties. The 1970s followed with a period of retrenchment, conservatism, and a sluggish mood of wanting to "stick with what works," shrinking back from the vagaries of change. Ebullience and optimism were silenced by austerity and skepticism.

Nevertheless, some of the Sixties' expansiveness remains fitfully tied to the restrictiveness of the

Seventies as America prepares to enter a new decade. What will be the flavor of this new decade, especially in terms of the two characteristics mentioned above? The religious experimentation continues, but so does the fiscal and social conservatism based, at least in part, on the recognition of limits. Is this not a paradox, an untenable situation? Where can it lead?

With a Zen-oriented governor in office in California, with works being published on "Buddhist Economics," and with an ecumenical movement growing stronger in the face of social retreatism, it seems not unreasonable to suggest that perhaps the two characteristics in question are not truly contradictory. In fact, they even seem to inform, fecundate, and modify each other. For example, the "limits to growth" school has demonstrated that the "imperative" to master and conquer nature, traditionally justified by appeal to religious authority, is outmoded in the modern world. The Indian doctrine of nonviolence (ahimsa), meanwhile, has taught us to remember and to respect the rights and dignity of every living being, whether plant, animal or human. Transcending religious boundaries while accepting physical limitations seems quite feasible.

Based on an extrapolation of these two tendencies and their potential for harmonious development, one may prognosticate that the 1980s just may witness a fruitful dialog between religious experimentation and environmental

concern, resulting in a growing awareness of the interrelatedness of spiritual growth and ecological mindfulness. The 1980s may see a harmonizing of the ideals of the 1960s and the realities of the 1970s.

If this happy state of affairs is to be brought about, one prominent factor would have to be an increased attention and devotion to the comparative study of religion (CSR). The discipline of CSR seeks to develop methods to augment interreligious understanding with the greatest possible accuracy and economy. In responding to the needs of a world made small by increased travel, rapid communication, and mass media, CSR endeavors to present, among other things, alternative images of the self, the universe, and ultimate reality. The disciplined and systematic inquiry into the varieties of religious experience answers the call for an idealism tempered by sober pragmatism. Through such a comparative effort, individuals can learn to apprehend and to actualize religious insights not available or not persuasively emphasized in their own traditions. A greater understanding of our varied but common spiritual inheritance can lead to a wiser appreciation of humanity's place in nature. The problem of dealing with the limits of natural resources can be eased greatly by drawing upon the world's illimitable spiritual resources.

The present study represents an attempt to take one small step in that direction. One possible method

for the comparative study of religion is identified in the study. The concepts of three religions are illustrated by way of testing the method, and the results of the application of the method are appraised in terms of the method's efficacy and its value for CSR. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the goal of increased self-awareness and interreligious understanding.

At this point, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to several people who assisted in the birthing of this manuscript: my friend and colleague Robert W. Powers, for his continuing intellectual stimulation and untiring editorial assistance; Professor Robert McDermott of Baruch College for his valuable advice on the study of Eastern religions; my advisors Professors Millard Clements and Carl P. Schmidt, for their constructive criticism and kind support; and to my dissertation chairperson and guru of many years, Professor Lee A. Belford, for his wit, wisdom, and warmth as a teacher, counselor and human being--may his retirement be as enjoyable and enlightening for him as his classes and association have been for me.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work, in the spirit of love and hope, to the memory of my sister Marie.

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CHAPTER I

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION

A Developing Discipline

Of the intellectual disciplines which engage the interest of modern scholars, the comparative study of religion[1] is simultaneously one of the oldest and one of the youngest. Although it is still in the process of defining itself and being defined, its roots extend deep into the soil from which modern civilization has grown.

> We find it documented for the first time in classic Greece, particularly from the fifth century. The interest was manifested in two ways: by traders' accounts that included descriptions of foreign cults and comparisons with Greek religious practices, and by philosophic criticism of the traditional religion.[2]

The documentors included many of the brightest lights of classical Greek culture: Parmenides, Empedocles, Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus.

It may be said that at the same time, and even somewhat earlier, similar critical efforts were being made in other cultural centers of the ancient world: in

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[1] Hereinafter referred to as CSR.

[2] Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, trans. by Willard R. Trask, New York: A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1959, 219.

India, traditional Brahmanism was being challenged and reformulated by Siddhartha Gautama and by the Jain founder Mahavira; Zarathustra (Zoroaster) was reforming the foundering Indo-Iranian polytheism into a strict ethical monotheism; the Hebrew prophets were crying out to their people to fly from the dangers and consequences of apostasy, and to leave off from empty ritual and sacrifice and return to the faith of their fathers; Confucius and Lao Tzu were breathing new life into the behavior and beliefs of the peoples of China by summoning them to rediscover the way of the ancients.

Thus, at least in its critical mode, CSR was born in an age of worldwide religious reform.

In the West, the study of religions for purposes of comparison continued apace in the Alexandrian world. The Stoics went on to develop an allegorical interpretation of religion. The Romans Cicero, Seneca, Tacitus, and Julius Caesar compiled comparative information on foreign cults and practices, as did the Greek Plutarch. In the early centuries of the modern era, the heated, often mortal, debates between Christian apologists and heretics cast more light upon possible religious options. The meteoric rise and spiritual power of Islam generated new religious controversy and study among Christians, Jews, and Moslems alike, particularly with the "rediscovery" of Aristotle.

Renaissance humanism, voyages of discovery, the Reformation, and the birth pangs of the Enlightenment

created widespread interest in the varieties of the religious life. With the early nineteenth century's advances in the histories of religions, Indo-European philology, and comparative linguistics, the stage was set for the beginning of the modern era of CSR.[1]

In its modern phase, CSR is only little over a century old, if its origins are dated back to Max Müller's landmark publication in 1856 of his "Essay on Comparative Mythology," which was followed by his attempt to present English translations of all the religious classics of the East in the Sacred Books of the East series. Early in the modern phase, comparative religionists were primarily concerned with the study of mythology (Müller, Frazer, Bachofen) and with the "origin," "nature," and "essence" of religion (Bachofen, Schmidt, Tiele).

The perspectives of other developing disciplines added new dimensions to CSR. Anthropologists (Morgen, Spencer, Tylor) emphasized the study of "primitive" religion. Psychologists (James, Freud, Jung) probed the psychic underpinnings of religion, and sociologists (Durkheim, Weber, Troeltsch) analyzed the social contexts. Biblical scholars (Wellhausen, Delitzsch, Smith) made their contributions, as did philosophers, theologians, historians, linguists, and archeologists. More recently,

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[1] *Ibid.*, 219-229.

a phenomenological approach has arisen with significant results and impact (Van der Leeuw, Wach, Smart).[1]

But even with this illustrious and extensive geneology, CSR remains, in a sense, one of the youngest of contemporary intellectual disciplines. It is young in the sense that it has still not settled upon its "own" method, appropriate to the study of its subject matter. This is so despite, or perhaps because of, the variegated approaches that have marked CSR in its dynamic modern phase.

At this point in its development as both an old and a young discipline, it is vitally important for CSR to evaluate the various approaches and methods that historically have been employed and to experiment with new and different ones, toward the end of developing an appropriate methodology.

In addition to its inherent intellectual interest, the topic of CSR is significant in terms of furthering mutual understanding among peoples. The present widespread ecumenical movement, especially since Vatican II, strongly emphasizes this need. Although the world has grown smaller, differences among people seem, if anything, even more easily exacerbated than before. Researchers

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[1] History condensed from Jacques Waardenburg, ed., Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion, 2 vols., Vol. I "Introduction and Anthology," in Jacques Waardenburg, gen. ed., Religion and Reason: Method and Theory in the Study and Interpretation of Religions, 15 vols., The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1973, III, 7-78.

from various fields are utilizing comparative methods in the hope of arriving at a higher understanding of the commonality of all peoples.

> What unites the comparative endeavors of these fields is the assumption that exploration of the religio-ethical meaning systems of peoples will aid comprehension of their behavior. This understanding seems increasingly important both from a viewpoint of intercultural enrichment and from a perspective of urgency or survival, say, in the Middle East, India and Bangladesh, or Ireland.[1]

Joachim Wach

Given the significance of the topic of CSR, the need for methodologies by which to do CSR becomes readily apparent. Methodologies are needed which would enable a systematic comparison of the religions and would permit researchers to identify, reflect upon, and develop further studies based upon the similarities and differences revealed by the application of the methodologies.

One such method is suggested, although not developed or applied systematically, by Joachim Wach in his book _The Comparative Study of Religion_.[2] Wach distinguishes among the _motivation_ for religious expression, the _modes_ of such expression, and the _means_ of expression.[3] Of

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[1] Roderick Hindery, "Exploring Comparative Religious Ethics," _Journal of Ecumenical Studies_, Summer, 1973, 10:3, 553.

[2] Joachim Wach, _The Comparative Study of Religion_, ed. with an introduction by Joseph M. Kitagawa, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.

[3] _Ibid._, 60-65.

primary interest is Wach's discussion of the means of religious expression, because therein Wach appears to be attempting to satisfy one of the most pressing needs of CSR, namely, the development of a systematic methodology conducive to the comparative study of religion. The subdisciplinary area involved can be described as the comparative study of religious thought,[1] which Wach terms the "intellectual expression of religious experience."[2]

Wach died in 1955, not long after completing the ideas expressed in The Comparative Study of Religion. In an introduction to the book, written after Wach's death, Joseph Kitagawa discusses Wach's

> . . . constructive approach to the study of diverse religions, incorporating the insights of philosophy, theology, and Religionswissenschaft. Unfortunately, he did not leave behind him a systematic exposition on the subject. . .[3]

The role of the researcher at this point is to review and reconsider Wach's work. This present research represents an attempt to articulate Wach's general approach to CSR and to apply and test Wach's CSRT method as an hypothesis.

Testing Wach's Method

This research will test Joachim Wach's method for the comparative study of religious thought (CSRT) by

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[1] Hereinafter referred to as CSRT.

[2] Wach, 76.

[3] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Introduction: The Life and Thought of Joachim Wach," in Wach, xxxix.

applying it to three representative and disparate religions--Zoroastrianism, Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta, and Theravada Buddhism--as these religions are represented in the writings of recognized scholars.

The basic questions which the paper poses and seeks to answer can be articulated as follows:

--What is the historical and conceptual context of the problem which Wach addressed; that is, what are some of the various important approaches which have been employed in the comparative study of religion (CSR)?

--What are Wach's theory and method for CSR and CSRT?

--How does Wach's method apply to the study of Zoroastrianism, Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta, and Theravada Buddhism, as these religions are represented in the writings of recognized scholars?

--How does the application of Wach's method to the study of the different religions contribute to or facilitate CSR?

These questions provide the contour of the path which this study intends to take. However, in a study of a subject as vast and complex as CSR, certain delimitations of interest become necessary and unavoidable. In order that the reader's attention may be focused on the intended path of the study, mention should be made of the areas and byways which the study will not, in its present form, attempt to explore.

First, a "religion" is a vast complex of interrelated parts, including doctrine, dogma, myth, revelation, ethics, ritual, practices, institutions, art, music, symbols, literature, personages, and so on.[1] For reasons of economy, this research is primarily concerned with what Wach calls the "intellectual expression of religious experience,"[2] or what might be called the comparative study of religious thought (CSRT).

Also, there would be great value to a critical study of the various approaches to CSR which have been employed, but such a critical study would take the present research far afield. The purpose of the second chapter is rather to criticize, by way of illustrating, a specific weakness within the discipline, namely, the prevailing uncertainty over appropriate methodology. A descriptive review of some of CSR's many contrasting approaches and methodologies will serve the purpose while providing a meaningful context for the basic intent of this research, to test a particular method for CSRT.

Additionally, although Wach's method could theoretically be applied to any and all of the world's religions, this present research, again for reasons of economy, will

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[1] Ninian Smart, "The Structure of the Comparative Study of Religion," in John R. Hinnells, ed., Comparative Religion in Education, Newcastle, England: Oriel Press Limited, 1970, 27.

[2] Wach, 76.

refer primarily to three specific religions. The three religions in question have been selected for their representativeness and disparateness. They are representative in that each religion has exercized significant historical influence on the beliefs of millions of persons and/or has affected various developments within its own or other traditions. They are disparate in that each presents a radically different conception of ultimate reality and the individual's relationship thereto. If one were to postulate a continuum along which conceptions of ultimate reality were to be located, Zoroastrianism and Theravada Buddhism would occupy extreme, opposite positions on the continuum, while Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta would be located on the middle ground. That is, early Zoroastrianism posits a strict ethical monotheism (although this was transformed into a radical dualism in later centuries), Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta represents a non-personal philosophical monism, and Theravada Buddhism categorically denies the existence of a substantial ultimate reality, or at most intentionally withholds comment on it. These factors should allow, within reasonable constraints, for a meaningful test of Wach's method.

Finally, this research is essentially methodological in its interests, primarily designed to test a specific method for CSR. It will not attempt to unearth new data about any particular religion, to explore any aspect of a particular religion in depth, or to provide new insights or interpretations about a particular

religion. Its purpose is methodological, not historical, exegetical, or hermeneutic. Therefore, the data required for the application of the method to the religions in question is on the level of general survey knowledge about the three religions and their "intellectual content"; no deeper knowledge, analysis of scriptures, or specialized study within the three religions is necessary for the purpose of this research. The necessary information is provided satisfactorily by authoritative expositions by recognized scholars and scholar/practitioners of the religions. The authors used in this exposition of religious thought have been selected on the basis of their reputation, popularity, influence, and recognition by fellow scholars, and the clarity of their expositions. As preliminary research has revealed, there are relatively few important differences among the selected authors in describing the religions on the general survey level. Where there are differences, the most widely held view is the one adapted. Eight of the works used are original English-language sources; one is a translation from German.

Another consideration in a study of a subject which admits of a broad, multi-disciplinary approach, as does CSR, is the usage of terms. In fact, only a few terms are used in any specialized sense, and these terms can be summarily identified and explained. They are used in accordance with Wach's usage, which in turn is indebted to the insights and perspectives of Paul Tillich.

Ultimate Reality. In this research, the term "Ultimate Reality" is understood in the Tillichian sense as the object of "ultimate concern." Although Wach is inconsistent in his use of the term, most frequently using it in the broad Tillichian sense, but at other times denoting by it a personal deity, for this research, "Ultimate Reality" "means that whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him, and, conversely, it means that a man can be concerned ultimately only about that which is god for him."[1] "If God is understood as that which concerns man ultimately, early Buddhism has a concept of God just as certainly as does Vedanta Hinduism."[2]

Religion. Religion is understood as those human beliefs, practices, and expressions which reflect one's ultimate concern: "The religious concern is ultimate; it excludes all other concerns from ultimate significance."[3]

Theology. Theology is understood as the "intellectual content" of religious expression as it describes and defines notions of Ultimate Reality. Again, in

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[1] Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, I, 211.

[2] Ibid., 220.

[3] Ibid., 11.

accordance with Wach's primary usage, Ultimate Reality is understood in the Tillichian sense.[1]

Cosmology. Cosmology is understood as the "intellectual content" of religious expression as it relates to the "origin, structure, and destiny of the universe," in the light of one's understanding of Ultimate Reality.[2]

Anthropology. Anthropology is understood as the "intellectual content" of religious expression pertaining to the position of humanity "in light of a general theological and cosmological framework."[3]

The method to be followed in this research is a descriptive and comparative one. The procedure will be that of: a) selecting the texts and describing the ideas that will provide the context of the problem which Wach addressed; b) delineating Wach's theory and method for CSR and CSRT from his own works; c) selecting appropriate scholarly works from which the "intellectual content" of the three religions in question will be recast into the mold of Wach's methodological approach; and d) analyzing and evaluating the results against the data provided by other scholars and in the light of selected criteria,[4] which should enable the researcher to assess

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[1] Wach, 76-77.

[2] Ibid., 34.

[3] Ibid., 89.

[4] For a description of the selected criteria, see 178-181.

the efficacy of Wach's method and its value as a contribution to CSR.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF HISTORY AND METHODS OF THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION

General History

The promise and potential of the comparative study of religion (CSR) were present in the first historical stirrings of the religious imagination, particularly so when such reflection and agitation issued in religious protest and reform. Early religious creativity derived substantially from insight and "revelation," but when religious change was effected through conscious observation and imitation of the ways of neighboring, assumedly superior, religions, the potential of CSR became actualized, at least in its behavioral mode.

Information and data about strange religions, far and near, were collected by traders and thinkers in the ancient world. In Greece and Rome, philosophers were moved to account for the varieties of religions, and soon found that they needed to explain the phenomenon of religion itself. Different theories were adduced to place religion in a rational perspective. For their time and circumstances, these theories were respectable, but by modern standards, they appear inadequate and reductionistic.

> Summarizing these many centuries of rather sterile writings about the meaning and origin of the gods, we may first arrange the proposed

> explanations under these categories: natural allegory, psychology, history, and Euhemerism. These explanations are all mistaken, or at least hold only a tiny grain of truth. Some are even flatly rationalistic.[1]

Nonetheless, by virtue of such reflections and writings, a new corner was being turned in the relationship between human beings and their gods. Wilfred Cantwell Smith sees the turning point in works such as Lucretius' De Rerum Natura and Cicero's De Natura Deorum:

> There therefore emerges--but again, only incipiently--a new idea of religion, as a great objective something. It is thought of not as something that one does, or that one feels deeply about, or that impinges on one's will, exacting obedience or threatening disaster or offering reward or binding one into one's community, but for the first time as a theoretical entity of speculative interest, for conceptualization rather than decision--a generalization, abstracted, of something in which other people are involved.[2]

The history of CSR through the European Dark Ages and Middle Ages is roughly collateral with the history of Christian apologists and heresiarchs along with some variation on the ancient Greek and Roman interpretations of religion. All the while, Jews, Christians, and Moslems were reacting to events in Europe, Africa, and Asia, continuing to compile stories and observations about different religions, and submitting their data to analyses of various kinds. Another chapter in CSR was written by

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[1] Jan de Vries, Perspectives in the History of Religions, trans. with an introduction by Kees W. Bolle, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977, 11.

[2] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, The Meaning and End of Religion, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962, 22.

the Renaissance humanists who "believed that there was a tradition common to all religions, that knowledge of it sufficed for salvation, and that in the last analysis all religions were equal in value."[1] After the voyages of discovery, and after the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, the Enlightenment set the stage for the next act in the history of CSR.

Philosophers of reason began seeking for the "origins" and "essence" of religion, a fascination within CSR for what Mircea Eliade calls "the obsession with origins,"[2] an obsession which was to thrive throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The list of supposed "origins" and "essences" was formidable.[3] Charles de Brosses in 1757 found the quintessence of religion in "fetishism"; in 1794 François Dupuis discovered religions to be allegories of the motions of the stars (a thesis later to be christened "Pan-Babylonianism"); in 1869 J.F. MacLennon propounded the idea of "totemism"; in 1871 E.B. Tylor introduced the notion of "animism"; R.R. Marrett followed around 1900 with the theory of "mana." Later, Wilhelm Schmidt developed the thesis of a "primordial monotheism" which

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[1] Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, trans. by Willard R. Trask, New York: A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1959, 227.

[2] Mircea Eliade, The Quest, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969, 44.

[3] Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 228-231.

antedated all subsequent religious developments. Even Max Müller, the first great modern comparative religionist, thought he had found the Holy Grail in a "disease of language," by which natural phenomena, through time and misuse of language, had degenerated into gods and myths. The list goes on.

All of these theories were contradicted in the great wave of ethnological gathering that characterized the latter part of the nineteenth century. "Ethnographical materials inundated the nineteenth century. Only then was the history of religions born as a serious discipline."[1] The "origins" and "essences" schools began to lose their power to explain.

> As it turned out, all those researches and conflicting hypotheses have only pointed up the impossibility of ever finally determining the earliest form of religious experience and expression (if, indeed, there ever was one primordial mode) or of clearly fixing any universal evolution or development of religion. In the first place, the question of the origins of religion is not really a historical one.[2]

The problem, according to Joseph Kitagawa, is that indeed "the origin of religion is not a historical question; ultimately it is a metaphysical one."[3]

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[1] de Vries, 220.

[2] H.P. Sullivan, "The History of Religions: Some Problems and Prospects," in Paul Ramsey and John F. Wilson, eds., The Study of Religion in Colleges and Universities, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970, 270.

[3] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "The History of Religions in America," in Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa, eds., The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959, 25.

Not to be deterred, however, psychologists (such as Freud, James, and Jung) and sociologists (such as Weber, Durkheim, and Troeltsch) sought to explain religion in social-scientific terms. They, like their predecessors, gathered invaluable data on the religious experience, but, in doing so, attempted to reduce religion to a behavioral schema.

> Moreover, a sociological or psychological analysis fares no better. An "explanation" of religion in terms of corporate or individual sentiments or "needs" of whatever sort, is . . . really a description of conditions and not an explanation of causes . . . the *religious* element in that experience is not reducible to *nonreligious* factors.[1]

Reductionistic models are given short shrift by comparative religionists.

> Indeed, there is no such thing as a "pure" religious fact. Such a fact is always *also* a historical, sociological, cultural, and psychological fact, to name only the most important contexts. . . The confusion starts when *only* one aspect of religious life is accepted as primary and meaningful, and the other aspects or functions are regarded as secondary or even illusory. Such a reductionistic method was applied by Durkheim and other sociologists of religion. An even more drastic reductionism was brought forward by Freud in his *Totem and Taboo*.[2]

With Max Müller (1823-1900), the youthful phase of CSR, with its preoccupation with "origins" and "essences," blossoms into the modern phase, which is primarily concerned with finding appropriate methods for comparing religions in meaningful ways. The groundwork was prepared by Müller, Cornelis P. Tiele, P.D.C. De La Saussaye,

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[1] Sullivan, 271.

[2] Eliade, *The Quest*, 19.

and later Nathan Söderblom, W.B. Kristensen, Rudolf Otto, and Gerardus Van der Leeuw.

In the twentieth century, with most scholars no longer seeking to unravel the knotty mystery of the origin and essence of religion, CSR has turned its gaze inward, in a continuing effort to define just what it is and what it does.

On the most basic level, CSR is confronted with the issue of terminology. What should this disciplinary area be called?

> The root of the trouble is the question of method. Methodological uncertainty has been paraded for all to see in the variety of names the subject (allowing for the moment that it is a subject) has carried during its brief academic life: comparative religion, comparative religions, the science of religion (*Religionswissenschaft*), the history of religion (*Religionsgeschichte*), the history of religions, the phenomenology of religion, religious studies, and so on.[1]

Despite the impressive growth of CSR in the last hundred years, it is still widely recognized that it "has been in the recent past an area of scholarship in search for an adequate definition of itself."[2] The question of definition dates back to the beginning of the modern phase of CSR. "The expression *Religionswissenschaft* was

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[1] Eric J. Sharpe, "The Comparative Study of Religion in Historical Perspective," in John R. Hinnells, ed., *Comparative Religion in Education*, Newcastle, England: Oriel Press Limited, 1970, 5.

[2] Philip H. Ashby, "The History of Religions," in Paul Ramsey, ed., *Religion*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965, 39.

first used in 1867 by Max Müller."[1] This term (sometimes Allgemeine Religionswissenschaft) subsumed under its rubric the total array of disciplines relating to the study of religion. But the term, so useful in German, does not translate well into other languages.

> In the English-speaking world the imposing title of "general science of religions" has not been used widely, partly because it is too long and awkward, and partly because the English word "science" tends to be misleading.[2]

Most scholars prefer the term "history of religions" or "comparative study of religion" and a good argument can be made for both. Ninian Smart feels that

> . . . we are obliged to use "history of religions" in the broadest sense of the term, including not only history properly speaking, but also the comparative study of religions and religious morphology and phenomenology.[3]

For H.P. Sullivan, "the term 'history of religions' has come to be a synonym for Religionswissenschaft. . ."[4] Joseph Kitagawa concurs, but adds that "the nature of the discipline must be discussed in the total context of Religionswissenschaft."[5] Indeed, Sullivan, in favoring

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[1] Kitagawa, in Eliade and Kitagawa, 17.

[2] Ibid., 15.

[3] Eliade, The Quest, 1,n.3.

[4] Sullivan, 250.

[5] Kitagawa, in Eliade and Kitagawa, 15.

the "history of religions" chides that "whereas some people are undoubtedly comparatively religious, there is no such thing as 'comparative religion.'"[1]

Nevertheless, despite the indispensability of the historical dimension of religious studies, awareness of the necessity of classifying and comparing data dawned early in the modern phase of CSR.

> There was an obvious need to classify the numerous religious data under general categories, classes, and subclasses, were it only for identifying and giving names to new data . . . all in all, the comparative method became a more valuable instrument in the study of religion to the extent that the number of data increased, and that questions were raised which could not be answered in their precise historical context.[2]

Scholars today, as then, agree that history is important, but not exclusively so.

> It is also desirable that some standardization of categories for describing religions historically should be attained, provided it is not taken so far as to distort. The reason for this is that it paves the way for asking whether there are recurrent patterns in groups of religions, whether there is *per contra* something very special about a particular religion, and so on.[3]

Historians can relate the facts and the details of the longitudinal development of a religion.

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[1] Sullivan, 249,n.5. Sullivan cites Archbishop Temple as the source of this witticism.

[2] Jacques Waardenburg, ed., *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, 2 vols., *Vol. I "Introduction and Anthology,"* in Jacques Waardenburg, gen. ed., *Religion and Reason: Method and Theory in the Study and Interpretation of Religions*, 15 vols., The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1973, III, 52-53.

[3] Ninian Smart, *The Phenomenon of Religion*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1973, 40.

> Structurally oriented scholars, on the other hand, are sensitive to the universal characteristics of diverse religious phenomena. They tend to look for similarities, analogies, and homologies, and to deal with religious data typologically and cross-sectionally, disregarding historic contexts and religious traditions in which these data are found, even though they acknowledge the fact that religious data themselves must be provided by historical inquiry.[1]

The comparative method has by now become such an integral and representative aspect of the study of religion that many scholars would and do use it in the very designation of their discipline. "'The comparative study of religion' is perhaps a compromise and may not be ideal; but for the present it will serve our purpose."[2]

Some comparative religionists see the two methods combining in CSR to form what Reinhard Pummer calls "the historical comparison" which is "the distinctive character of the discipline."[3] "In reality," echoes Ugo

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[1] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Primitive, Classical, and Modern Religions: A Perspective on Understanding the History of Religions," in Joseph M. Kitagawa, Mircea Eliade, and Charles H. Long, eds., The History of Religions: Essays on the Problem of Understanding, in Jerold C. Brauer, gen. ed., Essays in Divinity, 7 vols., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967, I, 42.

[2] Sharpe, in Hinnells, 5. For the purpose of this present research, the terms "comparative study of religion" ("CSR"), "history of religions," and "Religionswissenschaft" are viewed as roughly equivalent and interchangeable in terms of designating the disciplinary area under study.

[3] Reinhard Pummer, "Recent Publications in the Methodology of the Science of Religion," Numen: International Review for the History of Religions, December, 1975, XXII:3, 170.

Bianchi, "the history of religions is not only a historical, but a comparative-historical study."[1]

But the majority of scholars would probably agree with Mircea Eliade that the historical and comparative approaches represent "two divergent but complementary methodological orientations. One group concentrate [sic] primarily on the characteristic structures of religious phenomena, the other choose [sic] to investigate their historical context."[2] This belief is held by, among others, Raffaele Pettazzoni,[3] Ninian Smart,[4] and Eric J. Sharpe.[5] In fact, Gerardus Van der Leeuw, emphasizing the relatedness of the two approaches, concluded that the historian and the comparative religionist "work in the closest possible association; they are indeed in the majority of cases combined in the person of a single investigator."[6]

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1 Ugo Bianchi, The History of Religions, Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1975, 3.

2 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 232.

3 Raffaele Pettazzoni, "The Supreme Being: Phenomenological Structure and Historical Development," in Eliade and Kitagawa, 66.

4 Smart, The Phenomenon of Religion, 40-41.

5 Eric J. Sharpe, "Some Problems of Method in the Study of Religion," Religion: A Journal of Religion and Religions, Spring, 1971, 1:1, 12.

6 Gerardus Van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, trans. by J.E. Turner, London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1938, 686.

If one is to do CSR, then, one must be acquainted with the historical and the comparative approaches. But does one need also to know the history, language, culture, and so on, of the religion or religions in question? Mircea Eliade thinks not:

> Obviously it is not a question of mastering all these domains as a philologist and a historian but of assimilating the researches of the specialist and integrating them in the specific perspective of the history of religions.[1]

The comparative religionist is not obligated or expected to replicate the works of others in the specialized fields. "His duty is rather to know about all these labors, to use their results, and to integrate them."[2] This view is shared by Roderick Hindery:

> From a perspective of scientific objectivity, data can be understood partially, if imperfectly, by reliance on critical translations and interpretations of primary and secondary sources, without experiential knowledge of every language, culture or religion involved.[3]

A well-taken reservation, or perhaps word of caution, regarding the enterprise of CSR is voiced by W.C. Smith, who fears that the personal aspect of religion is too easily lost in the search for methodology, which, he feels, is "the massive red herring of modern scholarship, the most significant obstacle to intellectual progress,

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[1] Eliade, The Quest, 58.

[2] Mircea Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism," in Eliade and Kitagawa, 91.

[3] Roderick Hindery, "Exploring Comparative Religious Ethics," Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Summer, 1973, 10:3, 568.

and the chief distraction from rational understanding of the world."[1] His concern is shared by other comparative religionists, but the need for method remains.

