

Chapter 7

Evangelization as a Cultural ^{Commitment} Action

EVANGELIZATION AND CULTURES

(A frame for an epistemological problem).

ANTONIO GALLO, S.J.

"While working with Jews, I live like a Jew. In the same way, when with Gentiles, I live like a Gentile. This does not mean that I don't obey God's laws." (I Cor. 9:20-21)

INTRODUCTION

Is the Inculturation of Faith a Necessary Issue?

The presence of many different human groups with a multiplicity of cultures in the process of contemporary life at the national and the international level is a fact we can experience and about which we can be informed by the communication media. Newspapers such as the *Miami Herald*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and such magazines as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Businessweek*, reflect our contemporary environment in the second half of 1992 and the turmoil of the electoral campaign.

We reflect upon these on the occasion of the ethnic war in Yugoslavia, the recent independence of many nations such as Czechoslovakia, Georgia, Armenia, the Ukraine and others; or the struggles in the Near East, Beirut, the PLO and the Jews, the Kurds in Iraq and many others. The Press also makes constant reference to the Haitians, Cubans, Blacks, and Hispanics as current problems in need of a solution¹

Amid this growing and amazing interaction of different ethnic groups in a sea of immigrants, there arise issues of economic need, political relations, jobs and marketing. These

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Philosophy and Theoretical Research - a Quarterly Journal
1992 vol II n° 3 (Sept.) Publication of the International Theoretical Society

"Husserl and Analytic Philosophy" (Robert Sokolowski)
de la Catholic University of Leuven
Intentionality and non-foundational realism (p. 225)

Intención de saber la diferencia entre lo fenomenológico y lo analítico...
Revue de Philosophie 1) Richard Cobb-Stevens: Husserl and Analytic Philosophy 1990 Dordrecht, Kluwer a press
2) John Drummond: Husserlian intentionality and non-foundational realism
Ideas and objects.

El 10 ensayo de Husserl. ^{de Fregé} ^{de Frege}
Análisis de categorías ^{de Frege} - reducción al psicologismo - "ser" como origen de la "acción"
- "le difícil, se explica" de "ser" como origen de la "acción"
de que Φ explica mejor que Ψ . - desde la "intención - categorial" - la experiencia predicativa - la acción
"proposic" como expresión lingüística - comprobable.

"Husserl should know logic and semantics can be rooted in subjective intention, without being dissolved
into merely subjective phenomena."

La concepción de "intención - categorial" en Husserl arroja algunas deficiencias de Frege
Este concepto supera lo fenomenológico y permite volver a lo pre-moderno y escapar aspectos de lo moderno
relato: entendimiento - percepción, una de las presentaciones "aspectos" - "looks" de las cosas.

Para evitar de Husserl "haber comparado la naturaleza - en lo más. Se mente nos la fenomenología de ellas (Leibniz)
En "el espacio - en el cual la "naturaleza" se expresa! (p. 225)
(se explica)

La misma expresión la idea de "subjetiva" = el individuo son experimentados, se puede como "instancias - de un grupo" (Klein)
Y estas expresiones (grupos) siempre se ven como interpretadas en "individuos"

This is probably not an ambiguity in but a necessary structure in cognition and the display of things -

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phenomena have a religious component we must not forget.

The reality of so many ethnic groups and cultures ^{v/w} which are repelled ~~by~~ the risk of losing their identity and being fused in a more general style of life poses anew for the Church the old challenge of the one revealed gospel assuming many different ways of life and one faith being communicated and perpetuated for centuries.

My question is not about the opportunity or fittingness of transmitting the traditional faith through such different cultures, but about the unavoidable necessity of doing so. This necessity refers not only to raising the question as a convenient way to discover practical answers, but to see evangelization as a communication of faith. In this way, we restrict the "communication act" to a special situation of communication from one culture to another, or from one ethnic group to another; we are not referring to the people who give or receive the knowledge and customs of the faith within the same group or culture (e.g., as parents who want to communicate the faith to their children, or a Pastor to the members of his own community or culture) in these cases, in certain measure, the problem does exist, but it is not so evident and complex as in the circumstance of different cultures. To some extent, the task of introducing the faith to other persons, or better, of introducing the other person to the faith, entails the problem of a very special act of communication.

How can parents communicate faith to their children? How

can one generation transmit this same faith to other ages? There always is a linguistic mediation and a problem of semantics; in this case, linguistic ground is involved as well. This will be more evident if we study the communication of faith in the situation of two different cultures, one of the preacher or missionary, and the other of the people who are to be evangelized.

EVANGELIZATION AS A SPECIAL TYPE OF COMMUNICATION

Primarily, "evangelization" is a contact with persons in an attempt to give them the content of the christian faith, the faith traditionally founded on the Gospel. Almost universally, this contact is entrusted to language: through the language, the gift is offered to the other person and is intended to change their life, to orient their will to act as believers.

In the communication of faith, this double aspect or dimension has a specific and unique character. It is not like the transmission of some science which can be verified through experimentation, nor is it the simple communication of a doctrine as a whole system of knowledge theoretically coherent and convincing.

The communication of faith brings with it a historical aspect, a speculative and systematically ordered body of truth, as well as a complex of values or an horizon of life in which the human person can express himself in individual and social behavior.

The conjunction of the two: knowledge and behavior, makes



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the communication of faith a deeper and more intense act of communication than any other. Therefore, it requires more careful analyses to ensure the effective realization of this contact and secure the gist of the transmission. Consequently, I will focus my analysis upon the act of "the communication of something as a complex existential act" which includes the transmission of faith. But I will not consider any particular "content" of faith. That would require special study, for the content of evangelization belongs to another science.

My attention involves faith only as the "principle of moral and spiritual action" as described above. As a principle of human conduct, it is very similar to ethical or aesthetic principles more open to the metaphysical, transcendental, and divine as well.

We must consider this as a very special act of communication, for it is so profound that [?] these men allow their minds and hearts to be opened to the weight of the spiritual meaning of the Gospel.