> It is true, the pursuit of methodology as an end in itself would be sterile, but it is equally as true that the neglect of questions of this kind would, in the long run, result in the dissolution of any scientific study of religion.[2]

In the end, even Smith, with certain qualifications, accepts the need for method in CSR:

> Method should be developed out of the particular problem that one is considering, not vice versa, and it should be ephemeral, subordinate, and fundamentally dispensable.[3]

One of the methodological problems within CSR involves the meaning of the word "comparative." Many works are designated studies of "comparative religion," but the term "comparative" functions ambiguously,

> . . . since most projects which claim the title "comparative" detail the outlines of religious belief and practice in sequential chapters or parallel course syllabi without collating what various religions may express in terms of similar categories such as God, man, or nature. Comparison, even in the descriptive sense, is left to the later efforts of the student or the reader.[4]

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[1] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Methodology and the Study of Religion: Some Misgivings," in Robert D. Baird, ed., Methodological Issues in Religious Studies, Chico, Ca.: New Horizons Press, 1975, 2.

[2] Pummer, 180.

[3] Smith, in Baird, 15.

[4] Hindery, 555-556.

Perhaps the first commandment for those who would describe their works as comparative studies of religion should be: Thou shalt compare. Says W.C. Smith:

> It is the business of comparative religion to construct statements about religion that are intelligible within at least two traditions simultaneously.[1]

While acknowledging that "the task of comparison is to point out not only similarities, but also differences,"[2] the comparative religionist must keep in mind that "comparison should be between comparables."[3] CSR seeks "an awareness of common or 'classical' features and themes within the varieties of religious experience and expression."[4] When a common feature is discovered, CSR attempts to discern whether "the parallel does not arise out of the dynamics of historical interaction but arises from the similarities of structural processes."[5] At its root, CSR asks one basic question:

> "What is the common element between two or more religious expressions which allows any comparison whatsoever?" This question is derived from

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[1] Smith, "Comparative Religion: Whither--and Why?" in Eliade and Kitagawa, 52.

[2] Bianchi, 33.

[3] Sharpe, in Hinnells, 15.

[4] Ashby, 12.

[5] Arvind Sharma, "An Inquiry into the Nature of the Distinction Between the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion," Numen: International Review for the History of Religions, August, 1975, XXII:2, 95.

> a descriptive concern and can be answered with empirically or historically based data.[1]

If one must bear in mind that the business of CSR is to compare and that "comparison should be between comparables," one must also be wary of the dangers of comparing too much and the limitations of comparing too little between religions; that is, the quantity of data to be compared must also be a consideration of the comparative religionist. Indeed,

> . . . there are good grounds for objecting that the comparison of religious systems as systems is a thoroughly unprofitable exercise, partly because excessive systematization is never in the interests of accurate understanding and may (e.g., in the case of Hinduism), promote complete misunderstanding, and partly because such comparisons are always ultimately between abstractions.[2]

A religion as a system is too huge and impractical a notion to be capable of comparative manipulation. As a system, a religion includes doctrine, dogma, myth, revelation, ethics, ritual, practice, institutions, art, music, symbols, literature, personages, and so on,[3] entirely too unwieldy a package for comparative work. Since "comparison should be between comparables," the kind and amount of data to be compared should be extracted

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[1] Frederick J. Streng, "The Objective Study of Religion and the Unique Quality of Religiousness," Religious Studies, September, 1970, 6:3, 217.

[2] Sharpe, in Hinnells, 14-15.

[3] Ninian Smart, "The Structure of the Comparative Study of Religion," in Hinnells, 27.

from the religious systems in such a way as to yield roughly comparable categories.

For this reason, however, some comparative religionists have addressed the problem of how to do CSR by isolating aspects of a religious system for comparison with comparable aspects of another religious system (or other religious systems). For example, scholars have compared different religions in respect to their treatment of the problem of evil, of the function of prayer and meditation, of the role of prophet and priest, and so on. Some have compared founders of religions or philosophical traditions, as Karl Jaspers did in his Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus;[1] some compare representative or influential thinkers, as Rudolf Otto compared Eckhart and Shankara in his Mysticism East and West.[2]

But if the comparison of religions as systems is rendered improbable by virtue of the enormity of the task, the comparison of arbitrarily selected aspects or personages of different religious traditions is less than completely satisfying to one who would do CSR, because of the lack of scholarly rigor involved in the methodology

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[1] Karl Jaspers, Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, trans. by Ralph Manheim, in Hannah Arendt, ed., The Great Philosophers, 2 vols., New York: Harvest/HBJ, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962, I.

[2] Rudolf Otto, Mysticism East and West, trans. by Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932.

and because of the limitations of the topic-selection process.

As a result of this state of affairs, much research that is described as work of comparative religion divides into two categories: a) works that tend to be comparative studies of arbitrarily selected aspects or personages of religious traditions; and b) works that tend to be historical, rather than comparative, in nature. A pressing need, then, in CSR is for the development of theories and methodologies that would enable and further the systematic, comparative study of religion, that would not pretend to compare whole systems of religions, that would not be content with comparing arbitrarily selected aspects or personages of religious traditions, and that would not merely recount histories.

This is the work which was commenced, in the modern era of CSR, by Max Müller and his contemporaries in the latter part of the nineteenth century. During the burst of activity of this period (in comparative philology, ethnology, Indo-European linguistics, mythology, religious sociology and psychology, evolutionary theory, and Oriental Studies), university chairs were established in America ("natural religion" in Harvard Divinity School in 1867 and "comparative theology" in Boston University in 1873)[1] and in Europe ("history of religions" in Geneva in

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[1] Kitagawa, in Eliade and Kitagawa, 2.

1873 and "religious sciences" at the Sorbonne in 1885).[1] A plethora of journals, books, and congresses followed rapidly.[2] This work has continued to the present, with comparative religionists still in the process of defining their field of study and its relationship to other disciplines, and still attempting to identify, apply, and refine the methodologies appropriate to their undertaking.

Indeed, CSR is "very much in the process of defining itself, its tasks, and its contribution, not simply to the academic consideration of religion, but to a deeper understanding of man himself."[3] Is CSR of more than mere academic interest? Most comparative religionists would give a decidedly affirmative answer. Eric Sharpe feels that CSR enables the individual to discover something about his or her own presuppositions as well as the presuppositions of others.[4] J.G. Arapura sees CSR "as a contributor to self-knowledge as well as to the more comprehensive aspects of knowledge that philosophy seeks. . ."[5] W.C. Smith states that "the objective is

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[1] Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 217.

[2] Ibid., 217-219.

[3] Sullivan, 248.

[4] Sharpe, in Hinnells, 18.

[5] J.G. Arapura, Religion as Anxiety and Tranquility, in Jacques Waardenburg, gen. ed., Religion and Reason: Method and Theory in the Study and Interpretation of Religions, 15 vols., The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1972, V, 9.

one's own enrichment, rather than the other group's, or the enrichment of all but without any transfer of allegiance. . ." such that we "may live together in mutual respect and collaboration."[1]

For Mircea Eliade, CSR leads to "a deeper knowledge of man" and "a new humanism,"[2] culminating in "a planétization of culture."[3] Friedrich Heiler concurs:

> If the religions thus learn to understand one another and cooperate, they will contribute more to the understanding of humanity and thereby to world peace than all the noteworthy efforts of politics.[4]

W.C. Smith suggests that CSR "may become the disciplined self-consciousness of man's variegated and developing religious life."[5] One philosopher, John Hick, augurs that endeavors such as CSR could presage a completely new stage in the cultural evolution of humanity:

> The future I am envisaging is accordingly one in which the presently existing religions will constitute the past history of different emphases and variations, which will then appear more like the different denominations of Christianity in North America or Europe today than like radically exclusive totalities.[6]

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[1] Smith, in Eliade and Kitagawa, 48.

[2] Eliade, The Quest, 3.

[3] Ibid., 69.

[4] Friedrich Heiler, "The History of Religions as a Preparation for the Co-operation of Religions," in Eliade and Kitagawa, 158.

[5] Smith, in Eliade and Kitagawa, 55.

[6] John H. Hick, Philosophy of Religion, in Elizabeth and Monroe Beardsley, eds., Foundations of Philosophy Series, 17 vols., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963, 127.

Some of these views of CSR may appear unduly apocalyptic, some may be excessively modest in their hopes, but probably all would agree that the individual who is exposed to CSR will, at the minimum, attain a greater sense of relatedness to those of other faiths. Using pronomial terms, W.C. Smith describes the process as ascending from a discussion about an "it" (another religion), to a "they," to a "we" talking about a "they," to a "we" talking to "you," to a "we" talking with "you," to a "we all" talking with each other about "us."[1]

The nature of CSR, the methodology of CSR, and the objective of CSR are on-going questions. But the reality of CSR and the need to address it require no metaphysical justification.

> Religion is a fact. It is a fact which the community of learning cannot responsibly ignore . . . to deny the fact of religion by ignoring it is to engage in a kind of irresponsibility which does not befit the proud heritage of the community of learning. The question, then, is not whether to study religion, but how to study it.[2]

Phenomenology

Joachim Wach's role in the history of CSR is best understood in the context of the development of the phenomenological method. Today, of the various methods

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[1] Smith, in Eliade and Kitagawa, 34.

[2] Robert Michaelson, The Scholarly Study of Religion in College and University, New Haven: 1964, 7, quoted in Sharpe, in Hinnells, 11.

competing for preeminence within the comparative study of religion, the place of honor seems more and more to be ascribed to this method.

> The contemporary study of the religions of the world, in America and among scholars around the world, whether it be known under the name of comparative religion, the history of religions, or the science of religions, uses in large measure the method of approach to its subject that is to be identified with the phenomenological study of religion . . . it is today a primary scholarly discipline and tool being used to further the development of a science of religion.[1]

Phenomenology means many things to many people, but it is essential to realize that in CSR, it is phenomenology as a method that is widely employed, and not phenomenology as a philosophy. The term "phenomenology" was used by Hegel, Kant, and others, but "when contemporaries speak about phenomenology, the name that arises spontaneously is that of Edmund Husserl."[2] The philosophy of phenomenology has had a significant influence on modern schools of thought, particularly existentialism,[3] but again, in CSR, it is the method of phenomenology that is crucial. H.P. Sullivan quotes the Dutch comparative religionist C.J. Bleeker in this regard:

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[1] Ashby, 29.

[2] Joseph J. Kockelmans, "Some Fundamental Themes of Husserl's Phenomenology," in Joseph J. Kockelmans, ed., Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Its Interpretation, Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967, 25.

[3] Richard Zaner and Don Ihde, eds., Phenomenology and Existentialism, New York: Capricorn Books, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1973.

> Phenomenology in the sense of Husserl is a theory of the validity of human knowledge. A phenomenology of religion, however, intends to be an investigation into the structure and significance of facts drawn from the vast field of the history of religions and arranged in systematic order.[1]

The utilization of the phenomenological method, in concert with the benign neglect of the problems and claims of philosophical phenomenology, is central to the business of CSR, because "if the history of religions is to retain an empirical character, then phenomenology must be a methodological device, not a philosophy."[2] Employing phenomenology as a method enables comparative religionists to gather data in a philosophically unencumbering manner. In doing so,

> . . . phenomenologists have placed their emphasis upon the descriptive pursuit; and they prefer to leave the problem of the value of the phenomenon . . . to the philosopher of religion, or, occasionally, to the theologian.[3]

With this approach Joachim Wach was in agreement.

> We use the term not in the sense of Husserl and Scheler but to indicate the systematic, not the historical, study of phenomena like prayer, priesthood, sect, etc.[4]

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[1] C.J. Bleeker, "Bulletin," Numen, 1954, 1:2, 147ff, quoted in Sullivan, 256.

[2] Sullivan, 255.

[3] Ashby, 27.

[4] Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944, 1,n.3.

In CSR, pioneering work in phenomenological research was done by P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, Nathan Söderblom, and C.J. Bleeker, but the seminal figure in the development of this approach was the Dutchman Gerardus Van der Leeuw. For Van der Leeuw, phenomenology has a three-fold implication: "(1) Something exists. (2) This something 'appears'. (3) Precisely because it 'appears' it is a 'phenomenon.'" Someone experiences the object, or "something."

> The "phenomenon" as such, therefore, is an object related to a subject, and a subject related to an object . . . its entire essence is given in its "appearance" and its appearance to "someone." If (finally) this "someone" begins to discuss what "appears," then phenomenology arises.[1]

In order to make sense of this "something" which "appears," we assign names to phenomena. "In giving names we separate phenomena and also associate them; in other words, we classify."[2] Classification is essential, because it creates structure. "Structure is reality significantly organized."[3] But the facts of reality must be allowed to speak to us as directly as possible. We must attain "a description which respects the data and their peculiar intentionality."[4] Van der Leeuw suggests that we accomplish this end through the technique of "*epoche*."

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[1] Van der Leeuw, 671.

[2] *Ibid*., 674.

[3] *Ibid*., 672.

[4] Jean Daniélou, "Phenomenology of Religions and Philosophy of Religion," in Eliade and Kitagawa, 78.

> Phenomenology, therefore, is neither metaphysics, nor the comprehension of empirical reality. It observes restraint (the epoche), and its understanding of events depends on its employing "brackets." Phenomenology is concerned only with "phenomena," that is, with "appearance"; for there is nothing whatever "behind" the phenomenon.[1]

As far as the phenomenological method is concerned, whether there is something "behind" the phenomenon that "does correspond also to something absolute and mysterious in itself beyond the edge of human influence and comprehension is a theological problem that our method . . . does not seek finally to tackle."[2] The purpose of Van der Leeuw's phenomenology is to let the phenomena appear, to assign names to the appearances, to experience them systematically while observing epoche and respecting their intentionality, to clarify what has been seen, and to testify to what has been understood.[3]

Phenomenology in this sense has self-imposed limits. It is true, as Charles Long notes, that Van der Leeuw "fails to tell us just how one must deal with the background of interpretation . . . a complete hermeneutic cannot avoid the interrelationship of the historical subject and object."[4] Arapura, too, observes that

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[1] Van der Leeuw, 675.

[2] Carl A. Raschke, James A. Kirk, and Mark C. Taylor, Religion and the Human Image, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977, 9.

[3] Van der Leeuw, 688.

[4] Charles H. Long, "Archaism and Hermeneutics," in Kitagawa et al., 71.

"Phenomenology as such, as Van der Leeuw expects, cannot permit itself to arrive at 'conclusions concerning revelation itself' even indirectly or *per viam negationis*."[1]

However, such ability or willingness to interpret does not fall within the intended program of phenomenology, since, as Arapura concedes, "evaluation is always premature in phenomenology."[2] It would seem that the import of the phenomenological method lies not in its hermeneutic value, but rather in the straightforward and simple way in which it advocates a presuppositionless experiencing and studying of the facts of the phenomena themselves.

The concepts of *epoche*, intentionality, and classification, as derived from Van der Leeuw, underlie much of the work of contemporary comparative religionists. Ninian Smart values *epoche* as an "attempt to reach an empathetic objectivity, or if you like a neutralist subjectivity,"[3] but he advises that, in addition to suspending judgment as to the *truth* of what is being investigated, the phenomenologist's "bracketing must also be a bracketing of expressions of value, feeling, etc."[4]

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[1] Arapura, 50.

[2] *Ibid.*, 51.

[3] Smart, *The Phenomenon of Religion*, 6.

[4] *Ibid.*, 32.

Roderick Hindery adds that it is also employed

> . . . in a sense of empathetic listening from a "detached inside" made possible by a presumption of the reality of analogous experience, e.g., between experiences of human love, of beauty, or of the religious.[1]

To do CSR, one "must put aside or suspend his own value judgments as much as possible in order to let religious phenomena 'speak' for themselves."[2] In this effort of the phenomenologist,

> . . . the primary aim is to overcome the subjective element in himself as a scholar while allowing full status to the subjective element in the person or community to whom the appearance of the phenomenon is significant.[3]

The ability to withhold judgment is vital for the comparative religionist.

> Scientific objectivity is inadequate without experiential empathy or <u>epoche</u> for the religio-ethical inspirations which underlie ethical thought and behavior. <u>Epoche</u>, in turn, is possible within intercultural as well as interpersonal dimensions.[4]

The function of <u>epoche</u> is to caution one against commiting one of the cardinal sins of CSR. "It is one of the basic rules of the phenomenological study of religions to avoid judgment of other religions by criteria of one's own."[5] Even, it should be added, if "one's own"

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[1] Hindery, 557.

[2] Sullivan, 251.

[3] Ashby, 27-28.

[4] Hindery, 569.

[5] Ernst Benz, "On Understanding Non-Christian Religions," in Eliade and Kitagawa, 120.

religion is atheism, agnosticism, or a social philosophy such as dialectical materialism.

The comparative religionist would be a phenomenologist "insofar as in his descriptions he respected the religious data and their peculiar intentionality."[1] The phenomenologist's purpose is not to interpret, criticize, or moralize, but "rather to grasp the religious intentions of these practices, no matter how bizarre or repelling they may seem to him ethically, theologically, sociologically, historically--or personally."[2] The intentionality of the data must shine through.

> Such students of religion as W. Brede Kristensen, Gerardus van der Leeuw, and J. Wach have emphasized that the investigator must "surrender himself" to the phenomena. This means, in part, that he must use the assumptions, the imagery, and the sensitivity of the religious devotee to the best of his ability if he is to understand even partially the religious value, or the intention, of the religious life he studies.[3]

In the phenomenological approach, the notions of epoche and respect for the intentionality of the data next lead to a kind of classification.

> The data must first be gathered. They must then be placed in groups. . . Although the construction of a typology of religious phenomena may at first

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[1] Eliade, The Quest, 35.

[2] Sullivan, 251.

[3] Streng, 210.

> be rather arbitrary because of lack of knowledge of the essential nature of the particular phenomenon, it is a necessary first step, for classification of data enables the scholar to come to a more adequate understanding of his subject and thereafter be equipped to refine and redefine his categories.[1]

Classification is needed to render a horizontal view of a religion. "Phenomenology of religion, therefore, has to take 'sections' of the trunk of the history of religion to exhibit the structure at a given time."[2] Using epoche, respect for the intentionality of data, and a system of classification, phenomenology begins its task.

> In brief, the aim of the phenomenologist in his description, is to provide, where necessary, what may be called a structure-laden account which is not theory-laden.[3]

In providing "a set of categories to isolate identifiable philosophic and religious interests,"[4] the phenomenologist works hand-in-hand with the historian to create a unified study of religion. The combination of the two approaches

> . . . fills a space that would otherwise be empty . . . between a phenomenology of religion intuitive and too open to generalization . . .

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[1] Ashby, 26.

[2] Smart, The Phenomenon of Religion, 38.

[3] Ninian Smart, The Science of Religion & the Sociology of Knowledge, Princeton, New Jersey: The Princeton University Press, 1973, 58.

[4] William W. Mountcastle, Jr., Religion in Planetary Perspective: A Philosophy of Comparative Religion, Nashville, Tennessee: The Parthenon Press, 1978, 42.

> and a philology or a historiography that, dedicated to the study of single cultural milieus, would be reluctant at any comparison. . .[1]

No contrariness exists between history and phenomenology. "There seems to be a rather natural affinity between phenomenology and the History of Religions."[2] Comparative religionists "insist upon the complementary and insepar-able character of the two tasks."[3] Raffaele Pettazzoni recognizes and values their relationship:

> Phenomenology and history complement each other. Phenomenology cannot do without ethnology, philology, and other historical disciplines. Phenomenology, on the other hand, gives the his-torical disciplines that sense of the religious which they are not able to capture. . . Religious phenomenology and history are not two sciences but are two complementary aspects of the integral science of religion. . .[4]

It is against this background, of the development of the phenomenological approach to CSR, that the figure of Joachim Wach emerges. Wach's work is original, yet continuous with the history of CSR; he benefited from, and significantly advanced, the use of the phenomeno-logical method in the comparative study of religion.

> Actually, the phenomenology of religion has as its basis a description which respects the

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[1] Bianchi, 210.

[2] Long, 74.

[3] H. Byron Earhart, "Toward a Unified Interpretation of Japanese Religion," in Kitagawa et al., 209,n.26.

[4] Pettazzoni, 66.

data and their peculiar intentionality. It endeavors to establish an order. This is just what Joachim Wach did.[1]

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[1] Daniélou, 78.

CHAPTER III

JOACHIM WACH AND THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION: APPROACH AND METHOD

Wach's General Approach to the Comparative Study of Religion

Joachim Wach (1898-1955) began his life and academic career in Germany. He studied at the universities of Leipzig, Munich, and Berlin, and taught the History of Religions at Leipzig (1924-1935) until he was forced to flee Germany under Nazi pressure. He emigrated to the United States and continued his teaching and research at Brown University (1935-1945) and the University of Chicago (1945-1955).[1]

According to students and colleagues, Wach was possessed of an "encyclopedic" knowledge, a "syntonic" intellectual attitude, and an "irenic" temperament.[2] Although raised in a Lutheran household in Germany (by parents both descended from the famous Mendelssohn family), later to become a member of the Protestant

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[1] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Introduction," in Joachim Wach, Understanding and Believing, ed. with an introduction by Joseph M. Kitagawa, New York: Harper Torch Books, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968, vii.

[2] Ibid., xxi, xxiii, xl.

Episcopal Church in the United States, this "convinced Christian was also a firm believer in the principle of the plurality of religions."[1]

> When Joachim Wach was introducing himself to the audience of his Barrows Lectures in India in 1952, he indicated to them the three dominant interests of his career. The first was the problem of understanding; the second, the sociology of religion; and the third, the problem of the nature of religious experience.[2]

Wach's earliest concern was with hermeneutics, "and his Das Verstehen in three volumes (1926-1933) remains the standard work on the subject."[3] Wach felt that an understanding of one's presuppositions was an essential prolegomenon to the work of a comparative religionist.

> It is no exaggeration to say that in the model Wach presented in Das Verstehen the historian of religions appears to be more of a philosopher than most philosophers, for Wach knew that reliohistorical interpretations depend largely on philosophical assumptions, and even more, that the correctness or incorrectness of interpretations are vitally related to the interpreter's awareness of his assumptions.[4]

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[1] Ibid., xvii, xxxvi.

[2] Charles M. Wood, Theory and Understanding: A Critique of the Hermeneutics of Joachim Wach, American Academy of Religion Dissertation Series, 12, Missoula, Montana: American Academy of Religion and Scholars Press, 1975, published also as dissertation for the degree of doctor of philosophy, Yale University, 1972, 21. Wach's book The Comparative Study of Religion was based on the Barrows Lectures.

[3] Mircea Eliade, The Quest, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969, 18.

[4] Kees W. Bolle, "Wach's Legacy: Reflexions on a New Book," History of Religions, 1970, X, 83.

Wach's own assumptions were:

> . . . the "givenness" of understanding by virtue of the fact that men live on this earth . . . that man by nature is inclined to religion . . . that man possesses the innate capacity to understand religion. . . Thus he directed what he considered the highest intellectual pursuit, Verstehen, or the understanding of understanding, toward the nature and structure of religious experience in its theoretical, practical and sociological expressions.[1]

Like Dilthey, Scheler, and others before him, Wach tried to establish a firm philosophical foundation for a constructive approach to the "human" sciences.

> As Wach understood it, the task of hermeneutics is to give an account of the process of understanding and to indicate the conditions which permit understanding to be realized within a given field of human expression.[2]

Despite his constant vigilance regarding philosophical presuppositions, Wach's primary "given field of human expression" was the study of religions.

> He was mainly a historian of religions, or, more precisely, a student of Religionswissenschaft, of which, to him, the sociology of religion was one of four branches (with the history of religions, phenomenology of religion, and psychology of religion).[3]

In carving out his concept of Religionswissenschaft, Wach was aware that, despite the formidable contributions of his predecessors, he was working with relatively unformed material. The scope, objectives, and

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[1] Kitagawa, "Introduction," in Wach, Understanding and Believing, viii-ix.

[2] Wood, 51.

[3] Eliade, The Quest, 18.

methods of the new science had to be determined, but he did not shrink from the task. He approached his subject confidently:

> Religionswissenschaft will seek to grasp with understanding all that foreign religions produce of faith, cult, custom, and community. It will seek to grasp the actual meaning, the religious intention, out of which spring all these; otherwise, and this it knows well, it will have only empty shells to tinker with. Religionswissenschaft does not abstain from using scales and standards; on the contrary, it makes much use of them. It seeks to overcome all superficial presuppositions, all the binding tendencies; it attempts to see the phenomena of other religious life; it tries to understand and honor this life in its actuality.[1]

Wach envisioned Religionswissenschaft as a unitive science affording a distinct and systematic approach to the study of religion.

> His primary concern was to develop and articulate a general framework in which scholars of different disciplines interested in religion, as well as adherents of diverse religious faiths, could understand each other.[2]

Wach's lengthy scholarly career came full cycle in at least one respect. Early on, "he had tended to stress the independence of the descriptive task of Religionswissenschaft from the normative concerns of theology

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[1] Wach, Understanding and Believing, 138-139.

[2] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Introduction: The Life and Thought of Joachim Wach," in Joachim Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, ed. with an introduction by Joseph M. Kitagawa, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958, xl.

and philosophy. . ."[1] Such independence was thought to be essential.

> Quantitatively and qualitatively *Religionswissenschaft* thus has a field of study distinct from that of theology: not our own religion but the foreign religions in all their manifoldness are its subject matter. It does not ask the question "what must I believe?" but "what is there that is believed?"[2]

At the same time, however, reaching beyond a purely descriptive approach to his subject, perhaps as an apologetic request for recognition of its existence from the established religious disciplines, Wach claimed that

> *Religionswissenschaft* in its true intention does not dissolve values but seeks for values. The sense for the numinous is not extinguished by it, but on the contrary, is awakened, strengthened, shaped, and enriched by it . . . it prepares one for a deeper conception of one's own faith . . . it ought to lead to the examination and preservation of one's own religious faith.[3]

The tension, manifested in Wach's writings, between the descriptive and normative approaches to religion, has pervaded and animated much of subsequent CSR. In Wach's career, the emphasis on separateness yielded eventually to a quest for synthesis.

> Gradually . . . he began to stress the importance of the systematic task, to be sure without minimizing the descriptive task, of

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[1] Kitagawa, "Introduction," in Joachim Wach, *Understanding and Believing*, xiii.

[2] Wach, *Understanding and Believing*, 126.

[3] *Ibid*., 127-128.

> Religionswissenschaft. Thus he came to view Religionswissenschaft as a link between the normative disciplines and the purely descriptive disciplines.[1]

This evolution of the ascribed task of Religionswissenschaft has not gone unnoticed by contemporary scholars, one of whom notes that

> . . . there are those who, like Joachim Wach, have held that it is the responsibility of history of religions to establish a connecting link between normative and descriptive activities through quest for meaning.[2]

Nevertheless, Religionswissenschaft, under its various appellations such as history of religions, CSR, and the science of religion, has survived and flourished, due in no small measure to Wach's perspicacity and determined effort. His innovative and decisive contribution to CSR, as outlined in his seminal essay on "The Meaning and Task of the History of Religions (Religionswissenschaft),"[3] is recognized as "a founding act of the discipline which he, some seventy-five years after

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[1] Kitagawa, "Introduction," in Wach, Understanding and Believing, xiii.

[2] Richard H. Drummond, "Christian Theology and the History of Religions," Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Summer, 1975, 12:3, 393.

[3] Wach, Understanding and Believing, 125-141. Also in Joseph M. Kitagawa, Mircea Eliade, and Charles H. Long, eds., The History of Religions: Essays on the Problem of Understanding, in Jerold C. Brauer, gen. ed., Essays in Divinity, 7 vols., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967, I, 1-19.

its foundation, re-founded as a fully autonomous systematic discipline in America."[1]

In charting the course of CSR, Wach chose as his North Star not a definition of religion per se (a thankless, impossible, and perhaps unnecessary task),[2] but rather "four formal criteria for a definition of what might be called religious experience."[3] For Wach, religious experience is "a response to what is experienced as ultimate reality," it is "a total response of the total being to what is apprehended as ultimate reality," it is "the most intense experience of which man is capable," and it is "practical, that is to say it involves an imperative, a committment which impels man to act." These criteria constitute Wach's starting point for CSR, and these "assumptions pertaining to religion are generally accepted by students of the discipline of History of Religions (Religionswissenschaft)."[4]

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[1] Jacques Waardenburg, ed., Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion, 2 vols., Vol. I "Introduction and Anthology," in Jacques Waardenburg, gen. ed., Religion and Reason: Method and Theory in the Study and Interpretation of Religions, 15 vols., The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1973, III, 64.

[2] Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, trans. by Ephraim Fischoff with an introduction by Talcott Parsons, Boston: Beacon Press, 1963, 1.

[3] Joachim Wach, Types of Religious Experience, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, 32-33.

[4] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Primitive, Classical, and Modern Religions: A Perspective on Understanding the History of Religions," in Kitagawa et al., 39-40.

Wach's propositions concerning religious experience are that it is universal, that it tends toward expression, and that a "comparative study of the forms of the expression of religious experience, the world over, shows an amazing similarity in structure."[1] In his general approach to the study of religion, Wach was struck by the apparent commonalities that transcend culture and history.

> Here, then, are some universals in religion: man relating himself in the experience which we call religious to ultimate reality. This experience, which is had within the limitations of time and space, tends to be expressed theoretically, practically, and sociologically. The forms of this expression, though conditioned by the environment within which it originated, show similarities in structure; there are universal themes in religious thought, the universal is always embedded in the particular.[2]

It was in order to distinguish the particular from the universal that Wach embarked on his study of comparative religion. The logic of his insight is shared by contemporary scholars, one of whom agrees that

> . . . while the distinctive and the universal form a basic polarity in the history of religions, the distinctive qualities of any religion always exist within the framework of the universal elements of the history of religions, and can be recognized and understood only within that general context through exhaustive comparative analysis.[3]

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[1] Wach, Types of Religious Experience, 33-34.

[2] Ibid., 47.

[3] Eugene George Frick, "The Meaning of Religion in the Religionswissenschaft of Joachim Wach, The Theology of Paul Tillich, and the Theology of Karl Rahner: An Inquiry," dissertation for the degree of doctor of philosophy, Marquette University, 1972, 234.

Just as he believed that _Religionswissenschaft_ should have a common meeting ground with the normative sciences of theology and philosophy, Wach proposed that there should be a gate open to the social sciences as well.