Usually preachers say, "My job is simply to show you the Catholic faith. What you do with it after that is out of my control."--This utterance may ^{not} really be true. In my opinion, the true realization of the contact depends essentially upon the act of facilitating the gift of the gospel. In other words, generally speaking, God's grace cannot perform its role of conversion and sanctification if we do not contribute a suitable and adequate act of communication.



COMMUNICATION OF FAITH AS A TRANSCENDENTAL ACT

Let us now consider the act of communicating the faith in the context explained above, limited to interchange between two different cultures: the one, that of the emissary, the other, that of the receivers. We shall describe how this act is a necessary channel to effect transmission of the living gift of the faith, which will become a resource for the spiritual evolution of the receiver.

Generally, we are tempted to reduce the communication of faith to the abstract structure of a linguistic performance:

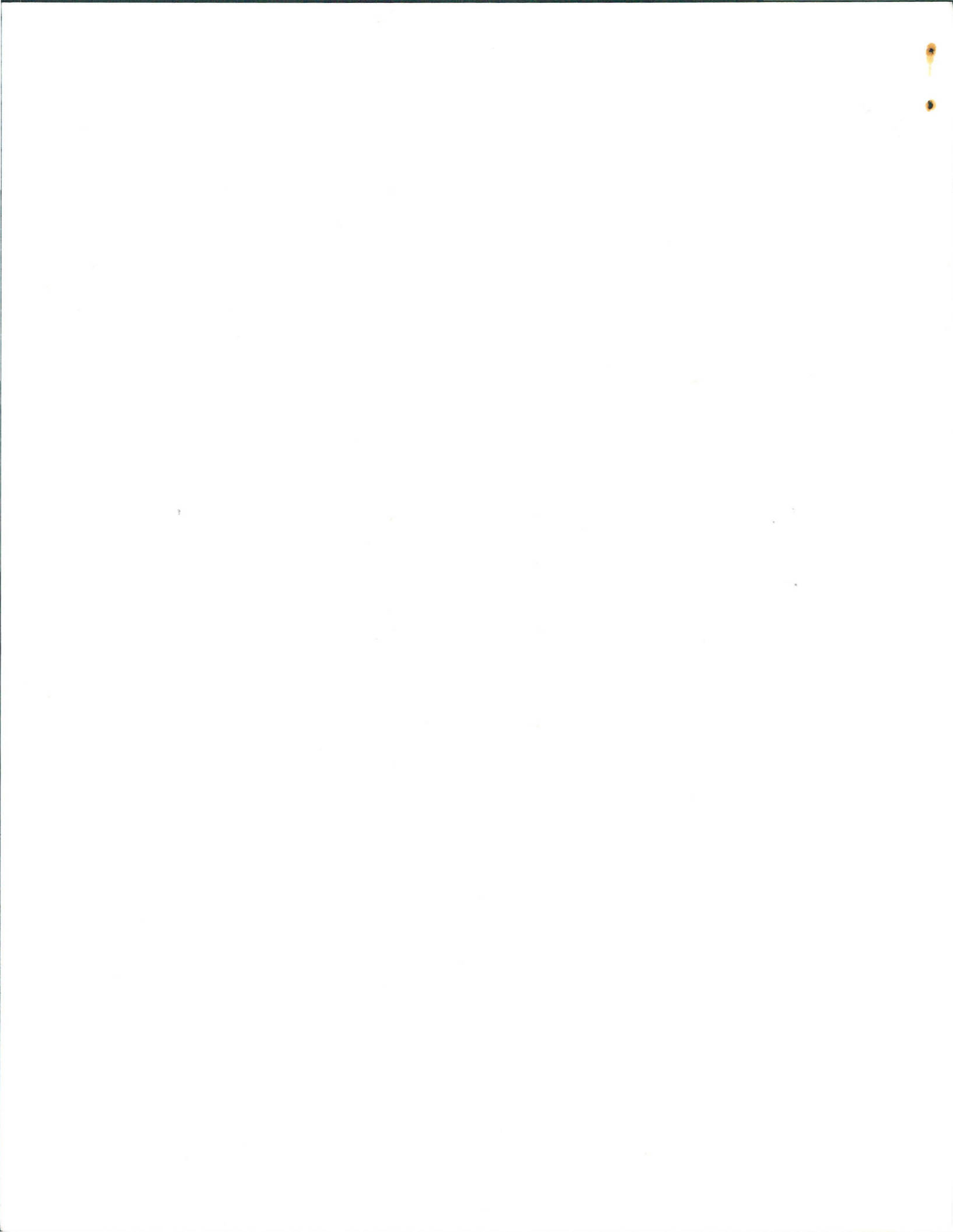


of course

However, the communication of faith is certainly also a linguistic act and can be reduced to this abstract and general scheme. In our case, however, this scheme is not only abstract but inadequate; it does not fit the complex act of sharing with other men the very special matter we call faith.

From the side of the "emissary" there is the subject: I am speaking, acting, expressing myself. But I am not only speaking, I am remembering, enjoying, reasoning, and appreciating the value of the Gospel, and I am deeply concerned about sharing the same faith.

I, who am involved in this act am not only a ^{is} subject, ^{is} but a complex reality, with my own history, life and spiritual attitude. To define all these, it is not enough to appeal to the



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illucutionary act or a perlocutionary as Searle and Austin explained at the linguistic level. I am a living subject but also an objective reality--a "subject-object" who shares his life experience with others. My experience is communicated through my own cultural media: images, words, reference, and customs, and this is done with a familiar from of significative elements.

From the side of the "receiver," reality is just as complex or even more so. In the linguistic scheme the receiver is only a term, an object I have to reach, like some material to be printed: It is passive. In reality, this subject is a person who must listen, pay attention, decipher words, find a meaning and be transformed by this. In experience, we encounter a true subject. The receiver is an ⁿobject-subjectⁿ, full of initiative and radiant power. Moreover, he moves in different horizons of thinking, sensations, traditions, stresses and interests.