> Wach felt the necessity of taking the sociological conditioning of religious life and the social contexts of religious expressions into serious consideration. He rejected, however, the extremist view that religious life is an epiphenomenon of social structure.[1]

Unlike previous scholars who investigated religion from the standpoint of the social sciences, Wach did not expect or hope to uncover the nature and essence of religion itself.

> Our aim will be more modest. We hope by an examination of the manifold interrelations between religion and social phenomena to contribute to a better appreciation of one function of religion, perhaps not its foremost but certainly an essential one.[2]

To this end, Wach set about developing a methodology for the sociology of religion that was compatible with, and integral to, the overall purposes of _Religionswissenschaft_.

> Wach himself defined the task of the sociology of religion as "the investigation of the relation between religion(s) and society in their mutual ways of conditioning each other and also of the configuration of any religiously determined social processes." Throughout his life, Wach tried to bridge the gap between the study of religion and

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[1] Eliade, _The Quest_, 18-19.

[2] Joachim Wach, _Sociology of Religion_, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944, 5.

the social sciences from the perspective of *Religionswissenschaft*.[1]

Wach conceived *Religionswissenschaft* as the general science of religion, encompassing several disciplines which, from its standpoint, would be considered auxiliary disciplines (although from their standpoint, *Religionswissenschaft* would be considered auxiliary). This view is shared by Joseph Kitagawa:

> Following Wach, we may divide *Religionswissenschaft* into historical and systematic divisions. Under the heading of "historical" come the general history of religion and the histories of specific religions. Under the heading of "systematic" come phenomenological, comparative, sociological, and psychological studies of religions. All these subdivisions are regarded as integral parts of *Religionswissenschaft* or the history of religions, in the way we use the term.[2]

For Wach, the essence of CSR, or *Religionswissenschaft*, lies in its harmonious utilization of the "divergent but complementary" methods involved in the historical and comparative approaches. He asserts that comparison, while not an end in itself, is "an important means of ascertaining analogies and differences between various forms of expression of religious experiences . . . ,"[3] although the "foundation upon which a fruitful comparative

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[1] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "The History of Religions in America," in Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa, eds., *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959, 20.

[2] *Ibid*., 19.

[3] Wach, *Types of Religious Experience*, 29.

study of religion rests must always be historical and philological, or, in other words, critical studies."[1]

The use of this combined approach should enable the student to follow what Wach considered the three main principles of CSR, namely, recognition of "the apologetic element in each religion," acknowledgement that each religion represents a "universal option, not subject to cultural determinism," and perception of the "qualitative differences of various religions," as well as their similarities.[2]

Certain "necessary equipment" is recommended by Wach as helpful to the prospective student of CSR.[3] First, linguistic ability is urged, although "this competence in and by itself does not guarantee positive results in the study of religion." Also, "an engagement of feeling, interest . . . or participation" is advised. The third form of equipment is "volition" or "a constructive purpose," which is neither "idle curiosity nor a passion for annihilating whatever differs from one's own position." Lastly, "there is still something else that is essential equipment for the study of religion, and that is experience." Wach defines religious experience here in the broadest, most inclusive sense. With

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[1] Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, 6.

[2] Kitagawa, in Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, xliii.

[3] Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, 11-14.

these rudiments of equipment, and following the three main principles, the student can commence study of CSR, with Wach's blessing.

One caveat in regard to Wach's approach to CSR is in order at this point. Ninian Smart alleges that, in Wach's use of the comparative method, "Wach's position goes beyond pure typology . . . and involves an implicit metaphysics. In this respect he is similar to Rudolf Otto and Eliade."[1] Smart asserts that "there is little doubt that Wach believed in the objective experience of that Ultimate Reality of which the sensus numinis is the experience."[2] That the charge is true appears incontravertible. Indeed, Friedrich Heiler deems that Wach's work, along with that of others, "has confirmed this comprehensive unity by pointing out the similarities in the world of religious phenomena."[3] According to Joseph Kitagawa, Wach "affirms Von Hügel's conviction that there is only one ultimate reality, but that the modes of human apprehension result in a multiplicity of religious experiences."[4] The most damning evidence is

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[1] Ninian Smart, The Science of Religion & the Sociology of Knowledge, Princeton, New Jersey: The Princeton University Press, 1973, 19.

[2] Ibid., 60.

[3] Friedrich Heiler, "The History of Religions as a Preparation for the Co-operation of Religions," in Eliade and Kitagawa, 141.

[4] Kitagawa, in Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, xli.

contained in Wach's own testimony: "Religious experience, then, is the inner aspect of the intercourse of man and the human mind with God."[1]

In elaborating on his accusation, Smart criticizes Wach for failing to distinguish between "pure typological phenomenology" and "metaphysical phenomenology," for failing to distinguish between "the common enterprise of the study of religion and the matter of individual and personal beliefs," and for "not making appropriate distinctions of level."[2] In summary, Smart concludes:

> . . . the theory that there exists an ultimate reality of a certain kind expressed through the central core, for example through numinous experience, is unnecessary. . . To put it differently, the claim that there exists that which the core reveals is a piece of theology.[3]

Such a claim, Smart insists, "is not to be identified with the profession of students of religion."[4] Smart's criticism seems justified, as it identifies a certain ambivalence in Wach's conception of the role of CSR. Smart's corrective advice is also well-taken by the student of CSR:

> That the core theory needs to be rejected, especially in the form presented by Wach, does not mean that there are not recurrent patterns and

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[1] Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, 41.

[2] Smart, The Science of Religion & the Sociology of Knowledge, 20, 64, 65.

[3] Ibid., 66.

[4] Ibid.

> so to say an "inner logic" of religious developments. . . But the rejection of the core theory in favor of a methodological agnosticism means that we have to do justice to the status of the phenomenological objects of religion.[1]

Ironically, Wach himself advocated this kind of "methodological agnosticism" in his own work. Even if he did not scrupulously observe his own proscription, the student of CSR would do well to do so.

> The historian *qua* historian will examine the sociological forms under which religiously motivated groups have organized, and he will inquire into the underlying theological assumptions. He will show parallels between different types which belong to different historical contexts. But he cannot *qua* historian go beyond this *descriptive* task to answer the *normative* quest.[2]

Criticism such as Smart's illustrates the singular importance of methodology in an undertaking such as CSR which attempts to address itself to diverse data in a multidisciplinary manner. Wach's methodological approach grew out of, and was refined by, his historical, sociological, comparative, and phenomenological studies. It bears some relationship and resemblance to, and influence upon, the methodologies employed by other comparative religionists, particularly in its emphasis on comparison and phenomenology. J.G. Arapura describes his own approach as "comparative phenomenology," which requires

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[1] *Ibid.*, 67.

[2] Wach, *Types of Religious Experience*, 229.

"the study of existential consciousness."[1] Ugo Bianchi defends "the historical-comparative method as _the_ method of the History of Religions. . ."[2] Another methodology is called the "constructionist" approach, which "draws in large part upon the theories and methods of the _Religionswissenschaft_ school for dealing with religious phenomena."[3] Ninian Smart advocates the use of a "typological phenomenology,"[4] while Mircea Eliade entitles his approach "morphology."[5] The comparative method is also used in normative endeavors, as evidenced by Roderick Hindery's call for "a multi-faceted CRE" (i.e., Comparative Religious Ethics) utilizing a normative-comparative method.[6] Perhaps the most charming methodology, seemingly innocent of the intellectual encumbrances of the aforementioned methods, but with phenomenological undertones

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[1] J.G. Arapura, _Religion as Anxiety and Tranquility_, in Jacques Waardenburg, gen. ed., _Religion and Reason: Method and Theory in the Study and Interpretation of Religions_, 15 vols., The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1972, V, 4.

[2] Ugo Bianchi, _The History of Religions_, Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1975, 217.

[3] Carl A. Raschke, James A. Kirk, and Mark C. Taylor, _Religion and the Human Image_, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977, vii.

[4] Ninian Smart, "The Structure of the Comparative Study of Religion," in John R. Hinnells, ed., _Comparative Religion in Education_, Newcastle, England: Oriel Press Limited, 1970, 22.

[5] Bianchi, 215.

[6] Roderick Hindery, "Exploring Comparative Religious Ethics," _Journal of Ecumenical Studies_, Summer, 1973, 10:3, 574.

in terms of its respect for the intentionality of the data, is that voiced in the admonition of Wilfred Cantwell Smith: "Of the various ways of finding out what something means to the person concerned, one way is to ask him."[1]

The development of an appropriate methodology was a foremost priority for Wach. During the time of his writings, which he considered a formative period of CSR, "he was concerned that the question of method take temporary precedence over other aspects of study."[2] In his methodological quest, Wach took no dogmatic position, but rather taught that

> . . . there is no single procedure forever suitable to the study of the history of religions but that the method will have to be adequate to the total epoch and prevailing conditions of the time to which the study is directed.[3]

Contemporary scholars pay tribute to Wach's "constant methodological concern,"[4] in which he strove for "a

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[1] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Comparative Religion: Whither--and Why," in Eliade and Kitagawa, 39. A more philosophical analysis of method in religion, building upon a Wittgensteinian "language-game" model, is found in Robert McDermott's interesting article, "The Religion Game: Some Family Resemblances," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, December, 1970, XXXVIII:4, 390-400.

[2] Jerald C. Brauer, "General Editor's Preface," in Kitagawa et al., x.

[3] Ibid., ix.

[4] Waardenburg, 63.

systematic typological understanding,"[1] concentrating on the problem of "arranging and of classifying the forms of religious expression"[2] in a primary effort "directed toward structural understanding of religious experience and phenomena" while preserving "the historic character of religious data which are incorporated into his systematic, typological schema."[3] Wach's preoccupation with method left him little time to do direct historical research on the religions themselves. "For himself, he chose to labor in the methodological and theoretical dimensions, leaving the study of particular world religions to his disciples."[4]

Wach suggested that the method for CSR should meet two demands. "The first demand is that the method be unified. . . The second demand is that the method be adequate for the subject matter,"[5] that is, "the religio-scientific task must be carried out not 'philosophically' or 'scientifically' but 'religio-scientifically' with its own methodology."[6] Such a method is to be "essentially descriptive, aiming to understand the nature of all

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Wood, 51.

[3] Kitagawa, in Kitagawa et al., 43.

[4] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "In Memoriam: Joachim Wach--Teacher and Colleague," in Wach, Understanding and Believing, 199.

[5] Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, 14-15.

[6] Kitagawa, in Eliade and Kitagawa, 18.

religions,"[1] adhering to "the principle of relative objectivity,"[2] which Wach saw as a realistic compromise between a naive objectivity and an absolute subjectivity.

> The endless variety of phenomena which the history, psychology, and sociology of religion provide us must be organized. Typological categories are designed to do that. "This construction of types is only intended for a better understanding of history from the point of view of life." As long as this is borne in mind there is no danger that concrete individuality and historical variety will be slighted in favor of a typological approach. Types of mythical or theological notions, types of worship, types of religious charisma may be conceived.[3]

This methodological approach is well received by contemporary scholars. Following Wach's lead, Ninian Smart states that this "elaboration of a standardized set of categories, of types of religious items, is the task of typological phenomenology, necessarily comparative in its approach."[4] Smart also agrees that such an approach does not do an injustice to the particularity of the data:

> It would thus be illusory to suppose that one may exhaust the meaning of a faith by typological phenomenology as applied to it. The historical aspect of the study of a faith safeguards, fortunately, against this tendency, and brings out the uniqueness of a faith (of every faith, indeed).[5]

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[1] Wach, Sociology of Religion, 1.

[2] Wach, Types of Religious Experience, 57.

[3] Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, 25-26.

[4] Ninian Smart, The Phenomenon of Religion, New York: Herder and Herder, 1973, 41.

[5] Smart, in Hinnells, 27.

Wach's approach to CSR, grounded as it is in its historical and comparative orientation, provides for researchers the tools they expect of such a discipline. "A fair statement of a current consensus would probably be that its proper methodological focus is that of a social science dealing with historical data of a particular (i.e., religious) kind."[1] For some, a dry respect for Wach's achievement spills over into a barely muted enthusiasm: "The comparative analysis of religions is the fulfillment of, and application of, the descriptive and analytic presentation of the manifold data of the history of religions."[2]

In terms of meeting his requirements for appropriateness for the study of CSR, Wach rejected

> . . . five basic methodological perspectives: historicism, intellectualism, philosophical-theological absolutism, skepticism-relativism, and a purely functional approach. . .[3]

He also lists "five legitimate methodological approaches to the study of religions: the historical, the psychological, the sociological, the phenomenological, and the typological."[4] As outlined above, the typological approach was of crucial importance to Wach in terms of

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[1] Drummond, 393.

[2] Frick, 235.

[3] *Ibid.*, 32.

[4] *Ibid.*, 34.

organizing data. But of equal importance to him, and preliminary in terms of gathering data, was the phenomenological approach.

> We need a phenomenology of the expressions of religious experience, a "grammar" of religious language, based on a comprehensive empirical, phenomenological, and comparative study.[1]

In shaping his approach to CSR, Wach

> . . . stressed the importance of both the empirical-descriptive and the phenomenological-*a priori* methods for this task, leaving the normative problem to ethics and the philosophy of religion.[2]

For Wach, phenomenology provides the key for the understanding of religion. Indeed, "Wach's interpretation of the meaning of religion develops within a context that is neither philosophical nor theological, but rather historical and phenomenological."[3] Wach saw phenomenology as an integral aspect of CSR.

> Its aim is to view religious ideas, acts, and institutions with due consideration to their "intention," yet without subscribing to any one philosophical, theological, metaphysical, or psychological theory. Thus a necessary supplement to a purely historical, psychological or sociological approach is provided. . . Neither history nor psychology can do the job of phenomenology.[4]

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1 Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, 15.

2 Kitagawa, in Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religion*, xxxi-xxxii.

3 Frick, 25.

4 Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religion*, 24-25.

Much contemporary CSR is in accord with Wach's intended use of phenomenology. "Through phenomenological analysis and comparison, the religious scholar seeks to detect a basic structure within the multiplicity of religious expressions."[1] But not all scholars are at ease with Wach's employment of phenomenology, a method "which goes back to Edmund Husserl's rarified analysis of the structure of consciousness. . ."[2] William W. Mountcastle, Jr., criticizing CSR in general, lauds its "objective attitude," but chides that "it is guided more by the model of the social sciences, which stresses description, than by philosophical method with its critical analysis and normative criteria."[3] Henry Duméry takes issue with Wach directly:

> Joachim Wach, with all that he claims for his typology, has to contend with a normative method. His manner of classification of the great forms of religious experience amounts, in fact, to a strongly rational selection. But it hardly rests on well worked out philosophical criteria.[4]

This criticism, while understandable in its constructive intent, is invalid in that it ignores the distinction

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[1] Frick, 35.

[2] Seymour Cain, "Review of The Comparative Study of Religion by Joachim Wach," Journal of Religion, 1960, XL, 48.

[3] William W. Mountcastle, Jr., Religion in Planetary Perspective: A Philosophy of Comparative Religion, Nashville, Tennessee: The Parthenon Press, 1978, 15.

[4] Henry Duméry, Critique et Religion, Paris: Société d'Éditions d'Enseignement, 1957, 204, quoted in Jean Daniélou, "Phenomenology of Religions and Philosophy of Religion," in Eliade and Kitagawa, 67.

between phenomenology as philosophy and phenomenology as method, and also in that it is indifferent to the self-imposed limits of the phenomenological method as it is used in CSR. The crucial distinction between the philosophical and methodological use of phenomenology is appreciated by Ugo Bianchi:

> But what I would like to say is that one should not require the historian of religions to enter into philosophical quarrels with Husserl; this is why the historian of religions should not be expected to discuss about phenomenology with technical terms and in harmony with Husserl's philosophy . . . within the frame of that particular phenomenology--not strictly intended in the technical Husserlian sense--it is in fact that when scholars talk of phenomenology, they mostly refer to so-called "structures" or "systems" wherein they make those phenomena fit and have a "meaning."[1]

Regarding Duméry's criticism of Wach's phenomenology of religious representations, Jean Daniélou rejoins that Duméry "fails to recognize the special contribution of phenomenology, which is the irreducibility of these representations to purely rational functions."[2] The use of phenomenology in CSR is not intended to produce normative criteria of a philosophical or theological nature. The problem it addresses, according to Daniélou, is rather

> . . . that of the organization of religious data in a coherent fashion. This consists of an effort to discern the meaning of the data furnished by the history of religions, to locate these different

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[1] Bianchi, 215.

[2] Daniélou, 81.

> meanings in their proper relationships, and finally also to place various religions in their reciprocal positions with regard to each other. This last problem especially interested Joachim Wach.[1]

Wach's Method for the Comparative Study of Religious Thought

Wach addressed the problem of method in all his writings on CSR, but it was in his final work, The Comparative Study of Religion, that he gave fullest expression to the methodological requirements of CSR. In this, of all his works, he formulated his most comprehensive statement on the ways and means by which one could realize

> . . . the desire to investigate the variety of what goes under the names of religion and religions in order to determine by comparison and phenomenological analysis if anything like a structure can be discovered in all these forms of expression. . .[2]

The statement of this book can be seen as a summary and recapitulation of his life and labor in CSR.

> The significance of his last work, The Comparative Study of Religion, lies in the fact that here Wach attempts to combine the insights and methods of Religionswissenschaft, philosophy of religion, and theology. It is all the more regrettable that he did not live long enough to complete the task which he assigned himself.[3]

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[1] Ibid., 82.

[2] Wach, Types of Religious Experience, 30.

[3] Kitagawa, in Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, xxxviii.

But Wach would undoubtedly appreciate having his last testament approached in the spirit of the quote with which his intellectual and spiritual mentor, Gerardus Van der Leeuw, ended the final page of his classic work in phenomenology, Religion in Essence and Manifestation: "and so everything has its end, and this book too. But everything that has an end also commences anew elsewhere."[1] A purpose of this present research is to test, as an hypothesis, one aspect of Wach's proposed methodology contained in The Comparative Study of Religion.

In the book, which contains an introduction by Joseph Kitagawa on "The Life and Thought of Joachim Wach," Wach devotes his first chapter to "Development, Meaning and Method in the Comparative Study of Religions." In the second chapter, he delineates "The Nature of Religious Experience." In the remainder of the book, he apportions one chapter each to the three basic means of the expression of religious experience, namely, "The Expression of Religious Experience in Thought," "The Expression of Religious Experience in Action," and "The Expression of Religious Experience in Fellowship." In all, Wach is hypothesizing "universal" activities, qualities, and categories by which the varied data of religious experience can be apprehended, organized, and compared.

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[1] Gerardus Van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, trans. by J.E. Turner, London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1938, 695.

Of primary interest is his chapter on "The Expression of Religious Experience in Thought." Wach prefaces his analysis with a reminder that, like all kinds of experience, religious experience tends toward expression. Such expression takes universally applicable forms of _motivation_, _modes_, and _means_. The _motivation_ is spurred by the "explosive quality" of the experience, by the "urge to communicate" it, and by a "propagandistic" impulse. The _modes_ of expression are "endeictic" (Gr.: _endeixis_, announcement), i.e., veiled, symbolic, implicit, usually visual communication, and "discursive," i.e., articulate, conceptual, explicit, primarily verbal or literary communication. The _means_ of expression are "action," "fellowship," and "thought." The expression of religious experience in "action" involves cultus, i.e., ritual, devotion, service, and worship, while its expression in "fellowship" is seen in the nature, structure, and functions of religious groups and communities.

"Thought," as a means of expressing religious experience, is comprised of form and content. Under form are subsumed myth, doctrine, dogma, oral transmission, writings, creeds, and confessions of faith. Under content are reckoned the answers to what Wach proposes are "basic and eternal" philosophical questions to which all religions, in their various ways, seek to respond. The issue of the expression of religious experience in the content of thought (i.e., the "basic and eternal"

questions) was of paramount importance to Wach, as evidenced by the fact that he devoted to its analysis more than half the space of this key chapter in the book.

Wach's "Basic and Eternal" Questions as Hypothesis

Despite its richness of insight, The Comparative Study of Religion gives only "preliminaries to the comparative study of religion" and merely "broaches the problem of the method to be followed. . ."[1] It seems appropriate, therefore, following Wach's own insistence on the "religio-scientific" nature of the discipline, not to accept Wach's thesis on the "basic and eternal" questions as gospel, but rather to test it as an hypothesis. This will be the concern, after delineating just what these questions are, of the balance of this research.

In his contention that religion answers the questions put forth by philosophy, Wach is following the lead of Paul Tillich.

> In his method of "correlation" Tillich has recognized that theological statements are always to be understood as answers to questions. "The method of correlation explains the contents of . . . faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence." As the history of religion proves, the basic questions are eternal, but the modes in which they are asked and the terminology which is employed vary.[2]

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[1] Waardenburg, 64.

[2] Wach, The Comparative Study of Religion, 76.

Wach attempts to identify what he sees as the "basic and eternal" existential questions which all religions, in their varying modes and terminologies, try to answer. In so doing, he hopes to create conceptual categories in which and by which the intellectual content of religious expression in the different religions can be compared. He argues that, although the answers vary over time and space, the questions are universal and timeless. Wach does not formulate the questions in an interrogative form, but rather, drawing from a somewhat randomly selected cross-section of the world's religions, he sketches in some possible answers, thereby implying the questions. From his sketched-in answers, however, the actual questions he is hypothesizing can be inferred and articulated.

With these considerations in mind, one may move on to Wach's questions. His schema is a tripartite one: he sees the "basic and eternal" questions comprising three themes.

> The first and most fundamental theme in any statement of faith concerns the nature of Ultimate Reality. That which is living and vivid in religious experience expresses itself in some concept of the nature of the deity. The second theme is that of the nature of all which is not ultimate--the cosmos, and within it, the world. The third singles out one phenomenon within this world--man. Theology, cosmology, and anthropology are central subjects of all religious thinking. . . These basic apprehensions are formulated in myth,

> doctrine, dogma, sacred writings, confessions of faith, and creeds.[1]

Although here Wach equates "Ultimate Reality" with "some concept of the nature of the deity," the terms "God" and "Ultimate Reality," for the purpose of this research, are understood, as Wach himself more frequently uses the terms, in the Tillichian sense as the object of "ultimate concern" to allow for the comparison of such disparate religions as Zoroastrianism and Theravada Buddhism. For Tillich, the description of God as "ultimate concern" "means that whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him, and, conversely, it means that a man can be concerned ultimately only about that which is god for him."[2]

The word "theology" should also be understood in the same general sense as pointing to humanity's ultimate concern, and not necessarily to a personal God.

> Historically, it is true that the term "theology" does not always fit too snugly, e.g., in Buddhism ("Buddhist Theology" is a paradox when there is scarcely a Theos). But this is a merely terminological difficulty. It is quite clear that Swami Vivekananda (for instance) was theologizing from a Hindu, or from one Hindu point of view, just as Karl Barth was expressing a Christian point of view.[3]

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[1] Ibid., 76-77. Similar thematic divisions have been used by other comparative religionists, e.g., the breakdown into "Ideas of God and Reality," "Cosmogony and Cosmology," and "Man and the Good Life," in F. Harold Smith, The Elements of Comparative Theology, London: Duckworth, 1937.

[2] Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, I, 211.

[3] Smart, in Hinnells, 28.

After introducing the tripartite nature of his schema, Wach proceeds to suggest the several "basic and eternal" existential questions that constitute each of the three themes. Under Ultimate Reality, he asks whether Ultimate Reality is characterized by pluralism or monism, by personalism or impersonalism, by distance or nearness. Under Cosmology, he asks about the origin of the universe, its constitutive order, and its destiny. Under Man, he asks about humanity's relation to the universe, about the nature of the self, about earthly goals, about hindrances to the attainment of these goals, about ways of overcoming these hindrances, and about ultimate goals. For the sake of clarity, these "basic and eternal" questions can be converted to their proper interrogative form:

Wach's "Basic and Eternal" Questions

A. Ultimate Reality (Theology)
   What is the nature of Ultimate Reality?
   In particular,
   1. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by pluralism or monism?
   2. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by personalism or impersonalism?
   3. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by distance or nearness?

B. Universe (Cosmology)
   1. What is the origin of the universe (e.g., creation, emergence, emanation, evolution, etc.)?
   2. What kind of order pervades the universe (e.g., is the universe real or unreal, good or evil, play or serious; are there fixed laws of nature; is time cyclical or linear; is history immutable or capable of divine intervention, etc.)?

3. What is the destiny of the universe (e.g., telos, eschatology, apocalypticism, recurrence, etc.)?

C. Humanity (Anthropology)

1. What is humanity's relationship to the universe?
2. What is the nature of the self (e.g., real or unreal, matter/spirit, component elements such as body, mind, soul, Atman, khandhas, etc.)?
3. What are the highest possibilities of earthly life (e.g., to attain perfection, redemption, self-realization, etc.)?
4. What are the hindrances in achieving these possibilities (e.g., sin, evil, desire, ignorance, etc.)?
5. How can these hindrances be overcome (e.g., by self-effort/divine grace, good works, ethical behavior, austerities, attitudes, meditation, etc.)?
6. What is the final and ultimate goal of human life (e.g., absorption into godhead, annihilation, reunion with God, etc.)?

These, then, as Wach proposes, are the "basic and eternal" questions which all religions, in their varied ways, seek to answer. In the context of Wach's methodological approach to CSR, with its emphasis on the comparative, typological, and phenomenological modes, the "basic and eternal" question-schema is ascribed a heuristic value in that it creates and represents conceptual categories in which and by which different religions can be compared and contrasted in terms of their intellectual content. Wach's implied intention is that such categorization-by-question might allow the researcher to transcend the historical differences between and among the religions and to discern similarities, contrasts, universals, recurrent patterns and uniqueness, and, in so

doing, advance the cause of a systematic and meaningful comparative study of religion.

In *The Comparative Study of Religion*, Wach enumerates a host of possible answers to his "basic and eternal" questions, but he does not apply his schema systematically to a comparison of specific religions. Such an application would afford a reasonable test of his schema as an hypothesis. It is the purpose of the next three chapters of this present research to apply Wach's schema to the study of three religious orientations, namely, Zoroastrianism, Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta, and Theravada Buddhism, in order to test the schema as an hypothesis. The concluding chapter will offer an analysis and evaluation of Wach's schema, or method, in terms of its efficacy and heuristic value as a contribution to the comparative study of religion.

CHAPTER IV

ZOROASTRIANISM IN WACH'S MODEL

In this chapter, Zoroastrianism will be studied from the point of view of Wach's "basic and eternal" questions. Accordingly, the intellectual content of the religion will be articulated in terms of Wach's model of the "intellectual expression of religious experience," to be given new form and appearance. The intellectual content, for this purpose, will be drawn from three sources: Zoroastrian Studies by A.V. Williams Jackson,[1] Zoroastrianism by Rustom Masani,[2] and The Teachings of the Magi: A Compendium of Zoroastrian Beliefs by R.C. Zaehner.[3] The intent of the chapter is to investigate how Zoroastrianism, as drawn from these three sources, answers the questions put forth by Wach.

Zoroaster (or Zarathushtra), the prophet of Iran, is believed "to have flourished between the latter half

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[1] A.V. Williams Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, originally published by Columbia University Press, 1928, New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1965.

[2] Rustom Masani, Zoroastrianism: The Religion of the Good Life, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968.

[3] R.C. Zaehner, The Teachings of the Magi: A Compendium of Zoroastrian Beliefs, New York: A Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1976.

of the seventh century and the middle of the sixth century B.C."[1] Born among a people who still had cultural, linguistic, and religious affinities with their Aryan, or Indo-Iranian, kinsmen in India, Zoroaster experienced powerful religious visions at the age of thirty. He began preaching an essentially monotheistic creed in the face of the prevailing polytheistic, nature-worshiping religion of his day. After ten years of trial, travel, and persecution, he found his first convert in his cousin, and then, more importantly, he won over Vishtaspa, King of Bactria. After a lifetime of struggle and preaching, Zoroaster died at the age of seventy-seven, while praying in a fire-temple.

After the conversion of Vishtaspa,[2] the Constantine of the faith, Zoroastrianism attained national status and grew stronger during the reign of the Achaemenian kings Cyrus, Darius I, and Xerxes, who were adherents, to varying degrees, of the religion.

> The national power of this faith was first broken by the invasion of Alexander the Great. Although the sacred books of Persia were burned, Zoroastrianism recovered from the blow and still persisted

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[1] Jackson, 24.

[2] In the text of this chapter and the following chapters, diacritic marks for foreign words and names are omitted to facilitate ease in reading, following the example of Masani, Organ, and Humphreys in their books used, respectively, in the chapters on Zoroastrianism, Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta, and Theravada Buddhism. In quotations from sources which use diacritics, however, foreign words and names are marked exactly as in the original sources.

> under the Seleucid rule of Iran and under the Parthian sway until the third century of our era. It once more rose to supremacy through the Sasanian Empire (226-651 A.D.), and even flourished more gloriously than ever. Schismatic synchretistic movements, like that of Manichaeism, arose to threaten its unity; and heresies, like the pernicious teachings of Mazdak, crept in. But these did little harm. The overthrow and ruin of Zoroastrianism came from without, from Muhammedanism, when Islam began its victorious career in the seventh century of our era.[1]

Many centuries of wandering and persecution followed for the faithful of Zoroastrianism. Today, the remnants of the faith number ten thousand or so Ghebers (or Gabars) in Iran and a little over a hundred thousand Parsis in the Bombay area.

According to numerous scholars, Zoroastrianism exerted a considerable influence on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The most direct influence came during the Babylonian captivity, when the Jews

> . . . were in constant contact with the Iranians. During the seventy years of their exile they borrowed from the Zoroastrian faith various doctrines such as the belief in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and future reward and punishment.[2]

Ideas about the Devil, about angelology and demonology, and even the inspiration for the Book of Job are sometimes given Zoroastrian origins. Scholars are divided on the extent and direction of influence between Zoroastrianism and the Semitic religions, but one sober

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[1] Jackson, 10.

[2] Masani, 18.

opinion is that "there is something of a tendency to underestimate the Persian influence upon Judaism and Christianity."[1]

The primary Zoroastrian scripture is the Avesta, the basic sub-divisions of which are the Gathas, "songs" or "odes" generally attributed to Zoroaster himself, the Yashts, "sacrificial hymns" addressed to various deities, and the Vendidad or Videvdat, "the law against the demons," a treatise on ritual.[2] Numerous texts over the centuries, such as the Bundahishn, elaborated on the insight and meaning of the Avesta.

The following are the Zoroastrian answers to Joachim Wach's "basic and eternal" questions, as derived from the works of Jackson, Masani, and Zaehner.

A. Ultimate Reality (Theology)
What is the nature of Ultimate Reality? In particular,
1. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by pluralism or monism?

This is a key question in Zoroastrian studies. Scholarly opinion varies on the nature of God, or Ahura Mazda (the All-Wise Lord), the nature of the Devil, or Angra Mainyu (the Evil Spirit), and the relationship between them. Opinion on the issue of the characterization of Ultimate Reality ranges from uncompromising

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[1] Jackson, 206.

[2] Zaehner, 13.

monotheism to radical dualism to some combination of monotheism and dualism. The basic features, however, of Ahura Mazda are generally agreed upon.

> Ahura Mazdā is an all-wise god, an omniscient lord, a spirit most benign and bounteous, immutable and unchanging, undeceiving and undeceived. He is a watchful guardian and protector, a giver of rewards and punishments, and he is the father and creator of all good things, especially the creator of light and of the cow. His throne is in the heavens, in the realm of eternal light; his presence is manifested by splendor and glory; and he is surrounded by a company of ministering angels who carry out his commands. It is Ahura Mazdā who was, and is, and will be.[1]

Ahura Mazda is "the principle of good"[2] and he is "the Good Artificer, or Worker, through whom everything comes into life and exists."[3]

To some, Ahura Mazda is the "one supreme God," and the religion of Mazda is a pure and ethical, uncompromising monotheism.[4] To others, Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu are coeval and co-equal antagonists in a dualist theology.[5] In relation to Angra Mainyu, Ahura Mazda

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[1] Jackson, 40.

[2] Zaehner, 15.

[3] Masani, 36.

[4] Ibid., 24,33,66.

[5] Zaehner, 15,18. The perspective taken by Masani and Jackson is that of the historical view of Zoroastrianism emphasizing persistent tendencies. Zaehner focuses primarily on "the dualist orthodoxy which seems to have been established under Shāpūr II in the fourth century A.D. . . ." (Zaehner, 11)

is seen as now infinite and omnipotent,[1] now finite and limited in power.[2] Another perspective holds that Zoroastrianism contains "dualistic traits and monotheistic tendencies," with a "striving toward unity."[3] One conciliatory view within Zoroastrian theology pits Angra Mainyu against Spenta Mainyu, the Holy Spirit of Ahura Mazda. The two personifications, one of evil and one of good, do battle against each other but do not represent Ultimate Reality. "The two Spirits do not exist independently, but each in relation to the other; they meet in the higher unity of Ahura Mazda."[4]

All of these viewpoints, nonetheless, agree on the ultimate victory of Ahura Mazda and the good. In the end, Angra Mainyu will be routed and evil will be destroyed. For this reason, Zoroastrianism is considered a "monotheistic and optimistic dualism."[5] Most modern Parsis regard their religion as monotheistic.[6]

In his struggle against evil, Ahura Mazda is assisted by several ranks of spirit-entities. In the first rank are the _Amesha Spentas_, Bountiful Immortals,

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[1] Masani, 36-37.

[2] Zaehner, 30.

[3] Jackson, 26,31.

[4] Masani, 65; Jackson, 70-72.

[5] Jackson, 31.

[6] Jackson, 34-35; Masani, 34.

who, although they are viewed as archangels, "represent merely the six outstanding Attributes of the Supreme Being."[1] The six are Vohu Manah, the Good Mind; Asha Vahishta, the Best Order, or Righteousness; Khshathra Vairya, the Absolute Power; Armaiti, High Thought, or Devotion; Haurvetat, Perfection; and Ameretat, Immortality. Together with Ahura Mazda, they constitute a celestial heptarchy. In the next rank is a large class of angelic beings called Yazatas, the Adorable Ones. Then come the Fravashis, Protective Spirits, a class of guardian angels. Each object in creation has its own fravashi. In keeping with the "dualistic traits" of Zoroastrianism, each good spirit-entity and each class of good spirit-entities has its opposite in an antagonistic demon or class of demons. In keeping with the religion's "optimistic monotheism," however, the good spirits will triumph over the demonic hordes at the end of time.

2. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by personalism or impersonalism?

Ahura Mazda represents the "principle of good" but is most immediately known in his six Attributes or Archangels (the Good Mind, Devotion, etc.), which represent personifications of abstract qualities. Nonetheless, Ahura Mazda did manifest himself in person to Zoroaster,

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[1] Masani, 42.

and is frequently described in personalistic terms, e.g., as the Good Artificer, or Worker, and as father and creator.[1] He is seen as a highly spiritualized person. "He is more spiritual than the supreme god of any other Aryan nation and approaches nearest to Jehovah."[2] As such, he is "the creator, ruler, and preserver of the universe. . ."[3] and it "will be seen that God in this aspect was not viewed as an abstraction,"[4] but as a personal deity.

3. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by distance or nearness?

This question admits of an ambiguous answer in Zoroastrianism. "His throne is in the heavens, in the realm of eternal light. . . ,"[5] seemingly inaccessible to humanity, at least until the final dispensation. "Thereafter, man will enter into the everlasting joy of Ahura Mazda."[6] But although he remains enthroned on high, he is an intelligible deity. "The Zoroastrian God is reasonable as well as good; there is nothing 'numinous' about him."[7] While he may be physically distant,

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[1] Jackson, 46.

[2] Ibid., 41.

[3] Masani, 37.

[4] Ibid., 36.

[5] Jackson, 40.

[6] Masani, 77.

[7] Zaehner, 59.

Ahura Mazda is near to humanity in his everpresent goodness and will, which accompany mortal beings in the form of the good spirit-entities (Amesha Spentas, Yazatas, Fravashis).

B. Universe (Cosmology)

1. What is the origin of the universe?

There is some variance of opinion within Zoroastrian studies regarding cosmogony.

> The general opinion is, it is true, that the Zoroastrian conception of creation was rather that of a forming or shaping of something pre-existent than a real creation ex nihilo; but this seems to be contradicted by a remarkable passage in the Bundahishn. . .[1]

In this passage, Ahura Mazda explains to Zoroaster "how He originally had brought into being the visible world, created out of nothing that had previously existed."[2]

However old its formative material may be, the universe as a universe "is not eternal but has an origin, and it is God who has originated it. . ."[3] The material of creation is not identical with the creator.

> Ahura Mazda is closely associated with the powers of nature, but there is no suggestion of pantheism in it. The Lord of Creation and the Universe are quite distinct.[4]

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[1] Jackson, 120.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Zaehner, 57.

[4] Masani, 35.

The earliest scriptures disclose the creative role of the Lord. "In the Gāthās Ahura Mazdā is extolled as the creator who has established and ordered all. . ."[1]

The material universe is created as a battle-field upon which Ahura Mazda might defeat his arch-rival Angra Mainyu. The term of the universe is to be twelve thousand years, divided into four periods, each of three thousand years duration. The first period begins and ends with the antagonists poised for battle. In the second period, Ahura Mazda creates the universe, knowing that it is there that he will finally defeat Angra Mainyu. After his creation of the spiritual universe (the Amesha Spentas, etc.), Ahura Mazda creates the material universe, in the order of sky, water, earth, plants, animal life, and humankind. Not to be outdone, Angra Mainyu fashions his demonic creation with which he will threaten Ahura Mazda's universe. In the third period, Angra Mainyu irrupts into the universe, intro-ducing discord, disease, wickedness, and death: the battle against Ahura Mazda has been joined on the plane of the created universe. In the final period, which commences with the birth of Zoroaster, the struggle of good against evil rages in full fury, until Ahura Mazda, with the indispensable assistance of humankind, succeeds

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[1] Jackson, 119.

in routing Angra Mainyu, paving the way for the final dispensation.[1]

The universe, then, was created by Ahura Mazda as a trap in which to ensnare the Devil, and it is in the realm of the universe that the final victory will be consummated.

2. What kind of order pervades the universe?

In keeping with the overall dualistic tenor of Zoroastrianism, the universe is seen as containing both good and evil. There is an "essential unity of the universe."[2] A godly intelligence permeates all. "Creation, indeed, is the 'manifestation' of God's eternal Wisdom. . ."[3] There is an order to the universe, divinely appointed. "Ahura Mazdā is pre-eminently the lord of law, of eternal order in nature, and of righteousness in the world."[4] The very order of the universe is personified in Asha Vahishta, The Best Order, or Righteousness, which, as "the law of the universe, is part of the essence of God. . ." and "a spiritual law in accordance with which the Universe has been fashioned and governed."[5]

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[1] Ibid., 110-115.

[2] Masani, 7.

[3] Zaehner, 82.

[4] Jackson, 118.

[5] Masani, 45,79.

A cardinal tenet of Zoroastrianism is that the created universe is a good universe, created by a good God, and that "the ultimate controlling will in the universe was simply good. . ."[1] It is tarnished not in its essential being, but in that it is threatened by Angra Mainyu and his demon-hordes. But despite the demonic onslaught, the universe is good in its intent, in its structure and order, and in its end, because it is within the sphere of the universe that evil will finally be laid to rest.

The universe is quite real; it is also good, and it is deadly serious. It is orderly, and time proceeds in a linear fashion to its appointed end. God, or Ahura Mazda, sits at the throne of creation and he does not intervene in history except insofar as he offers assistance through his spirit-entities to his ally, humanity, in the struggle against evil.

The order of the universe also entails an orderly view of the cosmos. In the geocentric Zoroastrian conception, there exists "the uppermost heaven, the gloomy abyss, and that which is between these two."[2] The

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[1] Ibid., 24. Zoroastrian "dualism" is distinct from Manichaeism in that, whereas Zoroastrianism teaches that humanity and creation are good by design, and evil is an irruption into or attack upon the inherently good universe, Manichaeism holds that the body and material creation are evil, and therefore to be abhorred, and only the spirit is good.

[2] Jackson, 117.

surface of the earth is divided into seven zones or circles, called Karshvars. The material order of the universe reflects the spiritual order of its creator.

3. What is the destiny of the universe?

This universe will have a definite end at an appointed time. It was created by Ahura Mazda as part of his plan to ensnare and defeat his evil arch-enemy Angra Mainyu. Guided by that purpose, the universe proceeds in its mission, as "the entire creation forges its way towards the goal of perfection. . ."[1] The Zoroastrian "regards the history of the material cosmos as a perpetual looking forward to the frashkart or final Rehabilitation at the end of time."[2] Zoroastrian eschatology is quite specific about the events occurring at the final dispensation.

> Beyond the hope of a future life for the individual there is the idea of a glorious consummation for the whole creation. The Gathas refer to a period when the present cycle of the world will be completed, the process of creation will cease, and the evolution of the Universe will have reached its destined goal. The world-process will then come to its final consummation as contemplated and ordained by Ahura Mazda at the dawn of creation. . . All the souls of the wicked will be brought out from hell and lustrated and purified at the termination of their sentence. The souls of the righteous too will rise. There thus will be brought about the Ristakhez, i.e., the Resurrection.[3]

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[1] Masani, 7.

[2] Zaehner, 74.

[3] Masani, 75.

During this time (at the end of the final three-thousand-year period of the universe's twelve-thousand-year duration), a savior (Saoshyant) will arise, bodies will be reunited with souls, an ordeal by molten metal will be endured, and in a final battle, evil will be defeated for all time. The evil spirit, Angra Mainyu, will not be destroyed in a literal sense, but rather driven underground, rendered powerless, "put out of action," or "deprived of actuality."[1]

With evil finally defeated, the universe will have accomplished its mission. With the end of time, there ensues a timeless and heavenly state of affairs, "like a huge reunion in which an ideal earthly life is restored. . ."[2] The world, time, and the universe as we have known them will have ended. "Thereafter, the world will enter upon a new cycle, free from all evil and misery, ever young, ever rejoicing, all souls enjoying a life of ineffable bliss and glory."[3]

C. Humanity (Anthropology)

1. What is humanity's relationship to the universe?

Humanity's role is closely tied to the overall mission of the universe and to Ahura Mazda's grand plan for the victory of good over evil.

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[1] Masani, 69; Zaehner, 19,58.

[2] Zaehner, 144.

[3] Masani, 75.

> Creation is for him a necessity in his fight with the Fiend, and man is in the forefront of the fray. . . Man's role in this world is to co-operate with nature on the natural plane. . . Such, then, is man's place in the universal order. . .[1]

In alliance with all of material creation, humanity conforms to the law, or order, of the universe, Asha Vahishta. "Man must obey this great law, for it is Asha that would lead him into the presence of Ahura Mazda."[2] Like the universe, humanity participates in the cosmic battle against evil. "The struggle within man's heart is merely a counterpart of the struggle which he encounters in the outer world."[3]

The first man created is Gayomart. From his seed issues forth the entire human race.[4] Gayomart's descendents, upon the revelation of the Religion (Zoroastrianism), are charged with the mission of leading Ahura Mazda's battle against Angra Mainyu. "Man is the instrument of his victory and through man's co-operation with God the Adversary is finally and utterly

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[1] Zaehner, 18-20.

[2] Masani, 79.

[3] *Ibid.*, 9.

[4] Jackson, 121. A later Zoroastrian text (the *Bundahishn*) tells of a Demon Whore who, in alliance with the Devil, corrupts Gayomart and seduces him. The Devil's victory is only partial, however, since the coupling makes the reproduction of the human species possible. (Zaehner, 42-45)

overthrown."[1] Thus humanity, in concert with the universe, effects Ahura Mazda's divine will.

2. What is the nature of the self?

The created self is both spiritual and material. The soul antedates the body, but is not eternal. Although body and soul separate at death, they reunite in the final Resurrection. "Man, then, belongs to God and to God is his return."[2]

The material self is composed of tanu, entire body; ast, the bones or frame; and gaya or ustana, vital energy or vitality. The spiritual faculties are daena, religion or revelation; urvan, soul; fravashi, spirit or Platonic archetype; ahu, conscience or reason; and baodas, consciousness, perception, memory. The spiritual faculties are supplemented by the attributes of khratu, knowledge; chisti, wisdom; ushi, intelligence; manas, mind; vachas, speech; shyaothna, action; and kama, free will.[3]

The doctrine of free will is a key tenet of Zoroastrian belief. It is in the nature of his created self that "man chooses between the principles of light and darkness, between truth and falsehood, between good

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[1] Zaehner, 56.

[2] Ibid., 17.

[3] Masani, 69-72; Jackson, 122-124.

and evil."[1] The individual was created by Ahura Mazda, and belongs to the spiritual kingdom.

> . . . but, created as a free agent, he has the right to choose. Upon that choice, however, his own salvation and his share in the ultimate triumph of good or evil in the world depend. Every good deed that man does increases the power of good; every evil act he commits augments the kingdom of evil. His weight thrown in either scale turns the beam of the balance in that direction. Hence, man ought to choose the good.[2]

The nature of the self, then, consists basically in the facts that it is real, it is spiritual and material, and it is free to choose between good and evil.

3. What are the highest possibilities of earthly life?

Just as the universe itself is moving towards the summit of perfection, "it is man's mission in this world to contribute towards the attainment of that goal."[3] Earthly life is "an interminable crusade against the forces of evil and imperfection," and it is "man's duty and highest mission on earth to rally to the banner of the King of Righteousness and to rout the forces of wickedness" in order to "purify, renovate, and restore to its pristine purity what is spoiled in creation by the Evil Spirit."[4] Since "God needs Man's help in his

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[1] Masani, 70-71.

[2] Jackson, 133.

[3] Masani, 8.

[4] *Ibid.*, 65-67.

battle,"[1] each individual must strive to become "a fellow-worker with God"[2] by treading the path of *Asha*, or righteousness.

> During this process social wrongs have to be adjusted; social justice has to be rendered; society as a whole has to be regenerated; the world has to be redeemed.[3]

By fulfilling the requirements of the Religion of the Good Life, human beings "have the opportunity of bettering their position and raising their dignity in this world and the next."[4] Only by vigorously joining the battle is humanity saved. "Redemption lies in co-operation with good and conflict with evil."[5] Such redemption, through participation in the conquest of evil, represents the highest possibility of life in this world. "Ultimate victory of righteousness over wickedness is thus the end of all earthly strife."[6]

4. *What are the hindrances in achieving these possibilities?*

If redemption lies in fighting the good fight against evil, then the greatest hindrances to achieving this end are found in the presence and activity of evil,

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[1] Zaehner, 18.

[2] Masani, 68.

[3] *Ibid.*, 65.

[4] *Ibid.*, 67.

[5] *Ibid.*, 68.

[6] *Ibid.*, 69.

and in any lack or lapse of humanity's steadfastness, will, and intelligence in fighting evil.

For the Zoroastrian, "the prime and inescapable fact of life is evil,"[1] despite, and contrary to, the inherent goodness of the created world.

> The pivotal problem of life is the problem of evil. . . There goes on within the heart of man a ceaseless conflict between the animal and the human, the diabolic and the divine.[2]

Ahura Mazda, in the form of his Holy Spirit, Spenta Mainyu, stands at one pole of the conflict.

> At the opposite pole stands *Angra Mainyu*, the Evil Spirit, who introduces discord and death in the world. The *daevas*, the offspring of the Evil Spirit, have chosen him as their lord; and he teaches them to mislead man through evil thought, evil word, or evil deed, and to lure him by his wiles to the path of wickedness.[3]

Angra Mainyu is the embodiment, cause, and instigator of evil. He is the unremitting enemy of the good, and as such, the chief hindrance to the reconciliation of humanity with Ahura Mazda. In short,

> . . . he is the opponent of God, the tempter of the Savior, the foe of mankind, the author of lies, a traitor and deceiver, the arch-fiend in command of hosts of demons, and the lord of the infernal regions and of the principalities of hell.[4]

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[1] Zaehner, 97.

[2] Masani, 8.

[3] *Ibid.*, 66.

[4] Jackson, 79.

His demonic helpmates, who battle remorselessly against Ahura Mazda's Bountiful Immortals, the *Amesha Spentas*, and his Adorable Ones, the *Yazatas*, are inspired especially by the *Druj*, the Lie, or Deceiver. This "host of demons, most of which are personified vices like concupiscence, anger, sloth, and heresy,"[1] assist Angra Mainyu in attempting to seduce humanity to the cause of evil. "All human evil is collectively summed up in the Avesta as the Druj, or lie."[2]

Despite the power of evil, humanity has the capacity to resist. "Man is endowed with reason and free will. If he brings evil on himself, it is because he yields to the Deceiving Principle within him."[3] It is by failing to exercise their God-given faculties that human beings are ruined by the forces of evil.

> Any lapse from the path of righteousness, any act of wrongdoing or carelessness, any neglect of goodness or lack of attention to the prescribed mode of living places man in the power of some demon or of some other evil force which constantly lurks ready to take possession of him and to destroy his body and soul.[4]

While Angra Mainyu provides the general context of the hindrance to redemption, the hindrance peculiar to each human being is his or her own susceptibility to sin.

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[1] Zaehner, 19.

[2] Masani, 53.

[3] *Ibid*., 67.

[4] Jackson, 108.

The greatest danger lies in not resisting the tempting guiles of Angra Mainyu, "for besides being the Destroyer, he is also the Deceiver, and his deception takes the form of persuading men that evil proceeds from God."[1] Given the Zoroastrian insistence on the goodness of Ahura Mazda, such misbelief constitutes the gravest offense. "Sin, then, when seen from this point of view, is sheer perversity: it is a failure to recognize who is your friend and who is your enemy."[2] This violates the very purpose for which humanity was created by Ahura Mazda.

> Sin, for the Zoroastrian, means the abandonment of man's true dignity which consists in his privileged position of being a front-line soldier freely fighting on the side of Ohrmazd against the wickedness of Ahriman, and enlisting on the side of the latter: it is treason.[3]

The individual, then, bears full responsibility for the commission of sin.[4] As a hindrance to redemption, infidelity to Ahura Mazda constitutes the most heinous transgression. Evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds of all manner hinder one's quest for redemption.

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[1] Zaehner, 133.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 125. Zaehner's references here to God and the Devil reflect the linguistic evolution from an early (Avestan) to a later (Pahlavi) Iranian language. The Avestan names "Ahura Mazda" and "Angra Mainyu," over the course of the centuries, became "Ohrmazd" and "Ahriman."

[4] Zoroastrianism of the Sasanian period, however, posits a "fall" of the human race due to the corruption of the first human couple, Mashye and Mashyane. (Zaehner, 67-74)

Some of the specific vices considered particularly reprehensible by Zoroastrianism include all forms of deceit (especially lying), robbery, theft, debt, physical lassitude, incontinence, sexual excesses, seduction, abortion, intemperance with alcohol, uncharitableness, and defilement of the elements (earth, fire, and water).[1] Vengefulness, calumny, and slander are likewise condemned, and (in anticipation of the "Good Taste" of modern Protentantism?) the religion of Zoroaster also casts opprobrium upon manifestations of ill-breeding and bad manners, such as talking with one's mouth full and being a bore to one's neighbors.[2]

5. How can these hindrances be overcome?

"Zoroastrianism is predominantly an ethical religion."[3] Angra Mainyu cannot be routed, evil cannot be defeated, Ahura Mazda cannot overcome, without a valiant moral effort on the part of humanity. Conversely, the individual cannot find redemption except in alliance with Ahura Mazda and his universal law of righteousness, Asha Vahishta. A stringent moral code is enjoined upon the individual in this struggle. "It is not enough that he should ignore or non-co-operate

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[1] Jackson, 135-137.

[2] Zaehner, 100-101,125.

[3] Ibid., 97.

with evil. He should abhor it whole-heartedly and fight it vigorously."[1] The individual's efforts in doing good and fighting evil will be decisive in the cosmic struggle and in each person's quest for redemption. "Thus Zoroastrian morality is expressed in the three words, humat, hūkht, and huvarsht--good thoughts, good words and good deeds, and the greatest of these is good deeds."[2]

The Religion of the Good Life, which "is preeminently the religion in which good deeds are held up as the best and the most acceptable offering to God,"[3] teaches that an exact account is kept of one's behavior:

> A strict watch over each man's actions was believed to be kept by the divinities. All good deeds were carefully recorded; all sinful acts were sternly set down. . . These actions were written in an account-book and were heaped up to be weighed in the balance at the time of the Individual Judgment.[4]

Zoroastrianism does not admonish one "merely to be good and eschew evil but to do good and resist evil, is its basic principle."[5] One can overcome the hindrances to redemption, but the burden of doing so is one's own.

> Man receives reward or punishment after death according to his deeds. There is none to intercede for him. No intercession will help him. No particular creed or belief in any set dogmas will save him from retribution. In short, no

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1 Masani, 9.

2 Zaehner, 97.

3 Masani, 8.

4 Jackson, 133-134.

5 Masani, 10.

> trace of vicarious salvation can be seen in the message of Zarathushtra. Man is his own saviour. He has the making of his own heaven or his own hell.[1]

In pursuing the cause of redemption, however, one is not expected to deviate from the norm of conventional life. Zoroaster did not preach personal privation.

> Asceticism is unknown; renunciation, monastic life, celibacy, mendicancy, fasts, and mortification of the flesh have no place in his philosophy of life.[2]

In all of Zoroaster's teaching,

> . . . we find the keynote is moderation. . . Here no counsels of perfection are to be found, no extreme of self-sacrifice, no commands to love one's enemy or to turn the other cheek. . . The emphasis is always on moderation and the avoidance of extremes. What is demanded . . . is common sense. . . Asceticism on the one hand and pure hedonism on the other are extremes and therefore to be avoided.[3]

If, through one's behavior, one sins against Ahura Mazda, the sins must be confessed and penance carried out. "Sins, in order to be pardoned, have to be confessed, and confession puts the soul once again in a state of grace, restores it to its natural state of friendship with God."[4]

Among the positive virtues and behaviors required of Zoroastrians for the redemption of their souls and the

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[1] _Ibid_., 72.

[2] _Ibid_., 9.

[3] Zaehner, 98-99.

[4] _Ibid_., 125.

overcoming of hindrances are truthfulness, righteousness, justice, chastity, industriousness, compassion, charity, service to others, the promotion of education, the cultivation of civic virtues, and the development of agricultural skills.[1] All behavior should be conducted with temperance, discretion, and restraint.[2] Finally, if humanity is to contribute to Ahura Mazda's victory over Angra Mainyu, human beings must be fruitful and multiply.

Prayer and ritual are also enjoined upon the Zoroastrian, in addition to virtue. Participation in the _Haoma_ rite and the fire rite are central in Zoroastrianism, as are the proper disposal of the dead (in the Towers of Silence) and respect for the integrity of the elements (fire, earth, and water). Certain forms of prayer, worship, and ceremonies of purification are obligated.[3]

The Zoroastrian prerequisite to redemption is not a dull and lifeless ethic, nor is it negative in its tone. The prescribed self-effort and positive behavior encourage an attitude of confidence. "This call to arms is accompanied by the cheerful and inspiring message that if man but does his duty, good will prevail at

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[1] Masani, 77-89.

[2] Jackson, 136.

[3] Masani, 89-110.

last."[1] In summarizing Zoroastrian ethics, R.C. Zaehner offers a synopsis which reveals the heart of that ethic:

> Live a good and useful life, be considerate to others, fulfill your religious duties, cultivate the land, rear a family and bring up your children to be literate and cultivated. Remember at the same time that this life is only a prelude to the next and that your soul will have to answer for the deeds you did on earth.[2]

6. What is the final and ultimate goal of human life?

"Through all the writings of Zoroastrianism runs a strain of hope that the good will be rewarded hereafter and the wicked punished. . ."[3] The hope of divine reward forms the basis of the final and ultimate goal of human life. Life has been lived in an attempt to fight against evil, in an endeavor to accumulate good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, in an effort to redeem the soul. Religion has been practiced

> . . . not in austerities, not in sacrifices and offerings to powers of evil, not in the cultivation of fugitive and cloistered virtue, but in the daily exercize of positive virtue and the diffusion of good deeds.[4]

In reward for a life well-lived, the Zoroastrian trusts, a better place in a better world will be meted out to the righteous. "He was but animal yesterday. He is

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[1] Ibid., 8.

[2] Zaehner, 101.

[3] Jackson, 143.

[4] Masani, 8.

man today. His destiny is to be an angel. . ."[1] The person who humbly and steadfastly follows the Religion of the Good Life believes that the "doctrine of reward and punishment in this life stretches onward into the next,"[2] and that divine justice will see "the righteous made happy, the unrighteous chastised and purified."[3]

The journey to judgment is vividly portrayed in Zoroastrian eschatology. After three days of hovering about the dead body, the soul is escorted to the _Chinvat_ (Judgment) Bridge by either a beauteous maiden or a hideous hag (depending on whether the soul's deeds in life were predominantly good or bad). A final accounting of deeds is taken by three of Ahura Mazda'a _Yazatas_. A favorable disposition leads to heaven, the place of Eternal Light. If the accounting of good and evil deeds is exactly balanced, the soul's destination is purgatory (_hamestagan_), where "the only pains suffered are those of heat and cold."[4] If the evil deeds have preponderated, though, the soul is cast "into a Hell of darkness so thick that it can be grasped by the hand."[5]

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1 _Ibid_., 8-9.

2 _Ibid_., 71.

3 _Ibid_.

4 Zaehner, 132.

5 Jackson, 147-148.

The Zoroastrian Hell is not a place of eternal damnation, however. It more resembles the Christian notion of Purgatory. Its purpose is to cleanse and purify the wicked, since "no good God could mete out eternal punishment to his creatures, however grave their sins, for this would be contrary both to his goodness and to his justice."[1]

A happy encounter with divine judgment, then, is the final and ultimate goal of human life which is within reach of every individual. The crowning stage of the soul's journey, however, takes place in the events which occur during the final dispensation, when all souls are resurrected, the ordeal of molten metal is endured, evil is defeated forever, and the universe is renovated for an eternity of bliss.[2] Here the journey concludes, and the God-appointed goal of life and creation is achieved, "for in the end all human souls, reunited with their bodies, return to Ohrmazd [Āhura Mazdā] who is their maker and their father."[3]

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[1] Zaehner, 139.

[2] See above, on the "destiny of the universe," 86-87.

[3] Zaehner, 133.

CHAPTER V

ADVAITA (NON-DUALIST) VEDANTA IN WACH'S MODEL

The "intellectual expression of religious experience" in Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta,[1] for the purpose of this chapter's work, will be selected from the following three texts: The System of the Vedânta by Paul Deussen,[2] Advaita Vedānta by Eliot Deutsch,[3] and Hinduism: Its Historical Development by Troy Wilson Organ.[4] The information about Advaita drawn from these texts will be utilized to answer Wach's "basic and eternal" questions.

Vedanta is one of the six orthodox *darshanas*, philosophical schools or viewpoints, in traditional Indian thought (along with Mimamsa, Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, and Vaisheshika). Of the four *margas*, or paths to

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[1] Hereinafter referred to, in the text, as Advaita.

[2] Paul Deussen, The System of the Vedânta, trans. by Charles Johnston, originally published in Chicago by the Open Court Publishing Company, 1912, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973.

[3] Eliot Deutsch, Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction, Honolulu: An East-West Center Book, The University Press of Hawaii, 1973.

[4] Troy Wilson Organ, Hinduism: Its Historical Development, Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1974.

liberation, it emphasizes jnana yoga, the discipline of knowledge, more than karma yoga, the mode of disinterested action, raja yoga, the ancient psychological path, or bhakti yoga, the way of love or devotion.

It is more than a philosophy, however, "Vedanta is primarily a religion. It is a philosophy only insofar as a philosophy is needed as a foundation for Vedantic religion."[1] Indeed, "Advaita Vedānta is more than a philosophical system . . . it is also a practical guide to spiritual experience, and is intimately bound up with spiritual experience."[2] More than in most cultures, philosophy and religion in India are intimately related, and the teaching of Vedanta reflects and illustrates that intimacy.