All these are more or less distant, and sometimes opposite to those of the emissary, I, the emissary at the same time am impacted by the culture of the object, from his words and body language, from their references, logical structure, emotion, clothes, social organization and environment. I am an object for his questions and answer a subject-object, just as he is an object-subject.

Most important of all, I am offering information and values which were not produced by a particular culture such as my own, because they were revealed and hence, born from an ⁿindependentⁿ source.

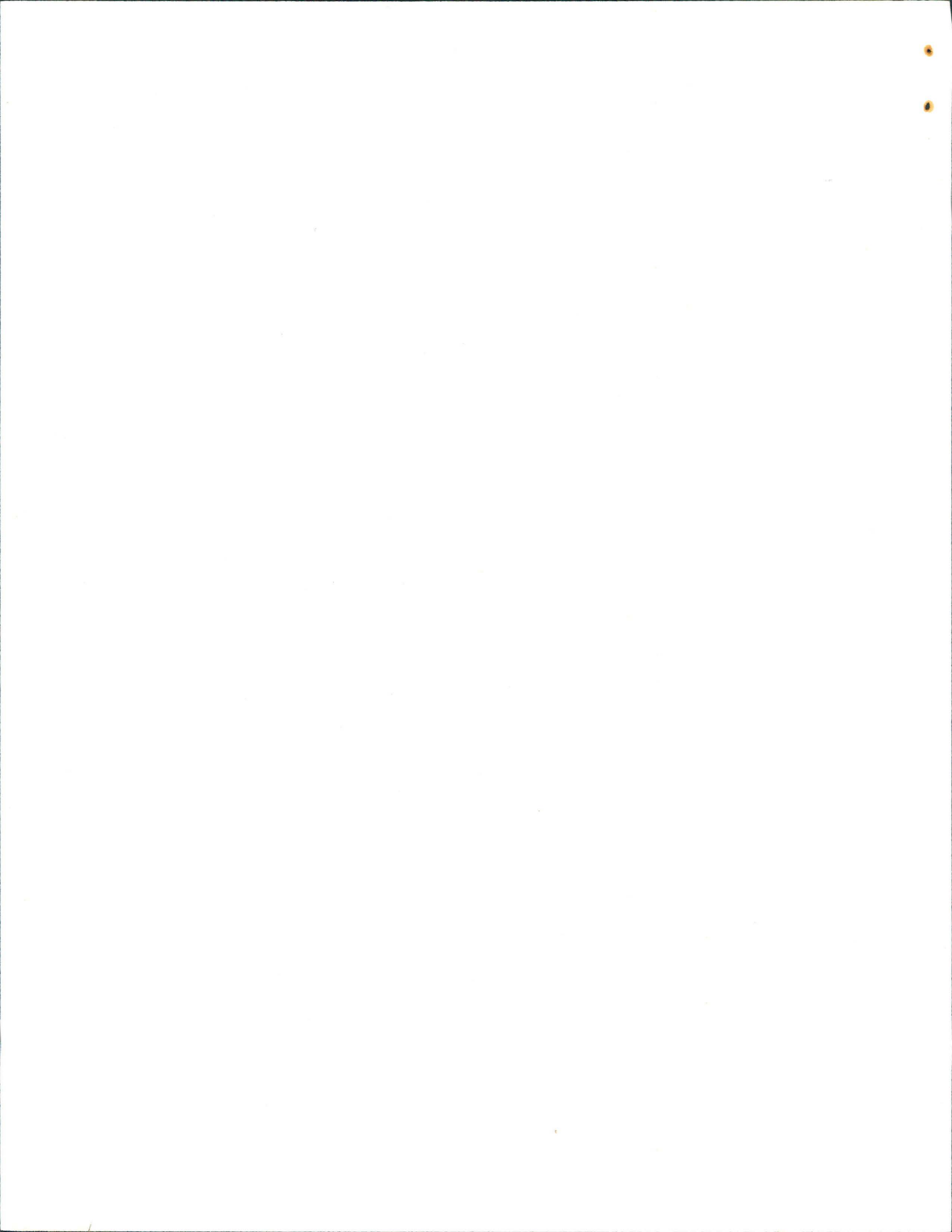


I will try to enlighten this very complex situation in which two subject-objects are dealing with a very strong "content"--not scientific, literary, nor verifiable, but metaphysical, transcendental, and spiritual as is the faith. *content of revelation and hence*

I will take a phenomenological approach to reach what Dr. McLean in his introduction says: "such phenomenological analysis enables us to look more deeply into the origin of our own subjectivity and thereby to expand the focus of our awareness from mankind to the divine as the objectively transcendent source in relation to which our conscious life stands as a gift manifesting the intimate divine life of love." We wish to put this whole problem in the context of Edmund Husserl's fifth Cartesian Meditation.

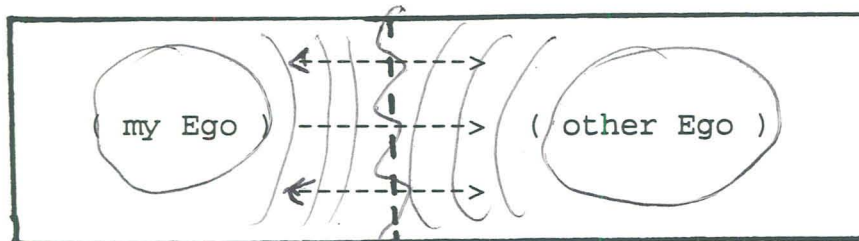
The phenomenological point of view always begins from an act of experience in which it is set, namely, my particular life experience here and now. All our speculation, reflection, or reduction concern this immediate, lasting and changing act, which lives and perdures, is deep and unique. In the fifth Meditation, Husserl explores my experience as an Ego before another person (another Ego) and of other men as "others."

My experience reveals the presence and the action of the other upon me. Of the two Egos, mine is a subject and the other Ego, an object. The two terms are interchangeable because they begin from experience itself. At the same time, this "other Ego" as object is revealing itself as a subject, acting with me, knowing me, speaking to me. In speaking to the other ego, then



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the following scheme obtains:



I am the subject (emissary) = active; The other Ego (receiving) = passive, is a subject too.

But between the two (persons) the message which communicated must be transferred through two cultures: the culture of the emissary and that of the receiver. My Ego has his own culture that I ^h understand: the other ego has his own culture that I ^h do not understand.^h I must summarize the culture of the other to my own because he is asking and challenging me in my own experience.

How can the emissary Ego be acquainted with the truth he communicates if this is not received through the same medium? This is the general problem of all acts of communication with others which we bring into focus from the point of view of the faith. For phenomenology, this simple act of communication is not without solution when we put it in the immediate frame of the living experience. ^h No matter how complex, an experience can always be described and analyzed. But in this special case of the faith (as the content of the divine revelation) the message must be translated from the first culture to the second, from one subject to the other, as a whole that transcends both cultures and is not properly signified either.

At this point, some would recall Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, or Derrida or Richard Rorty. From the theory of the superman of Nietzsche, from the private language of Wittgenstein, or from the particular language of Rorty, it is not really possible to give a good explanation of the possibility of sharing a truth, common to these different languages. Freidrich Schick² attempts to overcome this apparent impossibility and the incommunicability between the subjective meaning of languages (Rorty) and to build a bridge between two strange spheres of meaning and incompatible horizons. *

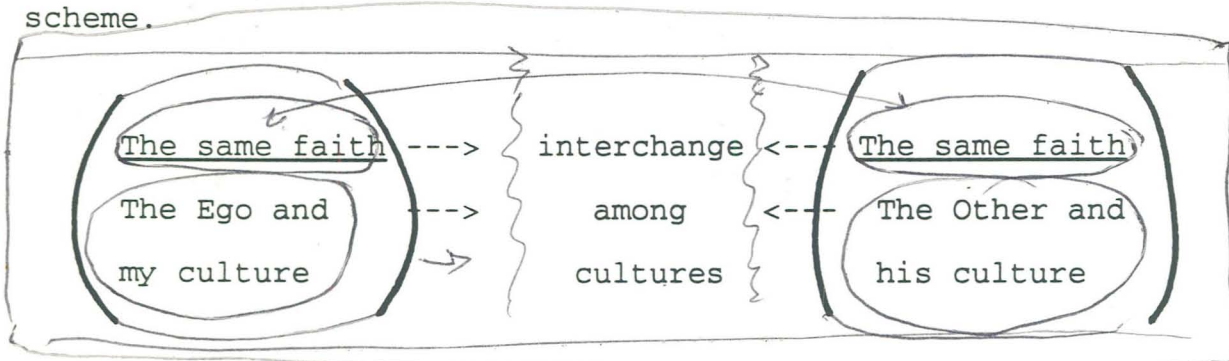
From the phenomenological perspective, the two languages and the acts of communication acts are themselves objects of experience; they allow a progressive advance of mutual understanding in similar form as we progressively and coherently achieve true physical or psychological perception. The experience is ongoing and ^{is} present in our intellectual reflexive activity as in its permanent foundation. The process of understanding the other is always open and can be improved through new action and dialog among the two, three or more, until some agreement and a common consciousness of sharing the truth is achieved. In the fifth meditation of Husserl, the dialog, interchange with others and new approaches are possibilities which human experience can explore, and carry out on the basis of the lebens-welt.

This reduction of a speculative problem to experience is an essential aspect for our theme of communication of faith, which

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we must clarify. For it is truly the central point of the whole question: where do we find the means to establish a contact that allows for a living, conceptual, emotional and practical "appropriation" of the faith? This might be called the "transcendental" dimension of action of communicating faith. If we can attain a clear understanding of it, we will be able to pass beyond the limits of our own culture and that of the other subject. In this specific occasion we will be sharing the faith not only with our neighbor but with the universal and divine knowledge and with the faith as the power of divine life.

This situation can be represented in a more complex graphic scheme.



The content of a message is transmitted through a medium (or ~~medium~~ ^{mean}) given to me, namely culture, which can serve also for sending the message. The medium for receiving a message from other men is also my culture. In the case of two different cultures there are then two different media or intellectual instruments for presenting significance or meaning. What is most important in this act of communication is not the means (or medium) but reaching signification or the same meaning.

In the communication of faith, the goal is to realize

① - Richard Cobb-Stevens: *Human and Analytical Philosophy. Phenomenologia* 16
Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press 1990, (p. 91-95)

"Husserl shows how logic and semantics can be rooted in subjective intuitions
without be reduced into merely subjective phenomena" (p. 91)

Karl Marx did see (in his German - Ideology) that the individual subject, even lost
inside the complex net of cultural relations, (political, intellectual, emotional),
But he doesn't understand the human group as ^{not real person!} the ~~theory~~ of production of the cultural
medium - in contrast he ascribes it to the social class - "the individuals) find their conditions
of life formerly established, they become, yet remain, their position in the life, and at the same
time their personal development"; - This absolutization of the concept of ~~the~~ class ~~degrades~~ the
individual _{they are subordinate to their class.} and multiplies
"on the subordination of the individual to their class becomes at the same time a subordination
to every type of representation" — there Marx substitute the abstract concepts of class
to the concrete reality of individual in his group that produces culture. —

through interchange a sign which in two different mediums produces the same meaning. This is the focal issue: is it possible; is it able to be realized at all levels of communication? Can two or more persons read the same meaning in different means?

At some abstract consideration there seems to be no theoretical or practical incompatibility. ^① The problem arises in the real world, especially if we are conscious of the dynamic aspect of the faith. As we saw the "milieu" or medium is first of all a linguistic one, but generally is not exclusively so. There are the sounds, moods, symbols and material objects produced by the culture--all the complex combinations we call "culture". We have to ~~transpare~~ transpose the basis of the culture which binds us, namely our Ego or most intimate essence (our personality, identity, spiritual conception, intellectual world) and to transmit the message there to other Egos.