The Sanskrit texts which form the basis of Vedantic interpretation are the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras or Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana, and the Bhagavad-gita. The Upanishads are metaphysical speculations on the teachings of the earliest scriptures (the Vedas, Brahmanas, and Aranyakas), and they reflect a major movement in Indian thought "from plurality to unity, from objectivity to subjectivity, and from materiality to spirituality."[3] The Brahma Sutras are a pithy commentary

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[1] Organ, 266.

[2] Deutsch, 4.

[3] Organ, 102.

on the *Upanishads*, and the *Bhagavadgita*, perhaps the most universally loved of the Indian scriptures, is a section of the lengthy epic, the *Mahabharata*. For Vedantic thought, however, the *Bhagavadgita* is less important than the other two texts. Taken together, the three works are known as the *prasthanas* or foundations of systematic Vedanta, recognized as authoritative by all schools of Vedanta and considered the "three great supports" of the informed Hindu.[1]

The term "Vedanta" has been variously translated as "Dogmas of the Vedas," "Final Aim of the Vedas," and simply "The End of the Vedas."[2] The term reflects the historical position of the *Upanishads* as the last of the four categories of scriptures accepted as *shruti*, or revealed (i.e., the *Upanishads* were composed after the *Vedas*, the *Brahmanas*, and the *Aranyakas*),[3] and it recognizes the Upanishads as the culmination and distillation of the earlier Vedic literature and religion.

After Badarayana (whose life is dated anywhere from 500 B.C. to 450 A.D.), numerous lines of Vedantic reasoning developed but three schools of thought came to predominate. The three schools were associated with the

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[1] Organ, 156; Deutsch, 3.

[2] Deussen, 3.

[3] Hindu scriptures composed after the *Upanishads* are considered *smriti*, remembered, rather than *shruti*, revealed.

names of Shankara (ninth century), Ramanuja (eleventh century), and Madhva (thirteenth century), but the greatest historical influence was exerted by the school associated with the name of Shankara.

The differences between the schools reflect the several ways in which they conceived the relationship between the self and Ultimate Reality. Madhva's "Dualist" Vedanta asserts that individual souls are real and exist apart from the Absolute, or Brahman; souls which are saved will enter the presence of Brahman, but will not become one with him. Ramanuja's "Qualified Non-Dualist" Vedanta posits a diversity-within-unity, wherein individual souls enjoy a separate reality, but only by the grace of, and within the comprehensive unity of, Brahman. Salvation here implies communion, although not identity, with the Absolute. Shankara's "Non-Dualist" Vedanta, in contradistinction to the systems propounded by Madhva and Ramanuja, ascribes no reality to the self or the soul, except from the point of view of a lower, imperfect kind of knowledge. The only reality for Shankara is Brahman, undifferentiated, non-empirical, and indescribable.

"Shankara is probably the greatest intellectual India has produced. . ."[1] Although born a Brahmin, he broke with tradition by moving from the stage of

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[1] Organ, 242.

brahmacharya, student, to that of sunnyasa, wandering mendicant, omitting the intervening stages of grihasthya, householder, and vanaprasthya, hermit, thereby circumventing the customary progression through life's four stages, or ashramas. Although he died at the age of thirty-two, he was a prolific writer of scriptural commentaries, poems, prayers, and songs, and founded four monasteries in different parts of India.

In all his work, Shankara's aim was practical and religious. "Shankara did not seek philosophical wisdom in order to know; he sought it in order to be saved."[1] Building upon his efforts, Vedanta has continued to exercise a significant influence on thinkers throughout the centuries. During the nineteenth-century "renaissance" in Hinduism, for example, it was present in the work of Rammohan Roy, whose intent was "to revive monotheism in India on the basis of the Vedanta."[2] Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and Radhakrishnan, to name just a few other Indian thinkers and leaders of the modern period, were also inspired by, and in turn reinvigorated, Vedantic thought.

> It has been, and continues to be, the most widely accepted system of thought among philosophers in India, and it is, we believe,

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[1] Ibid., 243.

[2] Ibid., 342.

> one of the greatest philosophical achievements to be found in the East or the West.[1]

Following are the answers of Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta to Joachim Wach's "basic and eternal" questions, as derived from the works of Deussen, Deutsch, and Organ.[2]

A. Ultimate Reality (Theology)
What is the nature of Ultimate Reality? In particular,
1. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by pluralism or monism?

Advaita teaches that "reality is One."[3] Brahman is the name used to designate Ultimate Reality. Brahman is described as "the ontological principle of unity," "the existential substratum of all subjects and objects," and as "pure unqualified being."[4] It is considered "permanent, eternal, and infinite."[5] Ultimately, there is only "the timeless, unconditioned, undifferentiated oneness of being. The Real is . . . Brahman."[6]

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[1] Deutsch, 3.

[2] These three works represent differing and complementary approaches to the study of Advaita. Deussen offers a rich lode of primary source material from Badarayana and Shankara in translation, as well as a "Short Survey of the Vedânta System." Deutsch reconstructs Advaitic philosophy "as a response to a series of universal questions and problems. . ." (Preface) Organ's text provides an illuminating chapter on Vedanta in the context of the history of Indian religious thought.

[3] Organ, 256.

[4] Deutsch, 10.

[5] Organ, 264.

[6] Deutsch, 19.

Brahman is apprehended as _saccidananda_, which means "being, consciousness, and bliss." To know Brahman is to know all, since it is "the unitary principle of all being, the knowledge of which liberates one from finitude."[1] Indeed, "Brahman is that which when known, all else is known."[2] However, as transcendental being, Brahman is in essence unthinkable and indescribable. Characterizations and definitions are used not with the intention or expectation of delineating the nature of its reality, but merely "to direct the mind towards Brahman."[3] The most accurate description of Brahman, in the _via negativa_ of Advaita, is that it is _neti, neti_, "not this, not this." "Brahman is ultimately a name for the experience of the timeless plenitude of being."[4] Only in its being experienced can Ultimate Reality (Brahman, the One) be known; names, description, and characterization merely serve to point to its reality.

2. _Is Ultimate Reality characterized by personalism or impersonalism?_

The answer to this question is that Ultimate Reality is characterized by both personalism _and_ impersonalism, although on the highest level, Brahman--insofar

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[1] _Ibid._, 9,n.1.

[2] _Ibid._, 84.

[3] _Ibid._, 11.

[4] _Ibid._, 9.

as it can be characterized--will be seen as impersonal. This situation does not reflect a duality within Brahman itself, since Brahman is always and unwaveringly One, but rather it reflects the two kinds of knowledge which human beings are capable of acquiring and exercising.

The two forms of knowledge postulated by Advaita are _apara vidya_, false, imperfect knowledge, and _para vidya_, perfect, true knowledge, whose source is revelation.[1] From the point of view of perfect knowledge, or _para vidya_, Brahman is experienced in its transcendental reality.

> Brahman, the One, is a state of being. It is not a "He," a personal being; nor is it an "It," an impersonal concept. Brahman is that state which is when all subject/object distinctions are obliterated.[2]

That is, Brahman is not a person, but it is also not _merely_ an impersonal concept. As unthinkable and indefineable reality, Brahman can only be experienced, and then only in the light of perfect knowledge, or _para vidya_.

Since human beings are finite and imperfect, however, it is from the perspective of _apara vidya_ that Brahman is generally approached, necessitating a more accessible (i.e., personal) notion of Brahman. The resultant is a twofold Advaitic conception of Ultimate Reality as _Nirguna_ Brahman and _Saguna_ Brahman.

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[1] Deussen, 454.

[2] Deutsch, 9.

> Nirguṇa Brahman--Brahman without qualities--is just that transcendent indeterminate state of being about which ultimately nothing can be affirmed. Saguṇa Brahman--Brahman with qualities --is Brahman as interpreted and affirmed by the mind from its necessarily limited standpoint; it is that about which something can be said. And it is also a kind of spiritual experience.[1]

Nirguna Brahman is without attributes, differences, forms, and limitations, whereas these are present in Saguna Brahman.[2] Nirguna Brahman obliterates all distinctions, is "a state of mental-spiritual enlightenment," "an objectification of spiritual experience without distinction or determination," and represents "the 'content' of an intuitive experience of identity." On the other hand, Saguna Brahman integrates and harmonizes distinctions, is "a state of vital loving awareness," "an objectification of determinate spiritual experience," and represents "the 'content' of a loving experience of unity."[3]

As Nirguna Brahman--Brahman without qualities--Ultimate Reality is directly intuited. However, as Saguna Brahman--Brahman with qualities--Ultimate Reality is known in the form of a personal god, Ishwara.[4] Ishwara is a creator god by whose grace the universe and

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[1] Ibid., 12.

[2] Deussen, 456.

[3] Deutsch, 13-14.

[4] Deussen, 459.

the knowledge of salvation come into existence. He is also the exactor of justice.

> He decrees for the soul its works and sufferings, taking into consideration in this the works of the previous life, and causing the fate in the new life to proceed from them as the rain produces the plant from the seed after its nature.[1]

As a personal god, Ishwara "is a proper object of devotion and, when realized in experience, is a state of loving bliss."[2] He is real, but his reality is contingent, and dissolves into the higher, impersonal unity of Nirguna Brahman when the individual who has experienced him graduates from imperfect to perfect knowledge, from apara vidya to para vidya.[3] Advaitic Ultimate Reality, then, is seen as personal from the point of view of the lower knowledge, but impersonal when experienced in the light of the higher knowledge.

3. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by distance or nearness?

In Advaita, Ultimate Reality is characterized by nearness, or more precisely, identity with the self. The only distance between the self and Ultimate Reality is the supposed distance imagined by one whose point of view is apara vidya, imperfect knowledge. Between Ultimate Reality, or Brahman, and the self, no differences

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Deutsch, 12-13,n.7.

[3] Deussen, 459.

obtain. "Brahman is a state of being wherein all distinctions between self, world, and God are transcended and obliterated."[1] To find Brahman, one looks within one's self. Brahman is not discerned in the world outside or apart from the self.

> He is however beheld by the sages in the state of Saṃrâdhanam (perfect satisfaction), which consists in a withdrawal of the organs from all external things, and a concentration on their own inner nature.[2]

Cutting through the dense fog of imperfect knowledge, of form and distinction, of supposed distance, one finds that the "innermost self is identical with Brahman."[3]

The name given to this "innermost self" in Advaita is the Atman, and the relationship between the Atman and Brahman is summed up in the equation: Atman is Brahman.

> . . . this means that Brahman, i.e., the eternal principle of all Being, the power which creates, sustains, and again absorbs into itself all worlds, is identical with the Atman, the Self or the Soul, i.e., that in us which we recognize, when we see things rightly, as our very self and true essence.[4]

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[1] Deutsch, 27.

[2] Deussen, 457.

[3] Organ, 268.

[4] Deussen, 453.

B. Universe (Cosmology)

1. What is the origin of the universe?

In Advaita, cosmology is a complex topic, but it is considered to be of secondary importance in the spiritual life of human beings. Advaita "wishes to teach that a man can be set free rather than how the world came into being or what is the nature of the world."[1] The topic has significance only from the perspective of lower knowledge, for "creation is a question and a problem only from the standpoint of rational-empirical consciousness, from the standpoint of Appearance within which philosophizing takes place."[2] Like characterizations of Brahman, theories of cosmology in Advaita serve only to point one in the direction of Ultimate Reality.

Brahman is the ground and locus of the world, and, as such, is "both efficient and material cause of the world."[3] The unitary nature of Brahman pervades Advaitic cosmology in that "the whole world is in reality only Brahman and has no existence beyond Brahman. . ."[4] The Oneness of Brahman is maintained throughout, for "by creation is only meant the identity . . . of the world

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[1] Organ, 244.

[2] Deutsch, 30.

[3] Organ, 257.

[4] Deussen, 465.

and Brahman; the world is the effect, Brahman is the cause; and effect and cause are identical. . ."[1]

But in the creation, the workings of the lower or imperfect knowledge, _apara vidya_ (as opposed to the higher or perfect knowledge, _para vidya_) are evident, for creation and the "content" of creation exist only from the point of view of _apara vidya_. In reality, nothing is created; there is no _real_ effect deriving from the cause. That there seems to be is a product of imperfect knowledge. The _Vivartavada_ (doctrine of appearance) theory of Advaita holds that "the effect is only an apparent manifestation of the cause."[2] Due to our imperfect knowledge, we lose sight of the sole reality of Brahman. "The cause alone is real; the effect is illusory."[3] There appears to be a modification or transformation of Brahman into the world, but the transformation is false, the product of our inferior knowledge. What seems to appear as the world, or effect, is a superimposition, _adhyasa_, of our faulty imaginings onto the primal reality, or cause. Creation is only apparent change. "That which is One cannot in reality become Many, it can only appear to be Many--and this through

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[1] _Ibid._, 467.

[2] Organ, 258.

[3] _Ibid._

superimposition grounded in our ignorance."[1] Thus the world of name-and-form, _nama-rupa_, comes into being.

Brahman "creates" the world as a magician "creates" his magic, without being bound by his magic. First, Brahman creates ether, or space-matter, then air, fire, water, earth: "in this process each successive element is produced not by the elements themselves but by Brahman in the form of the elements."[2] Then Brahman enters into the elements as individual souls, assuming divine, human, animal or plant bodies. Periodically, Brahman reabsorbs and then re-creates the world anew.

As creator of the world (when seen from the point of view of _apara vidya_, lower knowledge), Brahman is acting as the personal god, Ishwara. Ishwara "creates (sustains and destroys) worlds out of the sheer joy of doing so . . . his creative act is simply a release of energy for its own sake."[3] Ishwara creates for _lila_, play or sport, and the world is "the product of Ishwara's joyful spontaneous expression of power."[4]

However, once one ascends in knowledge from _apara vidya_ to _para vidya_, the appearance of the world dissolves,

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[1] Deutsch, 40.

[2] Deussen, 463.

[3] Deutsch, 38-39.

[4] Organ, 265.

and the Oneness of reality comes into view. The illusion of the manifest world "is a creative power until one realizes the truth of the sole reality of Brahman."[1] This view of creation, grounded as it is in lila and apara vidya, maintains the Oneness of Ultimate Reality. "It insures the non-dual character of Brahman and, although it does not actually explain the world in terms of the world, it shows how it makes its appearance in experience."[2] Its primary intent, in all, is not so much to answer the questions about the origin of the world, but rather "to lead the mind beyond the level of asking the questions to the level of seeing the answers."[3]

2. What kind of order pervades the universe?

The structure and order of the universe proceed from Brahman, which is the ground, cause, and creator of the universe. Advaita identifies

> . . . Brahman as . . . the light beyond the sky and in the heart . . . the life from which go forth all beings . . . in which the whole trembling world moves . . . the inner ruler . . . the principle of the world-order . . . the bridge, which holds these worlds asunder that they do not blend . . . by which sun and moon, heaven and earth, minutes, hours, days and years are kept apart . . . finally as destroyer of the world, who swallows up all created things. . .[4]

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[1] Deutsch, 30.

[2] Ibid., 45.

[3] Ibid., 30.

[4] Deussen, 458.

In Advaita, Brahman constitutes the order of the universe, much as Rita personified the cosmic law in the ancient Vedic religion.

Again, however, the phenomenal universe appears to the individual only from the point of view of the lower knowledge of apara vidya, or avidya.[1] The manifest content of the phenomenal world, when seen from the standpoint of avidya is designated maya, or illusion. "Maya as the ontological negative principle is coupled with avidya as the principle of ignorance."[2] The two terms represent different, but equally illusory, ways of describing reality. "Epistemologically, māyā is ignorance (avidyā)."[3]

Everything that "exists" within the world of nama-rupa, name-and-form, i.e., the phenomenal world, is maya. "The physical world and its effects, the gods, and the jivas /individual souls/ are the entities within the 'world' of maya."[4] All sense-impressions of the universe are maya.

> All attachments, aversions, fears, dreams, and semi-dreams are touched with māyā. All

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[1] Apara vidya and para vidya are the terms generally used in relation to knowledge of Brahman; avidya and vidya generally refer to knowledge of the self and the world. Since in reality Brahman is all, apara vidya and avidya are used interchangeably, as are para vidya and vidya.

[2] Organ, 261.

[3] Deutsch, 30.

[4] Organ, 264.

> memories, cognitions, percepts, and logics are grounded in _māyā_. _Māyā_ is whenever we fail to realize the oneness of the Real.[1]

Time, thought, and language cannot comprehend _maya_, because they are only distinctions within, and subject to, _maya_, having no reality on their own terms.

> The world cannot be explained in itself, for the mind that would explain it is part of, and is conditioned by, that which is to be explained. . . The ultimate "why" of the world cannot then be grasped.[2]

Nor, since the world is only a product of _maya_, can we expect an entry of Brahman, even in the form of the personal god Ishwara, into history, for history itself is _maya_. "In sum: for Advaita Vedānta, the creation or evolution of the world, as indeed the status of the world itself, is only an apparent truth."[3]

Does that mean then that the structure and order of the universe hold no reality whatsoever? The phenomenal world, to be sure, is _maya_. "But it is not on that account merely a figment of one's imagination."[4] The world of _maya_ is real and of value insofar as it points one to the higher knowledge of Ultimate Reality. "The world is--and ought to be--_maya_ for the enlightened man when considering the world from the point of view of

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[1] Deutsch, 29.

[2] _Ibid_., 42-43.

[3] _Ibid_., 40-41.

[4] _Ibid_., 31.

para vidya."[1] While in the world, we should regard the world as real. Indeed, "the world is an illusion only on the basis of an experience of the Absolute. The world cannot be an illusion to one who lacks that experience."[2] Advaita admonishes us merely "to keep in mind the conditions under which the world and other selves are perceived. . ."[3] Upon attainment of para vidya, the world will be seen as neither good nor bad, neither the lila, or sport, of Ishwara, nor serious, neither cyclical nor linear in time. All the world of maya will dissolve into the timeless, infinite Oneness of Brahman.

3. What is the destiny of the universe?

In a literal sense, the universe has no destiny because it has no ultimate being. The world was created by Brahman, in the person of Ishwara, as a "free whimsical activity with no end in view. . . No telic factor is involved."[4] Ishwara's creativity answers to no compelling need.

> Creation is not informed by any selfish motive. . . No moral consequences attach to the creator in his activity. . . It is simply the Divine's nature to create just as it is man's nature to breathe in and out. . . Līlā thus removes all motive, purpose,

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[1] Organ, 263.

[2] Deutsch, 32,n.11.

[3] Organ, 265.

[4] Ibid.

> and responsibility from Īśvara /Īshwara/ in his creative activity.[1]

If, however, the world of _maya_, this universe, has no destiny in ultimate terms, it nevertheless contains significance for individuals struggling in the limited light of _apara vidya_. Advaita is "not arguing that the world is of no value, for the world of _maya_ is always the _maya_ of Brahman."[2] On the contrary, it encourages us "to recognize that the characteristics that the world and other selves have are the characteristics Reality must have in order for it to be experienced by sense organs and minds."[3] When we move up to _para vidya_ and see the world for the _maya_ that it is, "the empirical world of multiplicity, according to the Advaitin, disappears from consciousness upon the attainment of the 'oneness' that is Brahman."[4] Experientially, we find that, in the creation and maintenance of the universe, "Brahman undergoes false transformation not for the sake of existence but for the sake of values."[5]

In the final analysis, the Advaitic conception of the universe is not so much a cosmology as an axiology, for "the real goal of existence is value."[6]

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[1] Deutsch, 39.

[2] Organ, 365.

[3] _Ibid._, 265-266.

[4] Deutsch, 34.

[5] Organ, 260.

[6] _Ibid._

C. Humanity (Anthropology)

1. What is humanity's relationship to the universe?

As long as one labors under the illusion of avidya, or apara vidya, one is subject to the universal law of karma, which results in samsara. Karma is the principle of causality operating in the moral realm. It determines whether and how one will be reborn on the basis of one's moral action.

> Very good works result in existence as a god; very bad in existence as an animal or plant; even if the soul does no works in these lives, this does not protect it from rebirth, for works of special goodness or badness demand for their retribution several successive existences.[1]

Samsara is the principle of the transmigration of souls. These two principles define humanity's primary relationship to the universe. The workings of karma and samsara are carefully watched over and executed by Ishwara as creator of the universe.

According to Advaita, karma and samsara have been the operating principles of the universe because "man's existential situation was one of bondage."[2] As long as humanity walked in the darkness of the lower knowledge, it could not be free. But the phenomenal universe, with its laws, could be transcended. "Bondage is not man's real situation. Bondage is maya; bondage is part of the apara view of things."[3] While one is in

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[1] Deussen, 462.

[2] Organ, 266.

[3] Ibid.

the *maya* universe, one has to conduct oneself accordingly, as illustrated by the story about the man who was confused and indignant about being thrown into a ditch by a *maya* elephant. When he demanded an explanation from a teacher, "he was told that the next time he met a *maya* elephant he better get his *maya* body out of the way."[1]

In Advaita, humanity's relationship to the universe is always seen as conditioned by the point of view of the perceiver's kind of knowledge.

> The whole extension of names and forms. . . , the whole plurality of phenomena . . . is, from the standpoint of highest reality, caused, produced, and laid as a burden /upon the soul/ by Ignorance . . . , which is refuted by perfect knowledge.[2]

Humanity must relate to the universe in its discrete and multiform phenomenal appearance, but "the metaphysical doctrine of the identity of Brahman and the world is always in the foreground"[3] of any consideration of the status of the universe. Upon attainment of *para vidya*, the *maya* universe dissolves. "For Advaita, 'oneness' holds only on the level of Brahman-experience and must never be confounded with the world of multiplicity (the world of *nāma-rūpa*--names and forms)."[4]

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[1] *Ibid*., 262.

[2] Deussen, 466.

[3] *Ibid*., 460.

[4] Deutsch, 95.

2. What is the nature of the self?

In considering the nature of the self, the differing perspectives of para vidya (or vidya) and apara vidya (or avidya) must once again be taken into account. From the standpoint of the higher knowledge, the self is Atman.

> Ātman (or paramātman, the highest Self), for Advaita Vedānta is that pure, undifferentiated, self-shining consciousness, timeless, spaceless, and unthinkable, that is not-different from Brahman and that underlies and supports the individual human person.[1]

This Atman is the real Self, or Soul, and "like Brahman the Soul is essentially pure spirituality,"[2] unrelated to the phenomenal world. At the same time, it is "not a part, an emanation of Brahman, but wholly and absolutely the eternal, indivisible Brahman Himself."[3] While not identified with the phenomenal self, Atman is

> . . . the Reality which substantiates mental and spiritual states such as thinking, remembering, imagining, willing, feeling, valuing, etc. . . The Atman is the transcendental ground of experience which under the conditions of causality, time, and space--which Advaitins often denote as nama-rupa--appears as existent jivas.[4]

In a sense, Brahman is Reality as viewed from an objective perspective, while "it is correct to identify the

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[1] Ibid., 48.

[2] Deussen, 468.

[3] Ibid., 453.

[4] Organ, 252-254.

Atman as Reality comprehended subjectively, the highest Self, the Paramatman."[1]

From the standpoint, however, of the lower knowledge, apara vidya or avidya, the self is known as the jiva, which is the transmigrating entity. "This individual self is that which distinguishes one person from another. . . It is finite, separate, and temporal. It is the phenomenal self of the individual living being."[2] Gods, human beings, demons, animals, plants, and even inanimate objects have jivas. The jiva is both real and not real.

> The individual human person, the jīva, is a combination of reality and appearance. It is "reality" so far as Ātman is its ground; it is "appearance" as far as it is identified as finite, conditioned, relative.[3]

The jiva is distinguished from the Atman by the upadhis, or limitations of the jiva. The upadhis are composed of the following: manas, the mind; buddhi, the wisdom intellect; aham-kara, the egoizing intellect; chitta, the universalizing intellect; the indriyas, which include the five faculties of perception (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), and the five faculties of action (grasping, moving, speaking, procreating, and evacuating); the mukhya prana, the five vital breaths (inhalation, exhalation, suspension, digestion, and soul-termination);

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[1] Ibid., 255.

[2] Ibid., 251.

[3] Deutsch, 51.

the karya-karana-sanghata, gross body or constitutive elements; the sukshmam cariram, subtle body or ethereal substance; and karma-acaya, works or deeds collected during life.[1] Of these upadhis, the gross body resolves back into the natural elements at death, but the others accompany the jiva in its transmigrations.

As with its cosmology, the Advaitic analysis of the nature of the self contains a value-intention.

> Although the physiology here is no doubt crude, representing, as it does, only the most basic awareness of the nature of vitality, the analysis does point to a furthering of self-awareness in the direction of the true Self and to the kind of mis-self-identification that we make.[2]

The jiva experiences four states of consciousness: the waking state, the dream state, the deep sleep state, and a state of transcendental consciousness.

> The waking and dream states . . . correspond to the phenomenal world of gross and subtle bodies . . . ; the state of deep sleep . . . to the qualified Brahman (saguṇa) or the Divine (Īśvara); and transcendental consciousness . . . to nirguṇa Brahman or Reality.[3]

These states reflect the different phases of the jiva on its journey to realizing the Atman within. The jiva itself is not immortal; "it is condemned to 'existence,' to phenomenal reality, until it realizes Ātman."[4]

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[1] Deussen, 468-471; Organ, 248.

[2] Deutsch, 59.

[3] Ibid., 63.

[4] Ibid., 59.

Beneath the _upadhis_ lies the transcendent Atman. "The Atman is the _jiva_ with _upadhis_ removed; or, to state this conversely, the _jiva_ is the Atman hidden by _avidya_ (false knowledge, nonknowledge, or ignorance)."[1] Although the _jiva_ is subject to transmigration, no trace of _karma_ attaches to the Atman.

> The existential status of the individual human person, whether as a reflection of Ātman or as a limitation of Ātman, is one of qualified reality; its essential status is that of unqualified reality, of identity with the Absolute.[2]

In Advaita, the rational demonstration of the nature of the self is not intended to delineate the nature of Ultimate Reality. Its purpose is not to comprehend the Atman-Brahman identity, but "to orient the mind towards it and to prepare the mind to accept it as a fact of experience."[3]

3. _What are the highest possibilities of earthly life?_

"The central concern of Advaita Vedānta is to establish the oneness of Reality and to lead the human being to a realization of it."[4] The overriding aim of the individual in the course of earthly life is "to attain and to promote the highest state of spiritual

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[1] Organ, 252.

[2] Deutsch, 54.

[3] _Ibid._, 50.

[4] _Ibid._, 47.

evolution."[1] The attainment of the higher knowledge, para vidya, is central to this effort, for "the final goal of knowledge, namely, spiritual intuitive insight, once attained, relegates all other forms and types of knowledge to a lower knowledge,"[2] which is seen to block the door to the realization of Reality.

The goal which constitutes the highest possibility of earthly life is the experience of the identity of the individual Self (Atman) with Brahman.

> Brahman is affirmed by the Advaitin as that fullness of being which enlightens and is joy . . . the experience, which is enduring for one who attains it, is the goal of human life.[3]

When one has seen maya, the upadhis, and avidya for the illusions that they are, one has learned to regard "the understanding of Brahman as the highest end of man."[4] Brahman is all being, all experience, all knowledge. "In other words, when Brahman is realized, nothing else needs to be known."[5] The realization of the identity of Brahman and Atman is the actualization of the "fundamental thought of the Vedanta, most briefly expressed by the Vedic words:

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[1] Organ, 266.

[2] Deutsch, 83.

[3] Ibid., 10.

[4] Organ, 260.

[5] Deutsch, 84.

tat tvam asi 'that art thou' . . . and aham Brahma asmi, 'I am Brahman' . . ."[1]

Good works, moral purification, theoretical understanding and divine grace, while beneficial, are not among the highest possibilities of earthly life, for all of these are rooted in the maya world.

> Therefore, liberation cannot consist in a process either of becoming or of doing something but only in the knowledge of something, already present, that is hidden by Ignorance. . .[2]

This knowledge is attainable by the individual not in the waking, dream, or deep sleep states of consciousness, but only in the fourth, turiya, state, of transcendental consciousness. Herein one realizes the state of being called nirvikalpa samadhi, which is

> . . . the experience of pure spiritual identity; the experience wherein the separation of self and non-self, of ego and world, is transcended, and pure oneness alone remains. This is the experience celebrated by the Advaitin as one of perfect insight, bliss and power; as one of infinite joy and understanding.[3]

Upon the attainment of the experience of pure spiritual identity with Brahman, one achieves the goal of moksha, or liberation from the bondage of karma and the necessity of samsara. "After the Brahmanhood of the

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[1] Deussen, 453.

[2] Ibid., 474-475.

[3] Deutsch, 18.

soul is recognized liberation follows at once. . ."[1] The implication of moksha is the complete and absolute freedom of the spirit from all prior restraints and limitations. "Spiritual freedom means the full realization of the potentialities of man as a spiritual being. It means the attaining of insight into oneself; it means self-knowledge and joy of being."[2]

In accordance with "the doctrine of jivanmukti, i.e., liberation while in the flesh,"[3] Advaita teaches that moksha is realizable in earthly life. The living person who has achieved moksha has attained the highest possibility of life.

> To the jīvanmukta, to the man who is free while living, Brahman is everywhere seen. Moksha or mukti, freedom or liberation, . . . is just this power of being and seeing that excludes nothing, that includes everything. Brahman is One. Everything has its being in Spirit: everything, in its true being, is Brahman.[4]

4. What are the hindrances in achieving these possibilities?

The fundamental obstacle to the achievement of moksha, the highest possibility of earthly life, is the failure to see the identity that obtains between the self and Brahman. Rather than seeing this identity, we

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[1] Deussen, 475.

[2] Deutsch, 104.

[3] Organ, 268.

[4] Deutsch, 110.

view ourselves as discrete, autonomous, individual selves, as _jivas_.