At this point it becomes clear that culture is not only a means that allows us to communicate faith in some circumstances, but a necessary context which influences, modifies, and in some circumstances could perhaps manipulate the content of the revelation we intend translate to the other. At the same time it could become a hard obstacle which closes off any true, objective or faithful production of meaning. (1)

This danger impels us to examine closely the epistemological aspect of the process of understanding which connects human persons in their continual interweaving with each other. In the



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introduction we referred to ethnic groups not merely because they are universal throughout the contemporary world, and because the consciousness of their diversity, the right of pluralism and of small communities to their own cultural expression is established almost officially; but because the phenomenon of the small groups is strongly alive. Small recently formed communities have become an object of daily discussion and seem to be a character of the "new age."³ It is remarkable to find in Husserl in the '30s a vision of the strong substance of culture creating among members of a group a net of relations very similar to the new collective personality.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEM OF THE CULTURE IN THE COMMUNICATION OF FAITH.

If we attempt to describe culture as a medium around myself, with myself as subject in the communication of faith (a first step for a phenomenological reflexion) we find that this culture in itself (seen experimentally) is not at all homogeneous. It presents many levels, which have from this epistemological point of view, different definitions, and inner consistency. In a culture we find external objects, material or intellectual products, traditions, behaviors, routine pictorial representations, art fictions, myths, social relations, practical skills, words, rules, concepts and ideological systems. Many are very general and common to other cultures; others are general in a specific culture, while others are exceptionally unique. All are essential or not essential aspects of the act of



communicating faith. It is necessary to put some order in this heterogeneous material and to make clear how the understanding works with each sector.

To do so we can speak of "levels" of knowledge, establishing a scale of abstraction from the lowest to the highest. In the understanding, the lower is the closest to the physical experience of something; it is the most sensible, the most particular and the most limited by conditions of space and time. Above this we place psychological knowledge and its objects, and so on until we reach ideas and concepts as the most general and abstract, and finally the pure logical structures void of any concrete content.

If going up, step by step we can affirm that from a certain point of view the superior level is better than the inferior, perhaps from another point of view the inferior levels are more close to the real life, to the lebens-welt. For the communication of the faith, this is an essential point. When experience reveals an opposition of cultures, words and symbols, it will be necessary to consider these oppositions in conjunction with the difference in levels.

We deal then with two parameters similar to two Cartesian coordinates: the peculiarity of the levels, and the quality of the oppositions. The two may be able to provide a more complete horizon for the problem and a new vision of experience as a whole, giving us new dimensions of things and persons.

I will attempt to give an idea of these levels and



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oppositions only in order to build a general frame and open new ways to approach the "core" of effective communication of the very important extraneous content that is the faith.

Opposition in cultural expressions is phenomenological. In the contact of two cultures my word is not yours, your emotional reaction is not mine; my cultural context of words, concepts, reasoning and relating are not yours. Consequently, our first question is about the nature of these oppositions: cultural, conceptual and sensible. We take the opposition at each level of knowledge first in the cultural experience, and then in the experience of communication.

Here we do not suggest a dialectical opposition in the sense of Fichte, Hegel or Marx, namely as a process of antithesis between two terms in the generation of a synthesis. This form of opposition is understandable only in the dialectical identification of the rationale with the real, of metaphysics with logic, as did Hegel.

What is essential is rather to situate every opposition in its proper environment in order sharply to strengthen its particular value and significance. The following schema indicates some of the levels of opposition found in an act of communication between two cultures. The elements of the superior level are understood as more abstract and general, for example, the elements of a statement. The lower level is more deeply implicated in immediate physical experience as an originary act of life. The schema separates five levels of possible



oppositions in communication:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. LOGICAL | = general structures of the intellectual activity. Logic, mathematics, relations, etc. |
| 2. CONCEPTUAL | = essences, mental representations, ideas, every content of intellectual knowledge. |
| 3. EMOTIONAL | = values, praises, axiological dimension. |
| 4. PSYCHOLOGICAL | = personal, selfishness, tendencies, interests, attitudes. |
| 5. PRACTICAL | = intuition of many forms, activity, works. |

We shall comment briefly on the three principal steps. This should suffice to clarify some of the big problems in the act of communicating faith.

A - The Opposition at the Logical Level

This opposition is the most universal and easy to affirm, if not so easy to understand. Its signification is very sharp and its sense very definite. If we say $2=2$, apparently there is no opposition, they are the same. The sameness is a total identification and absolutely general. If we write $2=3$ we consider only one aspect of the diversity. The opposition is as absolute as the sameness. In words we would say: "two is not three;" "God is not man". Logical opposition shows the universality and the oneness of the human mind. At this level are



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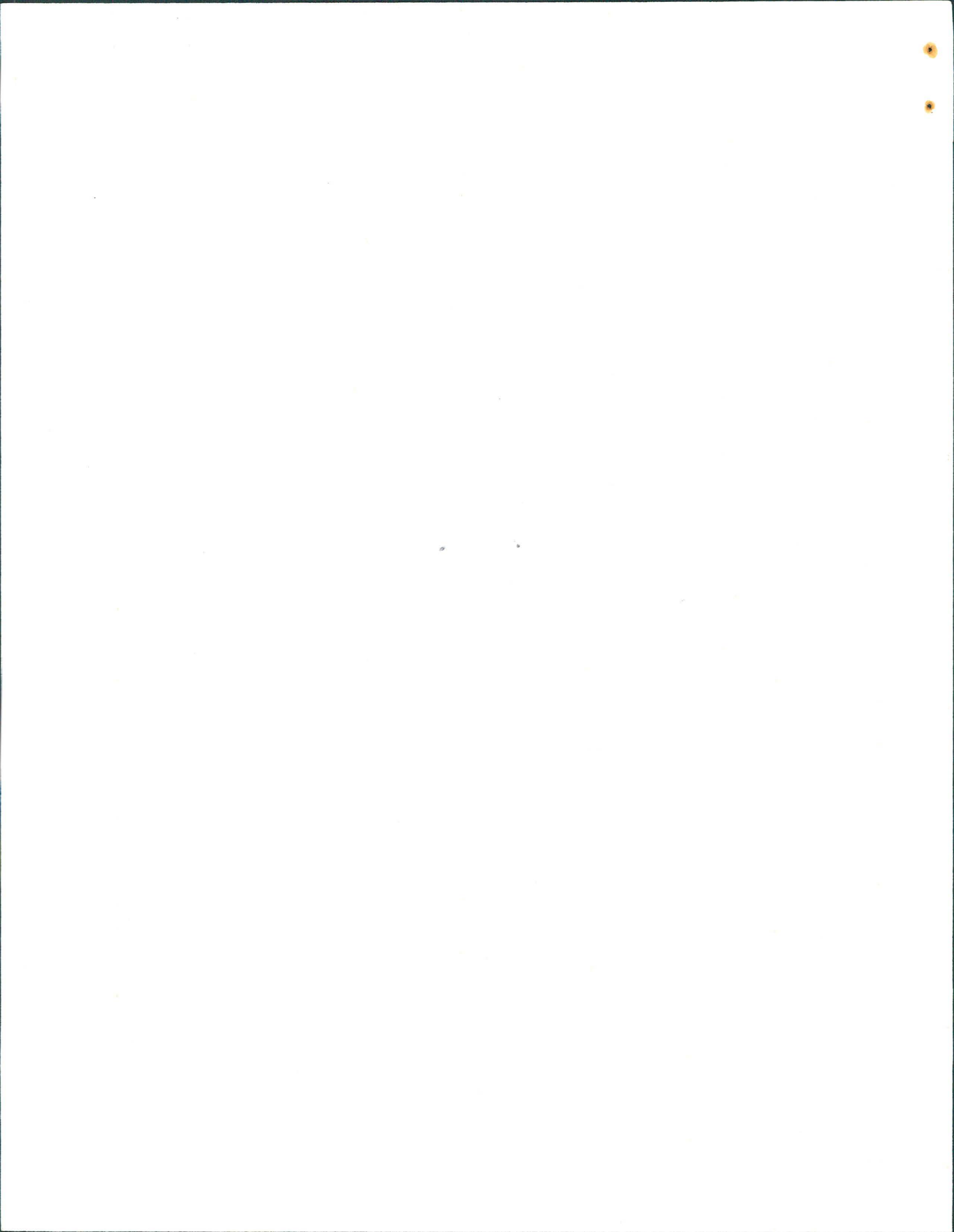
situated all the mathematical and logical structures. These are exact values; they lack any variation in time and space. They can be communicated to every man in every time. But not everyone understands them because they are abstract and at the highest level.

In general we admit them as the transcendental level and as absolutely human. They lead us to the universal mind, to the laws of earth and space. What is their effect on the communication of faith? Great mathematicians may be skeptical as Bertrand Russell or faithful as Leibnitz, but their faith or lack of it is not related to these structures.

The series of symbols: \neq , $=$, \rightarrow etc. express the relations: more, less, equal, different, contrary, superior, inferior, bigger, etc. All manifest their logical opposition through the use of negative utterances. The consonant (K) can mean "constant," and we suppose that their negative opposition is a constant and unlimited.

This means that apparently there could not be opposition between cultures at the logical and transcendental level, and communication there would find no obstacles. All logical structures do exist in every man and facilitate understanding at this level. But human beings generally do not live at the logical level, or make love with multiplication tables. Why? Perhaps because these divine structures are void of any descriptive or conceptual content. The more universal, the less living.

But some difficulty exists even at this level if we analyze



for example the "sameness" of $(2=2)$, $(100=100)$ and $(5+3=8)$ or $(-5=-2+-3)$. Are all the "samenesses" truly the same? What of the following two: -- "A table is not a chair"

-- "John is not a rock"

Is there any common opposition in the two statements? Is there a "K"?

If a logical negation is a sharp and pure negation (or a logical opposition) why should we feel angry if anybody says: "You are not a good citizen"? Is this opposition different from the former ones? This problem will become evident at the following level.

B - Opposition Between Concepts

At the level of knowledge, the concept, ideas or other cognitive structures which carry meaning or informative content are not simply logical structures, able to be reduced to an unique analytical point of view. Their references depict some objects, things or situations of all type of reality: material, intellectual, social, personal or collective.

We understand a concept in a general sense as a mental expression which corresponds to some notion of things which find linguistic formulation through statements. For example, to the question "Is John working there?" the answer is: "He is." The information is: "John is working there." In brief, we reduce concepts to nouns, for example: "the sea, book, mind, body, soul, spirit, God" or: "politics, ethics, work, liberation theology,