> Phenomenally, as _jīvas_, as individual conscious beings, we are _multi_-personalities. We become the roles and functions that we perform; we become the kinds of persons we conceive ourselves to be; we become the many identifications we form of aspects of our self. . . This, according to Advaita Vedānta, is the process through which we come to believe in the independent reality of the individual self and, consequently, to deny the reality of the Self.[1]

As a _jiva_, the Self loses sight of its essentially transcendent nature; that is, "the Self is unable to distinguish itself from the _Upâdhis_ or limitations (i.e., the body, the psychic organs and works) with which the Soul is clad. . ."[2] Owing to our _upadhis_, or limitations, we project (through _adhyasa_, superimposition) onto Ultimate Reality the illusory qualities we think to exist. In our ignorance, we fail "to overcome the error of superimposition and to see reality as an integrated whole."[3]

This failure to see reality as it is gives rise to _maya_, which is the illusory "content" of our projection, or superimposition. "_Maya_ denotes both the 'activity' and the 'effects' of Nirguna Brahman because they are neither acts nor effects."[4] The things of the

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[1] _Ibid_., 64.

[2] Deussen, 454.

[3] Organ, 247.

[4] _Ibid_., 261.

world of <u>nama-rupa</u>, name-and-form, i.e., the "appearances" of <u>maya</u>, have a contingent and transitory existence. "They are, like the figures in a dream, true . . . so long as the dream lasts, and are so no longer when awakening . . . comes."[1] In this <u>maya</u> world of appearance, we remain attached to illusion through involvement with the three <u>gunas</u>, or constitutive aspects of <u>maya</u>. The <u>gunas</u> are <u>rajas</u>, activity or pain; <u>tamas</u>, resistance or delusion; and <u>sattva</u>, order or pleasure.[2] The shifting interrelationships of the <u>gunas</u> within the individual tends to keep him or her enmeshed in the web of <u>maya</u>.

Good works and self-purification do not guarantee liberation, but their lack can be a hindrance. Indeed, "morality is helpful to enlightenment; he who acts otherwise is doomed to <u>saṁsāra</u>."[3] <u>Samsara</u>, or transmigration, in accordance with the working-out of one's <u>karma</u>, is the fate of the <u>jiva</u>, or individual, who has not reached the fourth state of consciousness, namely, transcendental consciousness.

> In the waking-dream state the self is caught up with objects, external and internal, and loses sight of its true nature as pure "subject." In deep-sleep consciousness the self is free from objects but has not yet transcended itself.[4]

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[1] Deussen, 467.

[2] Organ, 219.

[3] Deutsch, 78.

[4] <u>Ibid</u>., 64.

For Advaita, the root cause of humanity's subjection to the world of maya, and thus the foremost hindrance to the achievement of the highest possibility of earthly life, is the failure to see the Atman-Brahman identity because of our reliance on the lower form of knowledge, apara vidya, or avidya.

> The apara kind of knowledge is that which utilizes the upadhis, i.e., the limiting conditions of the intellect which include the use of the discursive mind (manas), the five senses, and the five organs of action of the body.[1]

Reliance upon apara vidya, or avidya, hinders one from seeing the Oneness of reality. "Avidyā binds one to a limited order of phenomenal experience,"[2] and imprisons one in the confines of the world of maya.

Advaita identifies incorrect understanding as the chief impediment to enlightenment and liberation. The presumptuousness of rational thought is especially castigated. This is a recurrent theme in Indian religious philosophy, throughout which "the Hindus, and particularly the Vedantists, are inclined to the view that the human mind is an intruder on Reality and has no authority for dictating the conditions of existence."[3] This is a hindrance, but the statement of the hindrance also implies a cure. Advaita teaches "that the deplorable condition

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[1] Organ, 245.

[2] Deutsch, 90.

[3] Organ, 266.

of man is due to a gross misunderstanding of value and reality, and that through correct understanding man can find the highest values."[1]

5. How can these hindrances be overcome?

The overcoming of the hindrances to moksha "is brought about by man's own Self (âtman) being recognized as identical with the highest Self (parama-âtman), i.e., the Brahman."[2] Liberation is unattainable without such recognition, for "this self-knowledge is a 'saving' knowledge; it enables the knower to overcome all pain, misery, ignorance, and bondage."[3] The "saving" knowledge, however, is not of a conceptual or theoretical nature. "There must be an illuminating awareness of identity, an experience which is not the result of discursive knowing but one which can even be described as mystical."[4]

One must arrive at the point of knowing that the jiva is not the true Self, that the jiva's limitations (the upadhis) cause adhyasa (superimposition of illusory qualities onto the ground of Reality) thereby giving rise to maya, the phenomenal content of the world of name-and-form or nama-rupa. Such insight regarding the true

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[1] Ibid., 247.

[2] Deussen, 455.

[3] Deutsch, 47.

[4] Organ, 268.

nature of the self and the universe requires a movement from imperfect knowledge, apara vidya or avidya, to perfect knowledge, para vidya or vidya.

Because of the nature of human ignorance, no external assistance is available, or even possible. "Man's state of lostness is a self-creation, not the curse of gods or the result of destiny."[1] Indeed, "in the lower knowledge, which contrasts the Âtman to ourselves and worships him as a personal God, knowledge appears as dependent on the grace of God."[2] However, it has been seen that this personal God is himself only a product of maya and therefore unavailing.

> Since bondage is a self-creation, then liberation is also a self-creation. The doctrine of divine grace was therefore rejected. A god cannot do for a person what he must do for himself.[3]

In the quest for liberation, the individual's own effort and resources are the sole determinants.

In the pursuit of this quest, as Advaita teaches, intellectual knowledge and ethical values and behavior can be of some assistance, but they are not to be considered ends in themselves. The six acceptable pramanas, or means of valid knowledge, are pratyaksa, perception; upamana, comparison; anupalabdhi, non-cognition;

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[1] Ibid., 267.

[2] Deussen, 475.

[3] Organ, 267.

anumana, inference; arthapatti, postulation; and sabda, testimony.[1] "The pramāṇas . . . are justified as valid means of knowledge as long as they do not have any pretensions to finality or ultimacy."[2]

Until one has achieved liberation, one is responsible for one's moral actions.

> The most basic criterion for moral judgment recommended by Advaita is that those acts, desires, and thoughts that lead the moral agent to the highest good, namely, self-realization, are "good" and those that lead him towards the fulfillment of egoistic desire, so far as they prevent self-realization, are "bad". . . The end does justify the means, provided that the end is the highest value, the summum bonum, self-realization.[3]

Positive ethical behavior is considered auxiliary to the central task. "Moral virtues, such as compassion, charity, self-control, and non-injury, may be supports for the attainment of the spiritual end, although they are not the ends themselves."[4] Knowing that the other is not different from oneself and that, like oneself, the other participates in Brahmanhood, one conducts one's behavior accordingly. "The quality then that ought to inform human action is non-egoism which, positively expressed, is what the Advaitin understands to be 'love.'"[5]

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[1] Deutsch, 69.

[2] Ibid., 83.

[3] Ibid., 100-101.

[4] Ibid., 102.

[5] Ibid.

The individual who has not yet attained liberation is expected to abide by the conventional norms of social conduct which have proven to be beneficial to the structure of society and the welfare of the individual. One of these norms of conduct involves fulfillment of the four goals of life, the *chaturvarga*. These goals are comprised of *kama*, hedonic satisfaction; *artha*, material possessions; *dharma*, duty and obligation; and *moksha*, liberation.[1] Prior to liberation, the regular progression through life's four stages, or *ashramas*,[2] was expected to be followed, as was devotion to one of the four *margas*,[3] or paths that lead to liberation. Whereas, for Advaita, the other norms of social conduct are considered to have "only a possible instrumental value for one who is seeking freedom,"[4] the way of *jnana yoga* represents the surest, most efficacious path to enlightenment.

Before embarking on the path of *jnana yoga*, four qualifications or requirements are demanded of the aspirant. They are: (1) discrimination between the real and the non-real, the timeless and the time-bound, the spiritual and the superficial; (2) renunciation of

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[1] Organ, 195.

[2] See above, 105-106.

[3] See above, 102-103.

[4] Deutsch, 100,n.1.

sensuous pleasures, petty desires, and the need for reward; (3) the acquisition of "the six means": mental tranquility, self-control, dispassion, endurance, intentness of mind, and faith; and (4) a longing for freedom and wisdom.[1] Having fulfilled these requirements, the aspirant proceeds through the three stages of *jnana yoga*, which are "hearing" (listening to the sages and studying the Advaitic texts), "thinking" (reflecting on the meaning and end of enlightenment), and "constant meditation" (concentration on the identity of Atman and Brahman).[2]

It is in the last stage of *jnana yoga* that *moksha*, freedom or liberation, is achieved. This stage is correlative with the fourth goal of life (*moksha*), with the fourth period of life (*sannyasa*), and with the fourth state of consciousness (*turiya*). Although the stages are delineated sequentially, the experience is available at every turn to the devoted aspirant. "*Moksha* is whenever the individual is ready for it."[3] The attainment of *moksha* is the complete overcoming of the hindrances to the achievement of the highest possibility of life, namely, the realization of the identity of Atman and Brahman.

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[1] Deutsch, 105; Deussen, 475.

[2] Deutsch, 106-110.

[3] Organ, 268.

6. What is the final and ultimate goal of human life?

"The aim of man . . . is liberation (moksha); i.e., the cessation of transmigration (saṃsâra). . ."[1] Release from the endless cycle of birth-death-rebirth is what leads to the final and ultimate goal of human life. Such release is the reward of the one who has attained moksha while living.

For the individual who dies without having achieved liberation, however, another round of samsara ensues: "the individual soul with the Upâdhis, which cause its individuality, has existed from all eternity and migrates (except in the case of liberation) from one body to another to all eternity. . ."[2] The duration and quality of one's life have been apportioned in accordance with the works to be atoned for from this and previous existences. Unless moksha has been attained, the soul sets forth on yet another journey.

> Only the gross body is annihilated by death; the subtle body on the other hand with the psychic organs has existed from eternity as the vestment of the soul and accompanies it on all its wanderings. And the wandering soul is further accompanied by the works (ritual and moral) performed by it during the life; and it is just these which prevent Saṃsâra from coming to a standstill.[3]

The process of transmigration is overseen by the personal god Ishwara, who "decrees action and suffering for the

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[1] Deussen, 455.

[2] Ibid., 461.

[3] Ibid., 462.

soul in the new birth in exact correspondence to the works of the former existence."[1]

In conformance with the decrees of Ishwara, the souls of the wicked transmigrate to the bodies of lower animals or plants. The souls of those who performed good works in life, but did not attain knowledge of either the lower (Saguna) Brahman or the higher (Nirguna) Brahman, transmigrate to the bodies of human beings. Not subject to rebirth, however, are the souls of those who attained knowledge of the lower (Saguna) Brahman by pious devotion to the personal god Ishwara. These last souls enjoy, after death, a happy but limited existence in the realm of Ishwara, but at the destruction of the world, when the lower (Saguna) Brahman, or Ishwara, also perishes, they finally attain complete liberation.[2]

The happiest fate is reserved for the soul of the individual who has attained moksha while in the flesh. This soul has won "freedom from karma, from actions that bind one to the world, and from the ceaseless round of births and deaths in the world (saṁsāra)."[3] The realization of the Atman-Brahman identity, gained in the attainment of moksha, "is the highest end of man because

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[1] Ibid., 463.

[2] Ibid. 471-474.

[3] Deutsch, 103.

it destroys the root of evil and the seed of the entire _samsara_."[1]

At this point, the soul achieves the final and ultimate goal of human life, which is absorption into Brahman. The illusion of the individual self, the _jiva_, is dispelled at last, and, to the Advaitin, this is a cause for celebration. "When his doctrine of _moksha_ is characterized as absorptionism and regret is expressed that individuality is lost, it must be pointed out that one cannot lose what one never had."[2] For Advaita, this final and ultimate goal of absorption is not merely a state of negation. "_Moksha_, in the positive sense, means the attaining to a state of 'at-one-ment' with the depth and quiescence of Reality and with the power of its creative becoming."[3]

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[1] Organ, 244.

[2] _Ibid._, 268-269.

[3] Deutsch, 104.

CHAPTER VI

THERAVADA BUDDHISM IN WACH'S MODEL

As in the previous two chapters, three works will be used in this chapter to provide basic religious data to be fitted into the form of answers to Wach's "basic and eternal" questions. Buddhism by Christmas Humphreys,[1] Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis by David J. Kalupahana,[2] and "Some Aspects of Reality as Taught by Theravāda Buddhism" by G.P. Malalasekera[3] will provide the data for the "intellectual expression of religious experience" in Theravada Buddhism for the purpose of answering Wach's questions.

Siddhartha Gautama (c. 563-483 B.C.) was born to a well-to-do family of the kshatriya or warrior caste

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[1] Christmas Humphreys, Buddhism, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1951.

[2] David J. Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1976.

[3] G.P. Malalasekera, "Some Aspects of Reality as Taught by Theravāda Buddhism," in Charles A. Moore, ed., The Indian Mind: Essentials of Indian Philosophy and Culture, Honolulu: East-West Center Press, University of Hawaii Press, 1967, 66-85. Article also published in book form as The Wheel Publication No. 127, Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1968.

in Kapilavastu along the southern edge of Nepal. As a young man, he renounced his sumptuous inheritance, left his parents and his wife and child, and adopted the life of asceticism. After six years of strenuous effort and experiment, he attained enlightenment. After founding an order of monks and nuns, he spent the remainder of his life traveling and preaching. He died at the age of eighty, in the company of his devoted disciples.[1]

The Buddha, or the Enlightened One, centered his analysis of being, consciousness, and salvation on The Four Noble Truths and The Noble Eightfold Path, his unique message to the world.

> This analysis was part of the Buddha's attempt to find answers to the great, primary questions which lie at the root of every religious system, which form the seed of religious development, upon the answer to which depends the nature of any religious philosophy. . .[2]

The Buddha's message spread far and wide within a very short time, since "Buddhism was from the first a missionary religion."[3] Building on the efforts of the Buddha's early disciples, the Emperor Ashoka, in the third century B.C., extended the reach of Buddhism to every corner of the Indian (Mauryan) Empire. As is the

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[1] Kalupahana, 133; Humphreys, 29-43.

[2] Malalasekera, 73.

[3] Humphreys, 60.

case with the seminal ideas of other founders of religions and philosophies, the message of the Buddha encountered varied interpretation, accretion, and attempts at restatement. In efforts to safeguard the pristine insight of the Buddha's teachings, councils of the Sangha, or band of disciples, were held, the first time immediately after the Buddha's death, then again about a hundred years later, once more around the time of Ashoka, and yet again under the Kushan king, Kanishka, toward the end of the first century A.D.

The councils' efforts to regulate doctrinal development were unsuccessful, however, in stemming the flow of speculation about the meaning of the Buddha's teachings. One result was a divergence of Buddhist thought into two main branches, the Hinayana and the Mahayana.[1] Of the three major schools of the Hinayana branch, the Theravada (Doctrine of the Elders) is the only one which survives, the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika having disappeared into history. The Mahayana branch evolved various schools of Buddhism which took on such still-extant forms as Shingon, Tendai, Shin, Zen,[2] and

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[1] "Mahayana" means "great vehicle"; "Hinayana" means "small vehicle." The appellations were devised by Mahayanists who believed that their more liberal "vehicle" would carry the masses to salvation, whereas Hinayana sufficed only for the select few who could execute its more rigorous requirements. Needless to say, Theravadins do not use "hinayana" as a self-designation.

[2] Shingon, Tendai, Shin, and Zen are Japanese names of Buddhist schools which had antecedents in China and/or India.

Tibetan Buddhism (or Lamaism). Today, the Hinayana branch (i.e., Theravada) predominates in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Kampuchea; Mahayana schools predominate in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, and guide what remains of the religious life in China. Through Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism), Mahayana also prevails in Tibet, Mongolia, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal. Since the eleventh century, Buddhism has been effectively extinct in India, the land of its birth.

It is widely accepted that of all the schools, the "oldest and probably nearest to the original teaching is the Theravada. . ."[1] Mahayanist teachings which are absent or less pointedly emphasized in early Buddhism and Theravada include the ideas of universal salvation, the _bodhisattva_ (a being who defers his or her own ultimate salvation in order to save all other beings first), the transference of "merit," the deification of the Buddha principle, the development of a pantheon of gods, salvation by faith or love, and an expansion of the doctrine of _Sunyata_, the Void. Mahayana, it is seen, is characterized by a relatively greater freedom of speculation, a strong metaphysical orientation, and an emphasis on the _bodhisattva_ ideal of saving others. Theravada, on the other hand, is more conservative in its adherence to the early teachings, has a more

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[1] Humphreys, 11.

rationalistic orientation, and stresses the importance of the ideal of the Arahat, the individual saved through his or her own strenuous efforts.

The Theravada scriptures are known as the Pali Canon, after the language in which they were written down over four centuries after the Buddha's death. The Canon's subdivisions comprise the Tipitaka, or Three Baskets of the Law: the Sutta Pitaka, the sermons or teachings of the Buddha; the Vinaya Pitaka, rules of the Sangha or Order; and the Abhidhamma Pitaka, a psychological and philosophical analysis and synthesis. The Sutta Pitaka is further divided into five sections called Nikayas, the last of which contains the Dhammapada, the most famous of Buddhist scriptures, and the Jataka tales, a collection of colorful, folkloric stories about the previous lives of the Buddha. Important post-canonical works include the Milinda-Panha ("Questions of King Milinda"), a dialogue between the Bactrian king Menander, and the Buddhist sage Nagasena, and the Visuddhi Magga ("Path of Purity") of the fourth century Buddhist philosopher Buddhaghosha.[1]

The following are the answers of Theravada Buddhism to Wach's "basic and eternal" questions as elicited from the works of Humphreys, Kalupahana, and Malalasekera.

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[1] Ibid., 233-237.

A. Ultimate Reality (Theology)
What is the nature of Ultimate Reality?
In particular,
1. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by pluralism or monism?

According to Theravada Buddhism,[1] this question has no meaningful answer because Ultimate Reality, whether of itself or in any of its specific characteristics, cannot be known by the human consciousness. The Theravadin response to the question can be analyzed into four phases: the human mind can only know the products of its own consciousness; there is no Ultimate Reality; even if there were, we couldn't know it; and it doesn't matter anyway--the question doesn't "tend toward edification" or salvation from suffering.

Human knowledge is limited. When individuals experience the world, the self and the objects of experience and the resultant experiences are collectively called dhamma, which are the transitory and contingent elements of existence. "In Buddhism these dhammā are the only ultimate reality."[2] But, as will be seen, the dhamma are not real in an absolute sense, for they exist only in relation to the individual self, which itself

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[1] Hereinafter referred to as Theravada.

[2] Malalasekera, 72. The word "dhamma" has several other usages in Pali, the most notable of which is the sense in which it is taken to mean the "truth" or "doctrine" of the Buddha.

"is not a real, ultimate fact,"[1] but contingent in turn upon finite human consciousness.

In an absolute sense, Theravada disbelieves in the existence of an Ultimate Reality.

> In regard to the question "What is ultimate reality?" the different schools of philosophy . . . seem to fall into two main divisions. Some of them say that the ultimate reality is one . . . other schools say . . . that the ultimate reality is plural. . .
>
> Now, what is the place of Buddhism among these different "isms"? The answer is that it does not belong to either group. The ultimate reality of the phenomena of the universe . . . is, according to Buddhism, neither plural, nor one, but none.[2]

There is no Ultimate Reality creating, directing, or affecting our lives. "Not only are entities such as God, soul, and matter denied reality, but even the simple stability of empirical objects is regarded as something constituted by our imagination."[3]

Even if there were an Ultimate Reality, we could not grasp it.

> The Buddhist teaching on God, in the sense of an Ultimate Reality, is neither agnostic, as is sometimes claimed, nor vague, but clear and logical. Whatever Reality may be, it is beyond the conception of the finite intellect. . . For . . . good reasons, the Buddha maintained about Reality a "noble silence." If there is . . . an Ultimate Reality . . . it must clearly be infinite, unlimited, unconditioned and without attributes. We, on the other hand, are clearly finite,

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[1] Ibid., 75.

[2] Ibid., 66-67.

[3] Ibid., 77.

> and limited and conditioned. . . It follows that we can neither define, describe, nor usefully discuss the nature of THAT which is beyond the comprehension of our finite consciousness.[1]

The Theravadin attitude toward Ultimate Reality, then, is that "attempts at description are misleading, unprofitable, and waste of time."[2] Other matters require more immediate attention. "The Buddha's teachings are more deeply and directly concerned with truth and the pragmatic importance of things, more with what might be called 'spiritual health,' than with theories."[3] In Theravada, ideas about Ultimate Reality are low in the hierarchy of true human needs. "It must always be borne in mind that Buddhism is primarily a way of life and, therefore, that it is with the human personality that it is almost wholly concerned."[4]

2. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by personalism or impersonalism?

Since Theravada denies the existence of an Ultimate Reality, or holds as unprofitable its very consideration, it follows that this question is meaningless in the Buddhist context.

> Buddhism is a religion without a God . . . its feet are firmly based on a cold, dispassionate

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[1] Humphreys, 79-80.

[2] *Ibid.*, 79.

[3] Malalasekera, 67.

[4] *Ibid.*

> reasoning from observed first premises.
> It has no Pope, and submits to no earthly,
> still less a heavenly, authority.[1]

Nor is the place of God ascribed to an impersonal Ultimate Reality. Rather, one is faced in Theravada simply with "the lack of metaphysical assumptions"[2] which generally are associated with religious philosophies.

3. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by distance or nearness?

This question, too, in the absence of a postulate about the existence of Ultimate Reality, admits of no meaningful answer, or even attempt at answering, from Theravada. Since "Ultimate Reality is indescribable and not conceptually grasped,"[3] the only possible answer is that it is characterized not by distance or by nearness, nor neither, nor both. This negative form of answer would apply equally to the questions of pluralism/monism and personalism/impersonalism.

B. Universe (Cosmology)

1. What is the origin of the universe?

In ultimate terms, this question, like the previous ones, cannot be answered. "The questions whether the world is eternal or not, finite or not, according to the Buddha, cannot be decided on the basis of the

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[1] Humphreys, 129.

[2] Kalupahana, 29.

[3] *Ibid.*, 77-78.

knowledge available to man."[1] Such questions simply "do not fit the case. . ."[2] From the point of view of human knowledge, there is no one being or thing known to have created the universe. "There is neither *causa materialis* . . . nor *causa efficiens*."[3]

The "appearance" of the universe, however, can be explained in light of knowledge about the human mind. In this sense, the universe has its "origin" in the reification by human consciousness of the evanescent elements of reality, the *dhamma*. This process involves the "self," the universe, and their relationship. The self is comprised of five *khanda* (groups or aggregates): *vedana*, feelings or sensations; *sanna*, ideas or perceptions; *sankhara*, dispositions or volitions; *vinnana*, cognitions or consciousness; and *rupa*, physical elements or body. *Vinnana*, or consciousness, has six cognitive faculties, or senses, which are the senses of vision, audition, smell, taste, touch, and the faculty of intellect.[4]

When these cognitive faculties or senses come into contact with the impermanent, ever-changing elements of the external world, they objectify the experience

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[1] *Ibid*., 156.

[2] *Ibid*., 157.

[3] Malalasekera, 78.

[4] Malalasekera, 70-71; Humphreys, 86-87,94.

through ignorance, thereby creating "objects" of cognition which correspond to the cognitive faculties or senses. The corresponding objects of cognition are (respective to the order in which the cognitive faculties or senses were enumerated in the previous paragraph) color and shape, sound, odor, savors, tangibles, and nonsensuous objects. The meeting place of each cognitive faculty or sense with its corresponding object of cognition is called an _ayatana_, and each _ayatana_ results in a specific cognition such as eye-cognition, ear-cognition, etc. The sixth _ayatana_, the point of contact between the faculty of intellect and its nonsensuous objects, results in consciousness itself. The three factors of cognition--the cognitive faculty or sense, the object of cognition, and the resultant cognition or consciousness--are classified under the name _dhatu_, elements of consciousness.[1]

Taken together, the _khanda_, _ayatana_, and _dhatu_ constitute the _dhamma_, or elements of existence.[2] Insofar as the universe can be said to have an origin in Theravada, it is in the upspringing of _dhamma_ from the ground of human consciousness. These elements of existence, however, do not "come into being" in a haphazard way. Indeed, "their manifestations are subject of definite

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[1] Malalasekera, 71-72.

[2] _Ibid_., 72.

laws, the laws of causation (hetu-paccaya)."[1] In this context, causation does not so much imply the production of an effect by a cause as it does the orderly transition or coordination of elements from one form to another.

> Strictly speaking, there is no causality at all, but only functional interdependence, no question of one thing's producing another, since one momentary entity, disappearing as it does at once, cannot produce any other entity . . . there is no destruction of one thing and no creation of another . . . but only a constant, uninterrupted, infinitely graduated change.[2]

Not in an initial act of creation, but rather in this continual process of change, rooted in human consciousness and the laws of causality, does the universe have its "origin." Because the things of the world "are characterized by arising (uppāda) and passing away (vaya),"[3] all of existence is said to be characterized by anicca, impermanence. Nothing perdures; nothing has a substantive reality in and of itself; everything flows. "In short, impermanence is a synonym for 'arising and passing away,' or 'birth and destruction.'"[4] In place of a notion about the creation or origin of the universe, Theravada proclaims the doctrine of anicca, impermanence.

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[1] Ibid., 78.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Kalupahana, 37.

[4] Ibid.

2. <u>What kind of order pervades the universe</u>?

The chief characteristic of the universe is *anicca*, impermanence, and the basic order which obtains is the law of causality as expressed in the doctrine of *karma*. In the realm of being which is capable of human conceptualization, the *dhamma* are the facts of reality which most closely approach ultimacy, although they do not command ultimacy in the strict sense of the word. Theravada "declares that there is no real unity at all in the world. Everything is discrete, separate, split up into an infinity of minute, impermanent elements, without any abiding stuff."[1] Beyond the limitations of the *dhamma*, human consciousness cannot tread. Theravada denies any ultimacy to the universe,

> . . . converting the world process into an appearance of evanescent elements, and calls the eternal pervasive matter, which is imagined as their support or substratum, a mere fiction.[2]

Without the reifying activity of human consciousness, the "stuff" of the universe would dissolve into its basic state of evanescence.

> We cannot say that matter has extension, cohesion, temperature, and vibration, but that matter is extension, etc., and that without these qualities there is nothing called matter. Matter is thus

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[1] Malalasekera, 74.

[2] *Ibid*.

> reduced to mere qualities and forces which are in a constant state of flux . . . there is no substance, no substratum, not even the idea, because the idea is dependent on certain conditions.[1]

These "certain conditions" have their ground in human consciousness. Although the elements of the universe are "not in a condition of static _being_, but in a state of perpetual _becoming_,"[2] we tend to impose the finite limits of our mind upon them.

> Reality does not consist of extended, perdurable bodies, but of point-instants (_khaṇa_) picked up in momentary sensations and constituting a string of events. Our intellect, then, by a process of synthesis, so to speak, puts them together and produces an integral image, which has nothing but an imagined mental computation.[3]

This overlaying of the fleeting, impermanent elements of reality with the concretizing agency of consciousness results in a distorted perception of the universe. "A single moment of existence is . . . something unique, unrepresentable and unutterable. In itself, set loose from all imagination, it is qualityless, timeless, and spaceless. . ."[4] It is, in short, marked by _anicca_, impermanence, and is characterized by arising (_uppada_) and passing away (_vaya_).

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[1] _Ibid_., 76.

[2] _Ibid_., 77.

[3] _Ibid_.

[4] _Ibid_.

The order which interrelates these "moments of existence" is the law of causality. "Causality explains the arising and passing away of things."[1] Permeating the entire universe, causality provides the structure and coordination upon which everything rests. "The law of causation is co-extensive with the Universe in place, time, and subject"[2] and operates in each of the five spheres or realms of existence, namely, the inorganic, the organic, the psychological, the moral, and the spiritual.[3]

This structuring and coordinating principle of the universe, the law of causality, is generally known as karma. "Karma (Pali: Kamma) is literally 'action,' 'doing,' 'deed.' It is at once cause, effect, and law which equilibrates the two."[4] As applied to the universe, karma is seen as the guarantor of (indeed, as the essence of) the prevailing structure and order. Therefore, "Karma is not only cause and effect in time; rather it is the law which governs the interrelation and solidarity of

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[1] Kalupahana, 36.

[2] Humphreys, 100.

[3] Kalupahana, 30.

[4] Humphreys, 100. In the text of the present research, most words which have both Pali and Sanskrit forms are used in their Pali form, since the language of the Theravadin scriptures is Pali. Two exceptions to this rule are the words, "kamma" and "nibbana," which appear in their more familiar Sanscrit forms, "karma" and "nirvana." In quoted material, all words appear as in the sources from which they are taken.

the Universe in all its parts. . ."[1] *Karma* provides the glue which holds the universe together in its condition of impermanence, or *anicca*. It is also the law which binds the individual to the consequences of his or her actions.[2]

3. What is the destiny of the universe?

Theravada takes a pragmatic view in regard to this question. Since knowledge of the answer is both unattainable and unconducive to salvation, speculation is neither offered nor encouraged. Instead, the situation of the individual is emphasized.

> Such is the formal plan of the Universe, an infinite interrelation of parts. . . There is no First Cause; no ultimate End. Manifestation, so long as it endures, is a Wheel of Becoming, and all "selves" within it are bound upon that Wheel.[3]

What is important is not the destiny of the universe, but the enlightenment and salvation of the individual. The elements of the universe

> . . . have four salient characteristics: they are non-substantial (*anatta*), evanescent (*anicca*), in a beginningless state of commotion (*dukkha*) and have quiescence only in a final cessation (*nirodha*).[4]

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[1] Humphreys, 103.

[2] The term "karma" is also used to refer to the consequences themselves.

[3] Humphreys, 19.

[4] Malalasekera, 72-73.

This "final cessation" is the goal of the individual; it transcends any "destiny" which the universe itself might be thought to have.

C. Humanity (Anthropology)

1. What is humanity's relationship to the universe?

Because the mark of the universe is anicca, impermanence, humanity's relationship to the universe is characterized by dukkha, suffering. The omnipresence of suffering constitutes the First Noble Truth of Buddhism. "The nature of man is such that he craves for eternal or permanent happiness. But the things from which he hopes to derive such happiness are themselves impermanent."[1] The impermanence of the universe, in its relationship to humanity, results in continual change, frustration, and suffering. "Like all other natural processes anicca is cyclic. It is an ever-rolling Wheel with four spokes --Birth, Growth, Decay and Death."[2] The most common interpretation of dukkha is "suffering."

> But "suffering" is only one translation of the Pali dukkha which covers all that we understand by pain, ill, disease--physical and mental--including such minor forms as disharmony, discomfort, irritation or friction, or, in a philosophic sense, the awareness of incompleteness or insufficiency. It is dissatisfaction and discontent, the opposite of all that we mentally embrace in the terms well-being, perfection, wholeness, bliss.[3]

Such suffering, in the expanded sense of the word, is what we experience in our relationship with the universe.

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[1] Kalupahana, 37.

[2] Humphreys, 80.

[3] Ibid., 81.

The means by which we relate to the universe are the *khanda*, or aggregates of which the "self" is comprised (i.e., bodily form, feelings, perceptions, dispositions, and consciousness). "They are the different modes in which the 'I' enters into relation with the external world, lays hold of it, 'seizes' it."[1] The *ayatana* are the meeting-points where the self comes into contact with the universe, in the process of which the *dhamma*, elements of existence, come into being. "It is from the friction of the living contact of senses with things that consciousness is born."[2]

Such contact describes how the living being comes into relationship with the universe, and it forms a part of the explanation of the workings of *samsara*, the cycle of birth-death-rebirth. Within *samsara* the self's entry, or re-entry, into the universe is brought about through the law of "dependent origination," also known as the "chain of causation." The law of dependent origination (*paticca-samuppada*) describes the twelve causal factors (*nidanas*) which function to bring about rebirth and keep the wheel of *samsara* ceaselessly turning. The causal factors, or *nidanas*, are symbolized as the spokes of a wheel. Each *nidana* is an effect of the previous one, and in turn is the cause of the following

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[1] Malalasekera, 71.

[2] *Ibid.*, 72.

one. The twelve _nidanas_ begin with _avidya_, ignorance; which gives rise to _sankhara_, dispositions; which lead to _vinnana_, consciousness; and the causal chain continues through _nama-rupa_, the psychophysical personality; _salayatana_, the five sense-organs plus intellect; _phassa_, contact; _vedana_, feelings; _tanha_, craving; _upadana_, attachment or grasping; _bhava_, becoming; and then _jati_, birth; which leads finally to sorrow and sickness, old age and death.[1]

Unless the individual has attained enlightenment and liberation, death simply marks the end of one round and the beginning of another within the workings of _samsara_. "Thus, like the revolutions of a wheel, there is a regular succession of death and rebirth, the moral cause of which is the cleaving to existing objects, while the instrumental cause is Karma."[2] In this way, the individual remains tied to the universe.

In re-entering the universe, aspects of the old "self" join with aspects of the new. "The process of rebirth is explained as the combining of the two factors, consciousness (_viññāṇa_) and the psychophysical personality (_nāmarūpa_)."[3] The conjoining takes place in the mother's womb, initiating a new life span.

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[1] Humphreys, 97-98; Kalupahana, 31-32.

[2] Humphreys, 99.

[3] Kalupahana, 32.

> Consciousness surviving from the past is said to become infused in this new personality, and thus a continuity is maintained between the two lives. The latent dispositions in this surviving consciousness therefore determine to a great extent the nature of the new personality.[1]

As a result of continued involvement in the twelve-factor law of dependent origination, the individual remains within the web of samsara. In this process, "it is consciousness that serves as a connecting link between two lives,"[2] this consciousness in turn being conditioned by accumulation of karma in previous lives. Through the workings of samsara as actualized in the law of dependent origination, humanity's relationship with the universe, characterized by dukkha, suffering, is maintained. In response to this situation, Theravada offers "a way of escape from the ever-revolving round of birth-and-death, which constitutes saṁsāra and which is considered a condition of degradation and suffering (dukkha)."[3]

2. What is the nature of the self?

The central Theravadin doctrine concerning the nature of the self is that it is anatta, nonsubstantial, which means that there is no changeless, immortal soul underlying the self. Anatta is one of the three "signs

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Kalupahana, 52.

[3] Malalasekera, 70.

of being" or "characteristics of existence," the others being anicca, impermanence, and dukkha, suffering. The doctrine of nonsubstantiality is considered a "middle path" between eternalism (continuity of a permanent soul) and annihilationism (total end of self at death).[1] The doctrine of anatta stresses that

> . . . the individual, conventionally called "I" or the "self," is a mass of physical and psychical elements without any permanent entity behind them to keep them together, without any "soul" inhering in them, the elements themselves, being a mere flux (santāna), a continuity of changes.[2]

Santana is a stream of interconnected facts which constitute the "self," but without any perduring soul-entity. "It includes the mental elements as well as the physical, the elements (dhammā) of one's own body and those of external objects, as far as they constitute the experience of a given personality."[3] All that is contained within santana is subject to arising and passing away. "Every combination of these elements represents a nominal, not an ultimate, reality."[4]

Within the stream of santana are the five khanda, aggregates or groups, which comprise the individual self. They are rupa, bodily form (composed of the elementary

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[1] Kalupahana, 41.

[2] Malalasekera, 73.

[3] Ibid., 75.

[4] Ibid.

qualities of extension, cohesion, caloricity, and vibration); vedana, feelings; sanna, perceptions; sankhara, dispositions; and vinnana, consciousness. The cognitive faculties (indriya) are composed of the senses of vision, audition, smell, taste, touch, and the faculty of mind. Each cognitive faculty produces its own kind of consciousness in its contact with the external world.

None of the khanda, either individually or collectively, can be identified with a changeless, immortal soul. The khanda are conditioned and always in flux.

> A living being is a khanda-complex, ever changing, but ever determined by its antecedent character, and that is ruled by kamma. . . Man, even in this life, is never the same, yet ever the result of his pre-existing self.[1]

This principle applies to the mind, or consciousness, as well. Consciousness "is never the same for two moments together, being in a constant state of flux."[2] Mind, or consciousness, cannot be mistaken for a permanent soul.

> Mind is not an entity but a function; consciousness is thought, and it arises when certain conditions are present. Thought does not arise as the actions of a "thinking subject," but is conditioned by, originates from, is dependent on, other states.[3]

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[1] Ibid., 79.

[2] Humphreys, 21.

[3] Malalasekera, 76.

Nothing of the "self" perdures, not the body, not feelings, not perceptions, not dispositions, not consciousness. All of these are in an unceasing state of flux; all are conditioned. What, then, is it about the "self" that continues on the path to enlightenment and liberation? What is it that transfers to a new body at rebirth? "The answer is consciousness . . . which, subject like all else to *anicca*, change, and *dukkha*, suffering, is unquestionably *anatta*, lacking a permanent immortal something. . ."[1] that can be called a soul. Consciousness is conditioned, but it is also a conditioning factor. In this fact is contained a vital belief about the nature of the self, namely that of free will.

For Theravada, "*kamma* is not fatalism."[2] On the contrary, each individual is capable of affecting his or her own *kamma*, or *karma*. "Will is . . . the chief element in the bundle of Sankharas,"[3] the *khanda* of dispositions which lead to consciousness. By exercizing free will in a positive and beneficial way, the individual is able to move closer to enlightenment and liberation. "Hence every man is free within the limitations of his self-created karma, the result of past actions of body, speech, and thought."[4] *Karma* may be

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[1] Humphreys, 21.

[2] Malalasekera, 79.

[3] Humphreys, 95.

[4] *Ibid*., 124.

objective, necessary, and invariable, but it is also conditional, that is, capable of being affected by the actions of the individual.[1] "It is this possibility of changing one's personality that gives meaning to moral or religious life."[2]

Although it has been said that Theravada denies the existence of an immortal soul, it must be added that, in a strict sense, Theravada, following early Buddhist teachings, withholds final comment on the question. The issue of an immortal soul was thought to be a metaphysical question not subject to verification.

> The theory of an immortal soul was not even considered useful as a regulative theory. In fact . . . it was a theory harmful to the religious life in that it tends to generate selfishness and egoism.[3]

Since the question does not "tend toward edification," Theravada teaches instead the nature of the self which experiences suffering, and how that suffering may be overcome. It concludes that the pursuit of the question of the existence or non-existence of a perduring soul or Self is idle at best, pernicious at worst.

> The SELF, whatever that may be, is infinite and bound by none of its forms. It IS, and is *ex hypothesi* beyond the reach of thought. It *is*

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[1] Kalupahana, 27-28.

[2] *Ibid.*, 51.

[3] *Ibid.*, 41.

> THAT of which the universe is a manifestation, and upon such matters the Buddha, for the reason that all such speculation is futile, maintained a "noble silence."[1]

3. What are the highest possibilities of earthly life?

In Theravada, the highest possibility of earthly life is the attainment of nirvana (Pali: nibbana). The desire for pleasure and happiness is not the final goal, nor is leading an ethical life. Even the acquisition of extrasensory powers, iddhis (Sanscrit: siddhis), such as psychokinesis, clairaudience, telepathy, retrocognition, and clairvoyance, while attainable, does not constitute the goal and must also be transcended since they may actually retard one in the quest.[2] Nirvana, and nirvana alone, is the goal.

The gateway to nirvana is the attainment of samadhi. Only after strenuous effort at disciplining both body and mind is samadhi attained.

> Samādhi is the stilling of thought, the perfect equilibrium of mind, which is attained by the jhāna (Sanskrit, dhyāna), the so-called "trances," perhaps better translated as "musings." They constitute the first taste of the happiness of nibbāna.[3]

Upon the attainment of samadhi, the seeker is able to acquire the associated qualities of prajna (Pali: panna), wisdom, and karuna, compassion.

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[1] Humphreys, 96.

[2] Kalupahana, 21-22.

[3] Malalasekera, 83.

> When Samadhi is merged with Prajna/Karuna the individual has earned the title "free," free from the fetters of Avidya, Ignorance, free from the snares of self and being free he knows that he is free, and finds himself upon the threshold of Nirvana.[1]

Having thus attained samadhi, wisdom, compassion, and freedom, the determined seeker, called arhant, or arahant (Sanskrit: arhat), is at the goal. "The Goal of Buddhism is the condition of the Arhat, and the Arhat is one who has reached Nirvana. . ."[2] The state of nirvana is beyond the reach of thought. "It cannot be conceived; it can only be experienced."[3] Nothing in one's previous life compares with the experience. "This is the supreme moment of illumination when the saint (arhant) sees the whole universe with the vividness of a living reality."[4]

Nirvana implies "the dying out of the three fires of Greed, Anger, and Illusion,"[5] as well as "the end of suffering . . . and a state of perfect happiness. . ."[6] The person who has attained nirvana is "the one who is fully enlightened and is completely freed and

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[1] Humphreys, 117.

[2] Ibid., 127.

[3] Ibid., 128.

[4] Malalasekera, 83-84.

[5] Humphreys, 156.

[6] Kalupahana, 81.

therefore remains unsmeared by the world, like a person who has 'crossed over' . . . and remains in safety when everything outside him is in turmoil."[1] The highest possibility of earthly life is realized in this attainment.

> Such is *nibbāna*, where the insight of non-self has taken the place of delusion and ignorance; where being is seen as a mere process of becoming, and becoming as ceasing; where the spell that has kept us in bondage is broken; where the dream-state will vanish into reality, and reality will be realized. This reality is not the eternalization of a self but escape therefrom, not the deliverance or the salvation *of* the self but the deliverance and salvation *from* the self, from the misconceived "I." And, with this, the last word has been said.[2]

4. *What are the hindrances in achieving these possibilities?*

The fundamental hindrance in achieving *nirvana* is the craving for the things of the world, including the mistaken notion of the self, which keeps one enmeshed in *dukkha*, suffering, and prevents one from attaining enlightenment. The individual is kept in bondage by a failure to perceive the character of *anatta*, the non-substantiality of the self. "It is through non-recognition . . . of Anatta that man experiences greater suffering than is involved in the mere fact of existence."[3] This idea is expressed in the Second Noble Truth of

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[1] *Ibid.*, 72.

[2] Malalasekera, 84.

[3] Humphreys, 87.

Buddhism, namely, that the cause of suffering is desire, or craving.

This craving, tanha, has its root in ignorance, avidya (Pali: avijja), and in turn brings about grasping or attachment, upadana, which eventually leads to birth-death-rebirth. The concept of craving, tanha, includes sensual desire, gratification of passions, and the tendency to separate the self from others and the world, but "it appears in many forms, ranging from ungovernable lust to the purest yearning for the helping of mankind."[1] In all its forms, it precludes the attainment of nirvana. "Thus, craving leads not only to suffering here and now, but also to further suffering in the future in the form of rebirth and consequent decay and death."[2]

These three related factors of the chain of causation, or law of dependent origination, function to prevent one from attaining nirvana, as all "beings are subject to suffering in this world because of ignorance (avijjā) and craving (tanhā) which lead to grasping (upādāna)."[3] Because of this situation, human beings act out of the four motives of wrongdoing: desire, hatred, delusion, and fear.[4] In so doing, they find

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[1] Ibid., 91.

[2] Kalupahana, 60.

[3] Ibid., 124.

[4] Humphreys, 109.

themselves ensnared by the Ten Fetters: the delusion of self, doubt regarding the path to salvation, belief in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies, attachment to sensuality, unkindliness, desire for separate life in the world of form, desire for separate life in the formless worlds, spiritual pride, self-righteousness, and ignorance.[1] Even the acquisition of *iddhis*, or extrasensory powers, can hinder one's chances of attaining *nirvana*, if attachment to them is allowed to form.

The social and ethical manifestations of ignorance, craving, and attachment include such behaviors as lying, stealing, unchastity, intemperance with intoxicants, and killing, as well as "bribery and corruption, gambling, sacrifices and oblations, auguries and prognostications, use of spells and incantations, and so on. . ."[2] Slander, harsh or rough speech, frivolous chatter, covetousness, malevolence, and false or heretical views are also deemed unethical conduct. The implied moral theory is that all behavior is unethical which leads to attachment and, consequently, unhealth, untruth, and suffering, for such behavior is not conducive to attaining *nirvana*, and instead keeps one rooted in the workings of *samsara*.

Craving, then, rooted in ignorance and productive of attachment, is seen as the basic hindrance to achieving

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[1] *Ibid*., 119-122.

[2] Kalupahana, 59.

the highest possibility of earthly life, namely, *nirvana*. It is craving which perpetuates suffering, *dukkha*, and is responsible for evil in the world. "The cause of evil is man's inordinate desires for self. All action directed to selfish, separative ends is evil; all which tends to union is good."[1]

5. *How can these hindrances be overcome?*

Theravada, as a religious way of life, places absolute responsibility for salvation on the shoulders of the individual. "It is self-reliant, claiming assistance from neither God nor gods, saviours or priestly men. . ."[2] From its beginning, "there was no question of sacrifice or sacrament, still less of prayer."[3] The Theravadin is enjoined to work out his or her own salvation, "for there is here no Savior or Redeemer to intercept the unfailing consequences of one's actions."[4]

Karma is not fatalism: it can be, and is, influenced by one's actions. Responsibility for one's salvation is based on the postulate that the individual is capable of exercizing free will. Choice and decision continually confront the individual. "It must also be

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[1] Humphreys, 123.

[2] *Ibid.*, 79.

[3] *Ibid.*, 61.

[4] Malalasekera, 80.

remembered that free will really means 'strong will,' for the possibility of choosing shows the presence of two or more opposites."[1] In teaching the overcoming of the hindrances to salvation, Theravada follows the Buddha's Path of the Middle Way. "It lies between the Pairs of Opposites whose equilibrium is peace."[2]

The overcoming of hindrances is expressed in the third and fourth Noble Truths of Buddhism, namely, that the end of suffering lies in the cessation of craving, and the way to the annihilation of suffering is found in the Noble Eightfold Path. The steps on the Path consist of (1) right views or understanding, (2) right thoughts or attitude of mind, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right concentration.[3] The Noble Eightfold Path has both a positive and a negative dimension. "Negatively, it brings about dispassion by the slow elimination of the thirst for sensuous pleasure; positively, it leads to pure compassion by the cultivation of a selfless love for all that lives."[4]

The eight steps are also arranged under the three categories of panna, sila, and samadhi. The first

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[1] Ibid., 80-81.

[2] Humphreys, 123.

[3] Humphreys, 110-117; Kalupahana, 59.

[4] Humphreys, 93.

category, *panna*, or wisdom, consists of right understanding and right thoughts. Under *sila*, or moral discipline, come right speech, right action, and right livelihood. *Samadhi*, or focusing of mind, is comprised of right effort (to discipline the mind), right mindfulness, and right concentration or meditation. Each category, or practice, has its function, and all are necessary in the quest for salvation. *Panna*, wisdom, is indispensable. "By eliminating ignorance and by developing insight into the nature of things, one is able to eliminate craving and thereby, grasping."[1] This effort is reinforced by the practice of *sila*, or moral discipline, which includes the vows to refrain from killing, stealing, unchastity, lying, etc. The practice of *sila* brings about "not only the moral development of the individual, but also social uplift, harmony, and concord."[2] The ethical good is conceived as that which tends toward detachment and, consequently, toward health, truth, happiness, and eventually, *nirvana*. In concert with *panna* and *sila*, the development of *samadhi* focusing of mind, places one at the very doorstep of *nirvana*.

Through the practice of wisdom, self-renunciation, and concentration of mind, as outlined in the Noble

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[1] Kalupahana, 124.

[2] *Ibid.*, 59.

Eightfold Path, one learns to overcome suffering by weeding out ignorance, craving, and attachment. One becomes unbound by the Ten Fetters, conducts one's behavior in an unerringly ethical manner, and even transcends the iddhis, or extrasensory powers. Caste distinctions are overcome. The extinguishing of the three fires of lust, ill-will, and delusion is learned. In place of the four motives of wrongdoing (desire, hatred, delusion, and fear), inspiration is gained by acquisition of the four Great Virtues, or Brahma Viharas (metta, lovingkindness; karuna, compassion; mudita, sympathetic joy; and upekkha, equanimity of mind).[1] The preceptive moral trinity (sila, dana, bhavana: cease to do evil, learn to do good, purify your heart and mind) is realized and internalized.[2]

In this pursuit, just as one's own efforts are all one can rely on, the only valid knowledge to be had is that gained by, or that which accords with, one's own experience or reasoning. By applying this effort and knowledge to the understanding of the Four Noble Truths and the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, one realizes that "the attainment of happiness in this present existence and the elimination of future suffering by putting an end to the vicious cycle of existence . . .

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[1] Humphreys, 125.

[2] Ibid., 114-115.

can be attained by the elimination of craving."[1] With the end of craving, the fundamental hindrance to achieving the highest possibility of earthly life is overcome, and the road to nirvana lies open.

6. What is the final and ultimate goal of human life?

At the end of life, a train of action ensues which is related to this life and prior lives. "A man's hereafter is the aggregate effects of the causes generated by him in the past."[2] The individual who has not attained enlightenment is subject to rebirth and, consequently, to suffering, decay, and death. "The goal of the religious life is therefore the attainment of freedom from birth (jāti)."[3]

Such freedom comes only with the realization of nirvana. "The word literally means 'going out,' as a fire dies for want of fueling. It is a cessation of becoming. . . It is the end of separateness."[4] Nirvana signals the end of dukkha, suffering, for "the immediate result of enlightenment is the attainment of perfect happiness . . . arising from the absence of craving or attachment. . ."[5] It represents salvation from the

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[1] Kalupahana, 60.

[2] Humphreys, 106.

[3] Kalupahana, 57.

[4] Humphreys, 128.

[5] Kalupahana, 33.

impermanence of being, anicca, and the nonsubstantiality, anatta, of the self, as well as from suffering.

> Nibbāna is thus best described as deliverance, surpassing all understanding, above all emotion, beyond all striving, the non-created, the non-conditioned, the non-destructible, which all may attain through insight and realization.[1]

All of life's other values and purposes are seen as mere steps to the goal of nirvana. "This supreme moment of illumination is the central point of the teaching regarding the path to salvation."[2]

In the process of attaining nirvana, the seeker passes through four stages. In the first stage, he or she overcomes the first three Fetters (delusion of self, doubt about the path, belief in rites). In the second and third stages the next two Fetters are destroyed (attachment to sensuality, unkindness). The final stage sees the transcending of the remaining five Fetters (desire for life in the worlds of forms, desire for life in formless worlds, spiritual pride, self-righteousness, and ignorance).[3] Nirvana itself has two levels. The first level is called "nirvana with residue." This is the level of the living arahat who, while no longer producing new karma, is still "living out" what remains of past karma. The second level, "nirvana without residue,"

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[1] Malalasekera, 84.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Humphreys, 119-122.

is that of the dead arahat who neither produces new karma, nor has any past karma to "live out."[1] This is the final emancipation. All craving has ceased, and, with it, becoming has ceased also. "Where there is no more becoming, there is no more birth, with all its concomitants of sorrow, decay, and death."[2]

The final and ultimate goal of human life, then, is seen to be freedom from rebirth through the achievement of nirvana. "Deathlessness is the ultimate consequence of the attainment of enlightenment and the elimination of craving."[3] Nothing of the "self" remains.

> Is nibbāna annihilation? Yes and no. Yes, because it is the annihilation of the lust for life, of the passions, of craving and grasping, and of all the things that result therefrom. But, on the other hand, where there is nothing to be annihilated, there can be no annihilation. That which constantly arises and arising is nothing but a process of change and in changing also constantly ceases--that cannot be said to be destroyed; it merely does not rise again.[4]

Although Theravada teaches that the arahat who has attained nirvana is not reborn, it does not deny (or postulate) that the enlightened one exists in any transcendental state after death. Such a state of being, if it exists, "cannot be known by the available means

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[1] Malalasekera, 81.

[2] Ibid., 84.

[3] Kalupahana, 33.

[4] Malalasekera, 84.

of knowing,"[1] and is considered a metaphysical question which does not "tend toward edification." In this matter, Theravada follows the example of the Buddha, who greeted such questions with a "noble silence" and proceeded to teach of suffering, the cause of suffering, and the end of suffering.

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[1] Kalupahana, 80.

CHAPTER VII

APPRAISAL

In this final chapter, Wach's method will be analyzed in terms of its basic efficacy, and a revision of his "basic and eternal" questions will be attempted, based on problems noted in the analysis. An evaluation of the method (as revised) then will be offered, followed by concluding remarks, including recommendations for further use of the method.

Analysis of the Efficacy of Wach's Method

In order to evaluate Wach's method for the comparative study of religious thought (CSRT) as a contribution to the comparative study of religion (CSR), an analysis of its efficacy must first be undertaken. The results obtained through the use of Wach's method will be subjected to the scrutiny of the criteria of coherence and correspondence. This will be accomplished, in part, by comparing the results obtained through the use of Wach's method in studying religious thought with the information provided by the scholars whose works were utilized in the three previous chapters. In this way, it is hoped, the utility of Wach's method may be fairly judged.

For the purpose of analyzing Wach's method, the criteria of coherence and correspondence have been selected by the present author on the basis of their relevance to the issues involved in the analysis. As the following paragraphs will indicate, these criteria are seen to suggest certain vital and appropriate questions which bear on the efficacy of Wach's method.

The criterion of coherence, or internal consistency, will be served by ascertaining the "inclusiveness" and the "logical fit" of Wach's question-categories as applied to the data. The works of the above-mentioned authors will be used in this regard. The criterion of correspondence, or external consistency, will ask whether Wach's method yields an "equivalence of categories" among the religions, and whether it possesses an "ability to show similarities and differences" between and among them. A careful study of the results of the application of Wach's method is required for this purpose.

Coherence asks about the ability of Wach's method to describe the religions individually; i.e., does each religion make sense from the point of view of the questions asked in Wach's method? The response to the question posed by coherence must first take into consideration whether Wach's method allows for an inclusive statement of the intellectual content of each religion. This will be judged by: (a) listing the topics covered in the

three books utilized for each religion, as indicated by their chapter or section headings (insofar as they pertain to religious thought); (b) ascertaining whether these topics are covered in the use of Wach's method; and (c) noting the differences, to see if the use of Wach's method omits any of these topics. Next, consideration will be made of the logical fit of Wach's question-categories. It will be asked whether Wach's question-categories are clear or ambiguous, distinct or overlapping; i.e., whether the data fit comfortably or are forced to fit into Wach's categories. Reference will be made again to the works used in the study of each religion. Answers to the questions of inclusiveness and logical fit will indicate the degree of coherence, or internal consistency, attributable to the use of Wach's method.

Correspondence, on the other hand, asks about the ability of Wach's method to describe the religions in relation to each other; i.e., do the Wachian question-categories apply across the board to the three religions and allow comparisons to be made? The response to the question of correspondence must first take into account whether Wach's method yields an equivalence of categories, which is to say, does the relative weight or importance of each question-category vary significantly between and among the religions? The second part of the correspondence question analyzes the ability of Wach's method to

show similarities and differences between and among the religions. This is the key question of the entire study. At issue is whether Wach's method can be used, regardless of history and context, to illustrate likenesses and contrasts, recurrent patterns and disjunctions, and characteristics which are unique, partly shared, or universally enjoyed by all the religions in question. The question of correspondence, in both its aspects, will be answered by a careful and critical reading of the results of the application of the method.

The criteria will be applied in the following order:

I. Coherence (internal consistency)
   A. Inclusiveness
   B. Logical fit

II. Correspondence (external consistency)
   A. Equivalence of categories
   B. Ability to show similarities and differences

The use of the criteria of coherence and correspondence will be employed to analyze the efficacy of Wach's method for CSRT as a means for making meaningful statements of comparison between and among religions.

I. Coherence

A. Inclusiveness

In order to make sense of, and communicate coherently about, a particular religion, Wach's method for CSRT must allow for an inclusive statement of the salient features of that religion. A way of determining whether

Wach's account of Zoroastrianism is inclusive is to compare the topics covered by the use of Wach's method in the present study with the topics covered in the three works used in the chapter on Zoroastrianism. "Topics," in this usage, refers to the basic ideas of the religion as indicated by their mention in chapter or section headings of the works utilized. Differences in coverage between the results of Wach's method and the content of the other works will be noted. The same procedure will be followed in regard to Advaita and Theravada.

Zoroastrianism

The "intellectual content" of Zoroastrianism[1] in A.V. Williams Jackson's book includes the following topics:[2]

> "Zoroastrianism as a Faith--Dualistic Traits and Monotheistic Tendencies" (Wach, A 1)
> "The Host of Heaven" (Wach, A 1)
> "The Legions of Hell" (Wach, A 1)
> "The Universe and Man--Cosmological, Anthropological, and Psychological Ideas of Ancient Man" (Wach, C 1,2, _et passim_)
> "The Moral and Ethical Teachings of the Ancient Zoroastrian Religion" (Wach, C 5)
> "Eschatology: The Ancient Persian Doctrine of a Future Life" (Wach, B 3, C 6)

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[1] The chapter or section headings enumerated include only those dealing with the "intellectual content" of the religions. For this purpose, no mention need by made of chapters or sections treating of the history of each religion, its ritual, literature, art, and so on.

[2] The numbers in the parenthesis following each chapter or section heading listed indicate which of Wach's questions (as enumerated on pages 71-72) most directly cover(s) the topic illustrated by the chapter or section heading.

"The Zoroastrian Doctrine of the Freedom of the Will" (Wach, C 2)

All of these topics are covered in the use of Wach's method. Each one fits into one or more of Wach's question-categories (the question of logical fit will be treated in the next section).

The topics enumerated in Rustom Masani's book are as follows:

"Repudiation of the False Gods" (Wach, C 1, *et passim*)
"Ahura Mazda" (Wach, A 1)
"Cosmology" (Wach, B 1,2,3)
"The Seven Immortals" (Wach, A 1)
"The Adorable Ones" (Wach, A 1)
"The Problem of Good and Evil" (Wach, A 1, B 1, *et passim*)
"Eschatology" (Wach, B 3, C 6)
"The Final Dispensation" (Wach, B 3, C 6)
"The Zoroastrian Code of Ethics" (Wach, C 5)

Wach's method also allows for coverage of each of these topics, as the content of Chapter IV of the present study indicates.

R.C. Zaehner's topics on Zoroastrian thought are expressed as:

"The Two Primeval Spirits and Creation" (Wach, A 1, B 1)
"The Devil's Onslaught" (Wach, B 1)
"The Necessity of Dualism" (Wach, A 1)
"Man's First Parents"
"The Good Religion" (Wach, C 5, *et passim*)
"The Good Ethics" (Wach, C 5)
"The Individual Judgment at Death" (Wach, B 3, C 6)
"The Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting" (Wach, B 3, C 6)

All but one of these topics are covered in the use of Wach's method. The topic of "Man's First Parents" was relegated to mention in a footnote, not fitting snugly

into Wach's question on "humanity's relationship to the universe."

With the one exception noted, the use of Wach's method in the present study allows for the inclusive expression of the topics of the "intellectual content" of Zoroastrianism, as indicated by the chapter headings of the works under study.

Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta

The basic topics of Advaita, as indicated in Paul Deussen's book, are as follows:

"Theology or the Doctrine of Brahman" (Wach, A 1)
"Cosmology or the Doctrine of the World" (Wach, B 1,2)
"Psychology or the Doctrine of the Soul" (Wach, B 3, C 2)
"Saṃsâra or the Doctrine of the Transmigration of the Soul" (Wach, C 1)
"Moksha or the Teaching of Liberation" (Wach, C 3,6)

Each of these topics is fully covered in the use of Wach's method.