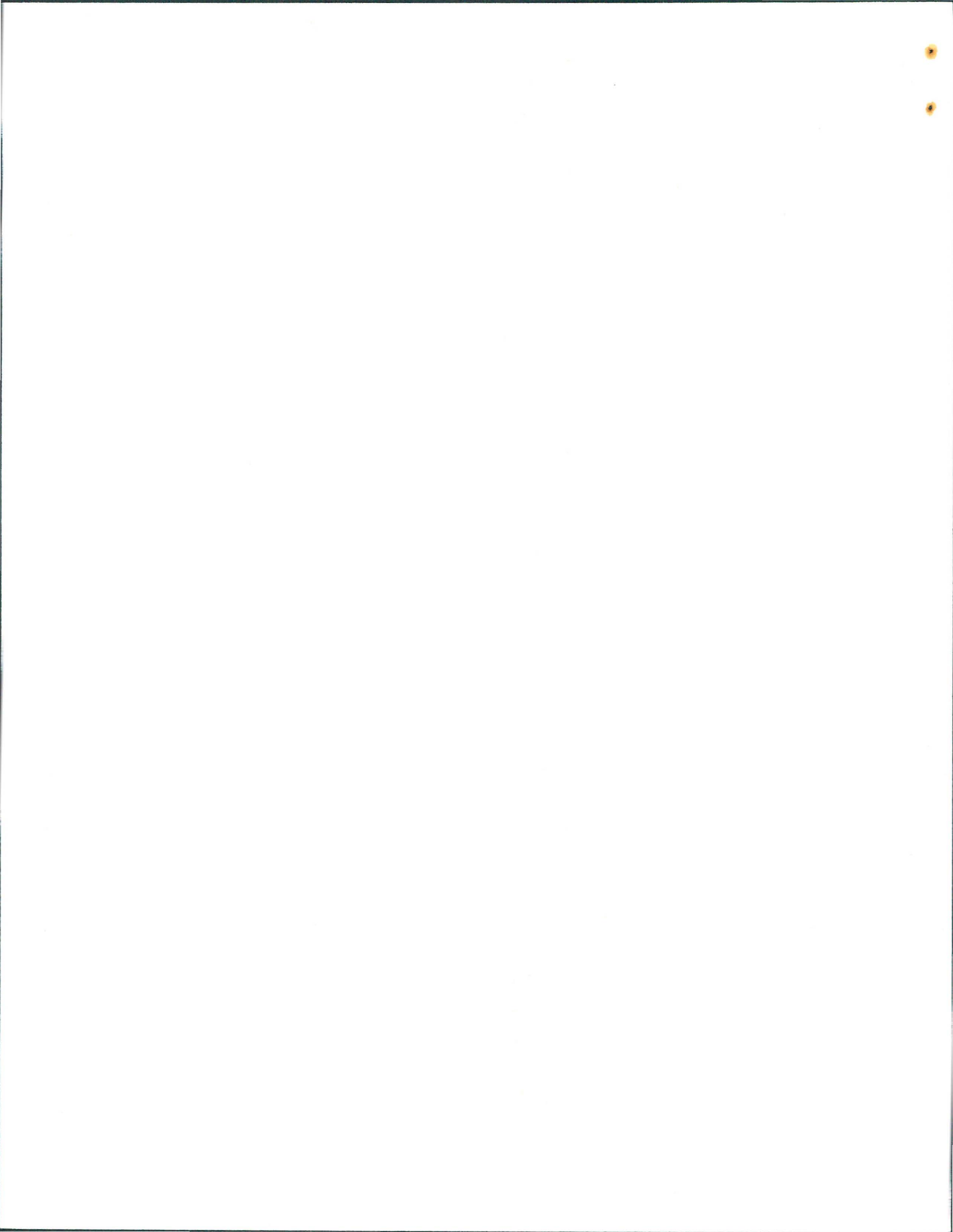
idea of salvation." Simple or complex, these concepts involve much information, which we are supposed to be able to communicate to the other.

Of course we can focus upon them only as logical entities and say: "John is working there" is a statement opposite to "John is not working there". This is logical opposition and in some form as general and absolute as are mathematical statements. Here we are taking the logical point of view and analyzing concepts. All men can understand them. I can say: "God is the creator", as logically opposed to: "God is not the creator". The statement would have absolute and general value. The opposition is only a logical one, and the understanding is only a logical understanding.

But this logical consideration is not very useful when we wish to give information about creation. Evidently, in our current mentality all oppositions are not logical oppositions. Their structures are not those of logic, but refer to a meaning or real fact. We do not consider it an illogical opposition; in some respect it is logical too, but it is not only so; it is more. Thus we must change from a logical point of view to a semantic, psychological or metaphysical one. All are involved in the acts of communication.

Changing the point of view changes the measure of information we get, and the nature of the opposition from logical or dialectical to that of meaning and of content.

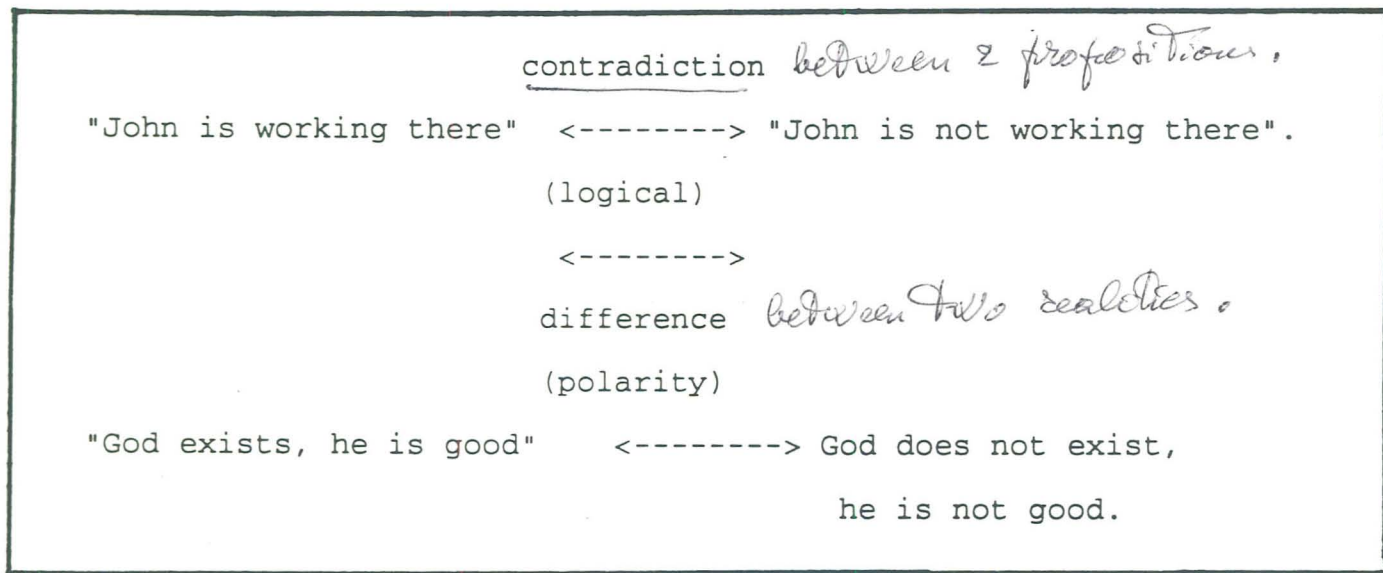
This new type of opposition we will call, not logical, but