Eliot Deutsch's chapter headings are:

"Brahman" (Wach, A 1,2,3)
"Levels of Being"
"Brahman and the World" (Wach, B 1)
"The Self" (Wach, C 2)
"Karma" (Wach, C 1)
"Aspects of Advaitic Epistemology" (Wach, A 2, *et passim*)
"Advaitic Ethics" (Wach, C 5)
"Mokṣa and Jñāna-yoga" (Wach, C 4,5,6)

With the exception of "Levels of Being," Wach's method accommodates Deutsch's topics. The inability, however, of Wach's method to provide for the expression of the content of the chapter on "Levels of Being" does not constitute a flaw in Wach's method. "Levels of Being"

comprises Deutsch's own reconstruction of Advaitic ontology, with relatively little direct reference to Advaitic text or tradition. It's omission by Wach's method is not significant, since Wach's method does cover Advaitic ontology in the categories of Ultimate Reality, the universe, and the self.

In Troy Wilson Organ's book, the sections which deal with the topics of Advaitic thought include:

"Shankara's Method of Interpreting the Upanishads" (Wach, A 2, *et passim*)
"Shankara's Philosophical Method" (Wach, C 2,3)
"Atman" (Wach, B 3, C 2)
"Brahman" (Wach, A 1,2,3)
"Maya" (Wach, B 2)
"Bondage and Liberation" (Wach, C 4,5,6)

The first two topics deal respectively with Advaitic epistemology and notions of states of consciousness. All of these topics are covered in the employment of Wach's method.

With no important exceptions, the topics of the "intellectual expression" of Advaitic thought are given full expression in the use of Wach's question-categories as applied in the present study.

Theravada Buddhism

The ideas of Theravada, as illustrated in Christmas Humphreys' book, are as follows:

"The Three Signs of Being" (Wach, C 2)
"The Four Noble Truths" (Wach, C 5, *et passim*)
"Karma and Rebirth" (Wach, B 2, C 1)
"The Noble Eightfold Path" (Wach, C 5)
"The Four Paths and the Goal" (Wach, C 6)

These topics are all covered in the use of Wach's method (the "Four Paths" are described in Wach's Question C 6 as the "four stages" to attaining nirvana).

David Kalupahana's chapter headings pertaining to the topics of Theravadin thought are:

"Epistemology" (Wach, A 1, B 1)
"Causality" (Wach, B 1, C 1)
"The Three Characteristics of Existence" (Wach, C 2)
"Karma and Rebirth" (Wach, B 2, C 1)
"Morality and Ethics" (Wach, C 5)
"Nirvana" (Wach, C 3,6)

As the present study's chapter on Theravada demonstrated, all of these topics are surveyed in the use of Wach's method.

The topics of Theravadin thought articulated by G.P. Malalasekera include:

"ultimate reality" (Wach, A 1)
"the self" (Wach, C 2)
"renunciation" (Wach, C 5)
"saṁsāra" (Wach, C 1)
"anatta, anicca, dukkha" (Wach, C 2)
"reality and the self" (Wach, C 1,2)
"causality" (Wach, B 1, C 1)
"free will" (Wach, C 2)
"enlightenment" (Wach, C 3,6)
"nibbāna" (Wach, C 3,6)

Each of these topics finds full expression in the utilization of Wach's method.

As the paragraphs above indicate, all major topics of Theravadin thought are accommodated within the framework of Wach's method, as employed in the present study.

In terms of the first aspect of the criterion of coherence, it can be seen that, with one exception ("Man's First Parents"), the use of Wach's method allows for full

coverage of the "intellectual expression of religious experience," as indicated by the application of the method to the data of these three religions. The demand for inclusiveness seems thereby satisfied.

B. Logical Fit

The criterion of coherence also includes the demand that the questions articulated by Wach's method allow for a logical fit of the data into the categories created by the questions. The question-categories must be analyzed in terms of their clarity or ambiguity, distinctness or indistinctness; i.e., in terms of whether the data fit snugly and comfortably into the forms posed by the question-categories. This will be accomplished by studying just how the data of the three religions in question have been made to fit into Wach's question-categories, with reference to the texts used in the chapters on the three religions.

Zoroastrianism

In regard to the Zoroastrian data, the Wachian question-categories fit the topics presented in the three texts very comfortably. That is, they generally appear clear and distinct, but with a few exceptions. The question on the distance/nearness of Ultimate Reality, for example, does not occupy much space in the three texts studied. It seems not to represent an important issue in Zoroastrianism.

On the other hand, some issues or topics are given much consideration in the three texts, but do not answer <u>directly</u> to any of Wach's questions, and, consequently, have had to be placed into categories which are related, but not directly apposite. These topics, and the questions under which they were subsumed, include the following: beings intermediate between Ultimate Reality and humanity (subsumed under pluralism/monism of Ultimate Reality), the nature of evil (subsumed under several questions), free will (under nature of self), the origin of humanity (under humanity's relationship with the universe), ethics (under overcoming hindrances), the failures and fates to be avoided both in life and after life (under highest possibilities of life and ultimate goals). These topics do not fit snugly and logically into Wach's question-categories, which suggests either that the questions should be re-worded or that new questions should be added to accommodate them. The importance of these topics is indicated by the fact that their discussion occupies considerable space in the texts studied, and by the fact that they are often the primary subject of entire chapters in the texts. Such chapters include, for example, "The Host of Heaven," "The Legions of Hell," "The Moral and Ethical Teachings of the Ancient Zoroastrian Religion," and "The Zoroastrian Doctrine of the Freedom of the Will" in Jackson's book; "The Seven Immortals," "The Adorable Ones," "The Problem of Good and Evil," and "The Zoroastrian Code of Ethics" in Masani's

text; and "The Devil's Onslaught," "Man's First Parents," "The Good Ethics," and "The Individual Judgment at Death" in the work by Zaehner.

The added emphasis given these topics in the three texts under study, as compared with the emphasis offered by Wach's method, suggests that some of the questions articulated in Wach's method are not entirely clear and distinct in relation to these topics. The Wachian questions entail some overlap, preclude the emphasizing of certain key topics, and do not sufficiently allow for a logical fit of the data into the question-categories without some revision. One question, that of the distance/nearness of Ultimate Reality, seems of secondary importance in the works of Jackson, Masani, and Zaehner.

Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta

With regard to the data of Advaita, Wach's questions generally allow for a close logical fit, although there are some exceptions here, too. Topics ill-fitted to Wach's questions, but particularly emphacized in the three texts used in the chapter on Advaita, include the following (with the Wachian questions under which they are subsumed): epistemology (subsumed under many questions), humanity's relationship to Ultimate Reality (under distance/nearness of Ultimate Reality and other questions), the cause of suffering (under hindrances to achieving life's possibilities), free will

(under nature of self), and ethics (under overcoming the hindrances). Again, the importance of these topics is indicated by the space allotted to their consideration in the texts under study, and by their prominence in chapter or section headings. The relevant chapter headings are: "Aspects of Advaitic Epistemology" and "Advaitic Ethics" in Deutsch's book, and "Atman," "Maya," and the two sections on epistemology and consciousness in Organ's text. There are no conflicts of logical fit indicated by Deussen's chapter headings in relation to Wach's questions.

The emphasis given these topics by virtue of length of discussion and prominence in chapter headings in these works challenges the clarity, distinctness, and logical fit of Wach's questions. Here again, revision of the questions seems in order.

Theravada Buddhism

As with Zoroastrianism and Advaita, the data of Theravada, as provided by the three texts utilized, for the most part fit well into Wach's questions. Topics singled out for extensive consideration in the three Theravada texts but uncomfortably fitted into Wach's questions, however, include the following (along with the questions under which they are subsumed): the nature and cause of suffering (subsumed under humanity's relationship to the universe, the nature of the self, and other questions), free will (under nature of the self), ethics

(under overcoming hindrances), and the relationship of the self to Ultimate Reality (under origin of the universe). These topics, treated in depth in the texts studied, are covered in chapters with such titles as: "The Three Signs of Being," "The Four Noble Truths," and "The Noble Eightfold Path" in Humphreys' book; "The Three Characteristics of Existence" and "Morality and Ethics" in the work by Kalupahana; and also in certain topics covered by Malalesekera such as "anatta, anicca, dukkha," "renunciation," and "free will."

The extended discussion and prominence given these aspects of Theravada in the three texts considered, when viewed in relation to the inability of Wach's method to give them clear, distinct, and logical expression, point up the necessity for some revision of Wach's question-categories.

The criterion of coherence, with its dual demand of inclusiveness and logical fit, appears generally satisfied in the use of Wach's method. As it has been employed, the method allows for the comprehensive expression of the salient features of the religions' intellectual content. The logical fit of the data of religious thought seems generally satisfactory, although the exceptions noted indicate that some revision of the question-categories would enhance significantly the efficacy of the method. Such revision will be attempted after analysis of the method's response to the criterion of correspondence.

II. Correspondence

A. Equivalence of Categories

The criterion of correspondence asks about the method's ability to describe religions, not separately, but in relation to each other. The first demand of correspondence is that the method entail the use of categories which bear some degree of equivalence when applied to the different religions. This demand poses a dual question: does the relative weight or importance of each question-category vary significantly from religion to religion, and, if and when it does, does this lessen the utility of the method? A careful reading of the results of the application of Wach's method is required to answer this question.

A review of the application of Wach's method indicates that the question-categories, when applied to the three religions, demonstrate a high degree of equivalence in terms of the categories' applicability to the three religions. That is, for the most part, the relative weight or importance of each question does not undergo significant variation when applied to one religion as compared with another. As the present study has indicated, for example, the questions on the pluralism/monism and personalism/impersonalism of Ultimate Reality are of equal importance in each of the three religions studied. Also equivalent in importance for each of the three religions are the questions on the origin and the order of the universe, as well as all the questions

dealing with humanity, or anthropology. All three religions have important things to say in regard to each of these questions.

Of unequal importance when applied to the three religions, however, is the question of the distance/nearness of Ultimate Reality, an issue which is less important in Zoroastrianism (self is partner of Ultimate Reality) than in Advaita (self _is_ Ultimate Reality), and of even less importance in Theravada (self and Ultimate Reality denied). Also of unequal importance is the question of the destiny of the universe, which is important in Zoroastrianism (universe is locus of redemption), less so in Advaita (universe is false transformation of Brahman), and of little or no importance in Theravada (nothing in universe endures). The question arises whether such relative inequality of importance lessens the utility of the method, at least insofar as these two question-categories are concerned. The answer would seem to be that the utility of the method is not thereby lessened: the very diversity in degrees of importance assigned to the question-categories by each religion actually helps to differentiate the religions, consequently aiding in achieving the goal of comparison.

It appears that the first demand of the criterion of correspondence, that there be equivalent categories, is generally well met in the use of Wach's method. It further appears that the few exceptions to this tendency

--namely, categories relatively unequal in importance--do not lessen the utility of the method but, on the contrary, assist in achieving the overall goal of differentiating religions for the purpose of comparison.

B. Ability to Show Similarities and Differences

The issue of the ability of Wach's method to show similarities and differences between and among the religions is the second demand of the criterion of correspondence. This is the last step in the analysis of the efficacy of the method. Moreover, it is the key question of the entire present study. The two demands of the criterion of coherence (inclusiveness and logical fit) and the first demand of the criterion of correspondence (equivalance of categories) are necessary but not sufficient grounds for confirming the efficacy of Wach's method for comparing religions. The decisive quality is its ability or inability to show differences and similarities between and among the religions. Consideration of this issue is based on a careful review of the results of the application of Wach's method to the data of the three religions studied.

In reviewing these results, one finds that the use of Wach's method does indeed illustrate clearly and articulately many examples of similarity and difference between and among the three religions. A partial listing of such similarities and differences, and of some of the universal and unique characteristics of the

religions, as gleaned from a reading of the application of Wach's method in the present study, will suffice to confirm this finding.

Universals. The application of Wach's method reveals that all three religions have some concept of Ultimate Reality, whether it be that of Ahura Mazda, Brahman, or the dhamma of existence. All three religions have some concept of the universe and the self. All three consider the question of survival after death, and relate such survival in some way to the kind and quality of life lived on earth. Additionally, all three subscribe to the doctrine of free will and ascribe some value, whether decisive or auxiliary, to the ethical dimension of life. All three religions, finally, posit proximate and ultimate goals to human life, and articulate the interrelationships of self, universe, and Ultimate Reality.

Similarities. As the study indicates, Zoroastrianism and Advaita bear certain similarities in terms of the goodness of Ultimate Reality, the self as composed of spiritual and material components, the survival of the soul or essence after death, and the creative agency of Ultimate Reality (in its manifest form). Advaita and Theravada are seen as similar in respect of the dependence of the appearance of the universe on human consciousness, the pervasiveness of the law of causality in human affairs, the notion of transmigration or

reincarnation, the progression through stages of enlightenment, the mere phenomenality of the self, the importance of the role of knowledge in salvation, and the necessity of transcending the phenomenal self. Zoroastrianism and Theravada are similar in the emphasis both place on individual responsibility in the quest for salvation.

Differences. The present study shows that Zoroastrianism differs from Advaita in terms of the personalism of Ultimate Reality, the cause of evil and suffering, the nature of the self which survives after death, the respective roles of knowledge and ethics in gaining salvation, and the nature of the afterlife. Zoroastrianism differs from Theravada in terms of the nature of the origin and reality of the universe and the self, the destiny of the universe, the need for renunciation, the nature of suffering, the hindrances to salvation, and the highest possibilities of life. Advaita differs from Theravada in terms of the nature of Ultimate Reality, the existence of a soul, the primary cause of suffering (ignorance versus desire), and the ultimate goal of life (absorption versus annihilation).

Unique Characteristics. Only Zoroastrianism, as the study reveals, posits a personal Ultimate Reality, the objective reality of the universe, the primacy of ethics in the quest for salvation, and the resurrection of the body. Advaita alone subscribes to the identity

of the essential self with Ultimate Reality, the unmanifest/manifest nature of Ultimate Reality (Nirguna and Saguna Brahman), and the reincarnation of the soul or essence. Finally, only Theravada rejects the idea of a soul or essence as the substratum of the self, explains the universe in terms of a chain of causally related factors, and formulates the ultimate goal of life with no reference to a beckoning and desired Ultimate Reality, whether personal or impersonal.

As the preceding partial listing indicates, Wach's method is quite capable of showing differences and similarities, and universal and unique characteristics, when applied to the study of the "intellectual content" of religions. Having also provided generally acceptable responses to the demands for inclusiveness, logical fit, and equivalence of categories, it appears that Wach's method for CSRT, in demonstrating an ability to show similarities and differences, has substantially satisfied the criteria of coherence and correspondence. The basic efficacy of Wach's method as a means for making meaningful comparisons between and among religions thus seems confirmed.

Revision of Wach's "Basic and Eternal" Questions

Because of the single problem noted in the response to the demand for inclusiveness and because of the several problems encountered in the demand for logical fit, it seems appropriate to attempt a partial revision of

Wach's question-categories in order to make them fully responsive to all the demands of the criteria of coherence and correspondence. In light of both the strengths and weaknesses of the method, the following revision of the question-categories is offered as a suggested improvement which is consistent with the basic intent and structure of the method. (Revised wording and additions are underscored in the revised questions.)

Wach's "Basic and Eternal" Questions (Revised)

A. Ultimate Reality (Theology)
   1. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by pluralism or monism?
   2. Is Ultimate Reality characterized by personalism or impersonalism?
   3. What other key features characterize Ultimate Reality?

B. Universe (Cosmology)
   1. What is the origin of the universe?
   2. What kind of order pervades the universe?
   3. What is the destiny of the universe?

C. Humanity (Anthropology)
   1. What is the origin of humanity and its relationship to the universe and Ultimate Reality?
   2. What is the nature of the self and human knowledge?
   3. Is the self characterized by free will or determinism?
   4. What is the cause of suffering and evil?
   5. What are the highest goals of life and the failures to be avoided?
   6. What are the hindrances in achieving these goals?
   7. How can these hindrances be overcome?
   8. What are the nature and role of ethics?
   9. What are the final and ultimate goals beyond life and the fates to be avoided?

On the basis of the application of Wach's method to the study of Zoroastrianism, Advaita, and Theravada, it is felt that this revision of the question-categories

enhances the efficacy of the method while remaining consistent with its basic intent and structure. The application of the method to the study of other religions may suggest a need for additional questions and/or revisions. As demonstrated in its application to the three religions under study, however, and as analyzed and revised in the present chapter, Wach's method for CSRT now can be evaluated in terms of its contribution to CSR.

Evaluation of Wach's Method as a Contribution to the Comparative Study of Religion

An evaluation of Wach's method in terms of its contribution to the comparative study of religion (CSR) must make reference to two sets of criteria. The first set of criteria is composed of Wach's own hopes, expectations, and demands for method in CSR, as delineated in Chapter III of the present study. The second set of criteria, expressed in Chapter II, comprises the concerns, needs, and requirements pertaining to CSR's methodology as articulated by contemporary scholars and critics.

Wach's method for the comparative study of religious thought (as it was expressed and tested in the three preceding chapters and analyzed and revised at the beginning of the present one) can be seen as a logical outgrowth of his early concern with *Verstehen*, or understanding. *Verstehen* was viewed by Wach as a

prerequisite or foundation for a constructive approach to CSR, and his method is an extension of the purpose of *Verstehen* in that it enables one's own philosophical-religious assumptions to be seen more clearly in light of those of other religions. The pursuit of the goal of unbiased interpretation is thereby aided in the process.

In accordance with Wach's expectation, the use of a phenomenological approach in the application of the method for CSRT further underscores and accords with Wach's insistence on a presuppositionless CSR. His "principle of relative objectivity" is maintained in the method's utilization of the techniques of the phenomenological approach, namely, *epoche* or bracketing of one's own beliefs or presuppositions, respect for the intentionality of the data, and classification of the data into categories suitable for unbiased comparison. The impact of researcher bias on the collection, organization, and analysis of data is thereby minimized.

Additionally, Wach's dual demand on method, namely, that it be unified and adequate for the subject matter, is met. The method for CSRT is unified in that it accords with generally held principles for the scientific collection of data, and does not require different methodological approaches to different religions or aspects of religious thought. It is also adequate for the subject matter insofar as it is capable of giving full rein to the diversified play of religious thought, value, and belief, omitting nothing essential therefrom.

In this, as Wach envisioned, CSR is able to proceed in a "religio-scientific" manner. Such a method, as has been demonstrated, satisfies Wach's basic requirement that a method for comparing religions be able to reveal similarities, differences, universal themes, and unique characteristics.

Wach was concerned that CSR delineate its own field of study, distinct from theology and the normative sciences in general, as well as from the other descriptive sciences. Wach's method for CSRT accomplishes this goal. By virtue of its phenomenological underpinning, it makes no qualitative or normative judgments about religions, nor does it attempt to evaluate religions in the light of particular philosophical or religious assumptions. Such responsibility is left to theology, the philosophy of religion, and ethics. At the same time, it differentiates itself from the other descriptive sciences by means of its focused attention on, and unique organization of, its specific subject matter, namely, the thought, beliefs, and values of religions. When the sociology and psychology of religion have done their work, that which remains by way of thought, belief, and value becomes the distinct field of study of the method for CSRT, i.e., the "intellectual content" of religion.

While distinguishing itself from the normative and descriptive sciences, nonetheless, the method for

CSRT does represent a link between them, as Wach had desired. Although not making value claims itself, the method does provide an arrangement of data which can become grist for the normative mill. Similarly, despite its merely tangential involvement with the social manifestations of religious belief, the method for CSRT furnishes factual information which can be used in connection with sociological and psychological theories about human behavior.

As the analysis of the efficacy of the method for CSRT has indicated, Wach was correct in declaring that the study of history is indispensable in complementing CSRT in fulfilling the ultimate aim of the method. While Wach's method has much to commend it, it lacks sensitivity to the peculiar emphases, contexts, and development of specific religions. As Wach affirmed, only the historical dimension of CSR can do justice to these aspects of religion.

Contrary to Wach's expectation, however, the method for CSRT does not confirm his hope that it would validate the metaphysical theory of the oneness of ultimate reality (or even the existence of one or several ultimate realities). Nor does the method for CSRT "awaken, strengthen, or shape" one's own values and beliefs. Such consequences may _indirectly_ derive from one's involvement with the method, but they do not _necessarily_ follow. Certain personal inclinations may

predispose an individual to derive such conclusions from the study, but the only necessary outcome of the application of the method of CSRT is a greater *understanding* of religious beliefs in relation to each other.

Notwithstanding these exceptions, however, the method for CSRT substantially fulfills Wach's hopes, expectations, and demands for method in CSR. In utilizing a phenomenological, typological, and comparative approach, it is able to transcend different historical contexts to make meaningful statements of comparison about religions. The development of this capability represents a major contribution to what Wach conceived to be the task of CSR (or *Religionswissenschaft* as he referred to it in his earlier works). In terms of Wach's intention, the method of CSRT advances and helps to actualize the overall goal of CSR, which is to attain a presuppositionless understanding of religious phenomena in all their intentionality. The ability to illustrate and communicate the similarities and differences between religions was, for Wach, the *raison d'être* of CSR and its methodology.

The concerns, needs, and requirements of CSR's methodology as articulated by other contemporary scholars and critics also seem well met by Wach's method for CSRT. A major factor in CSR's difficulty in defining itself as a distinct field of study has been its inability to develop appropriate methodologies. In its intention and

utility, Wach's method for CSRT takes CSR at least one step closer to redressing that need.

In doing so, however, the method for CSRT avoids several of the pitfalls historically associated with approaches to CSR. It does not, for example, attempt to uncover the "origin" or "essence" of religion in general or to demonstrate the "oneness" of the world's religions. Nor does it put forward a "flatly rationalistic" or reductionistic account of religion. Still less does it try to interpret all religion in terms of the principles of any one religion. Its modest goals and "principle of relative objectivity" preclude such claims and endeavors.

The scope and *modus operandi* of the method for CSRT respond favorably to the needs of CSR. Wach's method does not attempt to compare too much, that is, entire *systems* of religions (e.g., art, literature, symbols, ritual), nor does it select arbitrarily chosen *aspects* of religions for comparison (e.g., priests/prophets, attitudes toward death, notions of evil). Instead, its subject matter represents a significant yet manageable dimension of a religious system, namely, the "intellectual expression of religious experience." Its manner of collecting and organizing data ensures that the dictum "comparison should be between comparables" is heeded.

Despite these strengths, however, Wach's method for CSRT is not overly obtrusive. Allowing, as it does,

for the full and diverse expression of religious thought, it subordinates itself to the task at hand, namely, the understanding of religions in relation to each other. The method does not become an end in itself. Instead, it answers the pressing need for a suitable means of gathering and classifying data.

In its classificatory and comparative functions, Wach's method for CSRT guarantees that such an approach to the study of religion will not disguise a mere historical recounting of the facts of the evolution of religions. Its use does, however, point up the necessity of historical study as a complement to the comparative effort. As critics have rightly alleged, comparative study yields a useful but one-dimensional view of religion when presented without the added depth of the historical component. Wach's method for CSRT provides a sense of pattern, typology, and cross-sectional analogy which is not available to history *per se*, but it is equally true that the comparative method can bear its fullest fruit only when used in concert with the historical approach. Indeed, when combined with historical study, the comparative method can furnish more than abstracted categories of religious thought. The products of such collaboration would properly be designated "historical-comparisons."

Other disciplines, in addition to history, have a claim on the activities of CSR in general and on

methods such as Wach's in particular. As has been indicated, Wach's method, while maintaining the distinctiveness of CSR, provides data for the use of both normative and descriptive disciplines; it thus serves as a link between them. Wach's method does not, however, shed any light on the question of terminology for the overall field of study. While use of the method tends to confirm the interrelatedness of the subdisciplines within CSR (to use that appellation for the moment), it does not indicate whether "comparative study of religion," "history of religions," "science of religion," or some other rubric should be employed to designate the field of study which includes the history of religions, the comparative study of religion, phenomenology, and the sociology and psychology of religion. The choice of a name for the field will have to be made on grounds other than the efficacy of Wach's method.

Most importantly, however, Wach's method for CSRT does satisfy the demand of contemporary scholars that it *compare*. As has been demonstrated in the present study, use of the method enables researchers to collect and organize religious data in such a way as to allow meaningful statements of comparison to be made. Differences and similarities, unique characteristics and universals, continuities and disjunctions can be highlighted, the result being a greater understanding of the various religions in relation to one another.

Wach's method for CSRT, then, substantially satisfies the criteria for method in CSR as set forth both by Wach himself and by other contemporary scholars and critics. It offers a useful and valid means of collecting and organizing data in such a way as to allow meaningful statements of comparison to be made about religions in terms of their "intellectual content."

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to test Joachim Wach's method for the comparative study of religious thought (CSRT) while viewing his method in the context of his general approach to the comparative study of religion (CSR). In doing so, the study undertook to outline the historical and conceptual context of the problem Wach addressed, to articulate Wach's theory and methodology for CSR and CSRT, and to apply Wach's method to the study of Zoroastrianism, Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta, and Theravada Buddhism. The efficacy of Wach's method was analyzed by subjecting it to the criteria of coherence and correspondence, in the process of which the results obtained through the application of Wach's method were compared with data provided by other scholars. Finally, Wach's method was evaluated as a contribution to CSR in light of criteria set forth both by Wach himself and by other scholars and critics of CSR.

The result of the study was the finding that Wach's method, particularly as revised toward the end of

the study, demonstrates a great utility in accomplishing the purpose for which it was intended. That is, as applied in this study to the three religions in question, Wach's method provides a useful and valid means for gathering and organizing data so that meaningful statements of comparison can be made about the "intellectual expression of religious experience" as found in different religions, regardless of the historical and cultural contexts of the religions.

Wach's method is significant for the developing discipline of CSR. While satisfying Wach's own demands for methodology in CSR, his method also responds favorably to the concerns, needs, and requirements for CSR's methodology as articulated by other scholars and critics of the discipline. It directly and successfully answers to one of the most pressing needs of CSR, namely, the need to develop methodologies appropriate to the field of study encompassed by CSR. The problem of the prevailing methodological uncertainty of the discipline is thereby taken at least one step toward resolution.

In order that the utility of Wach's method be realistically appreciated, however, two points must be borne in mind. First, his method was applied to only three religions in the present study, and appropriate revisions to the method were made as a result. The application of Wach's method to the study of other religions may very well suggest further revisions. Second,

while Wach's method demonstrates a high degree of utility in pointing out similarities and differences between and among religions, its weaknesses are that it does not adequately identify special emphases or hierarchical priorities of religions and that it tells little or nothing of the cultural context and historical development and interrelationship of religions. For these purposes, Wach's method must be used in concert with the historical study of religion.

Wach's method for CSRT, while itself a significant contribution to CSR, should also stimulate further research in the field. Its heuristic value lies in its adaptability and in its ability to raise additional questions pertaining to the similarities and differences between and among religions as observed through the use of the method. In the present study, Wach's method was used to compare the most widely held and most persistent tendencies of religious thought within three particular traditions, namely, Zoroastrianism, Advaita (Non-Dualist) Vedanta, and Theravada Buddhism. The value of the method, however, is based on its adaptive use for comparing religious thought as it arises from different sources. That is, it need not be restricted to comparing such large, generalized entities as "Zoroastrianism" or "Theravada Buddhism." It is capable of comparing more specific, discrete entities such as "Second Century A.D. Zoroastrianism," "Theravada Buddhism in Burma," and "Radhakrishnan's Concept of Advaita." Wach's method

seems flexible and sensitive enough to accommodate and utilize, for comparative purposes, the data of any systematic statement of religious thought, whether it be that of an individual, a school, a nation or culture, an era, or an entire religion's general and persistent tendencies over the centuries (as was done in the present study).

Such methodological potency should stimulate interest and encourage further investigation into the causes and explanations for the noted similarities and differences. Questions which might arise from the use of Wach's method for CSRT might include ones such as the following: Why is the concept of Ultimate Reality in second-century Zoroastrianism (dualist) different from that of the Zoroastrianism of contemporary Parsis (monotheistic)? Why, despite the centuries that intervened between their origins, is Zen Buddhism, in its concept of salvation, closer to Theravada than are other Mahayana schools? Or, how does one explain certain similarities in cosmological thinking between certain ancient African and pre-Columbian American religions? Such questions would take the researcher out of the reach of Wach's method and into the realm of history and the descriptive sciences, but the initial impetus, as well as the clarification of the issues involved, would derive from the application of Wach's method. Such questions should also, in turn, stimulate further research into additional, related questions of similarity

and difference while the researcher is engaged in the search for explanations.

In addition to its basic heuristic value for scholarly research, Wach's method further benefits education in that it can be used as a pedagogical device for teaching the comparative study of religion. Teachers of religious studies on the secondary and post-secondary levels today are searching busily for appropriate means of teaching the subject matter of comparative religion. Wach's method for CSRT offers a device (the "basic and eternal" questions) by which the intellectual content of the world's religions can be communicated to students in a thorough, orderly and coherent fashion, enabling the students to perceive similarities and differences between and among the religions. Such use of Wach's method could prove to be of considerable value to teachers and students alike.

In a larger sense, Wach's method is also significant in that it furthers the aim of mutual understanding among peoples. Through the use of methods such as Wach's, the real differences between peoples of different religious faiths can be appreciated, and the commonalities which are shared can be identified and celebrated. A greater understanding of religious similarities and differences can contribute to the peaceful resolution of such inter-group conflicts as prevail in the world today. The growing movement toward ecumenicalism, as exemplified by the Council of Vatican II, is thereby strengthened.

On the basis of the present study, Wach's method for the comparative study of religious thought has been found to possess a fourfold significance. This significance lies in its utility in illustrating similarities and differences between and among religions regardless of history and cultural context, in its heuristic value for stimulating further research, in its usefulness as a pedagogical device for teaching comparative religion, and in its value for furthering the aim of mutual understanding among the peoples of the world. It is hoped that other researchers will utilize and add further refinement to Wach's method, thereby enhancing its utility and significance.

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