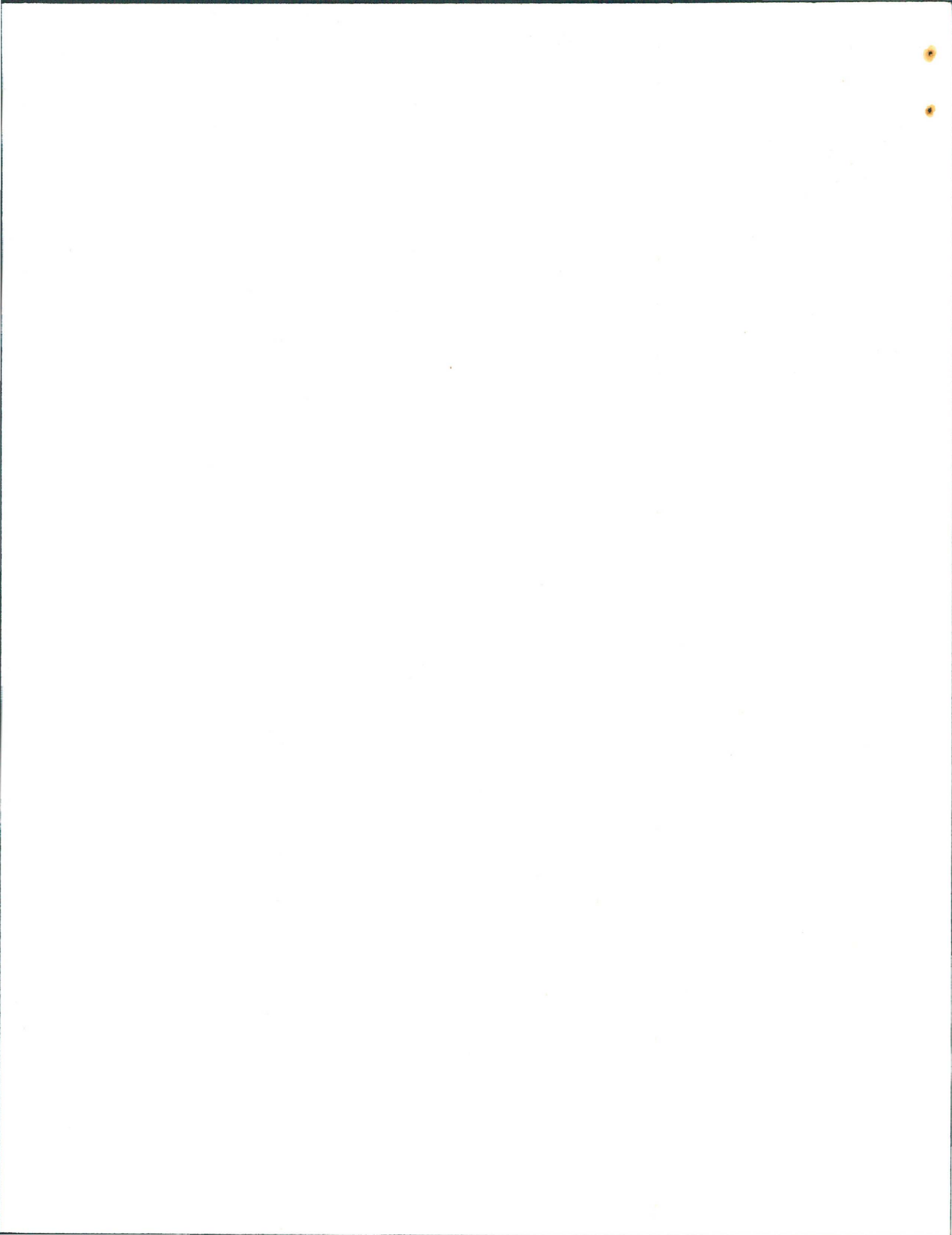
"polar" opposition. The opposition between "God exists" and "God does not exist" can be seen not only as a logical one, but as a polar opposition.

Husserl sometimes uses the term "polar," as does Paul Ricoeur. But maybe they did not attend directly to the phenomenon of polar opposition, which for us is essential to differentiate the levels of meanings in the act of communication.

If we take the statement: "John is working there," as opposite to "John is not working there," not as logical opposition but as polar opposition, we find that the two propositions are not contradictory at all. We have the following scheme:



We would not call them contraries or subcontraries, because all these terms are situated in the logical point of view. Let us step out of the logical point in order to penetrate more deeply



into the signification of the terms.

The terms "polar" and "polarity" refer originally to real poles. The north is opposite to the south, but their opposition is correlative--one depends upon the other as a magnetic reality. One could not exist without the other. We can use them abstractly to indicate the direction on a map as if they were independent, but their true life is magnetic and the magnetism is not a point but a force spread throughout the earth to produce the poles.

In a polarity we must make a continued relation among the terms and relatives in order to understand their meaning. One pole is supported by the other: there are many intermediate positions among them and many relations around them which constitute the context of their signification. Note that in the example, "John is working there," we can find that John was hired but he is not actually working; or that he generally is working, but not today; or that recently he was fired but he is there to fix something. In these many different situations how would we understand the opposition with "John is not working there?" How is one to understand this?

With the propositions of faith, this kind of polar opposition would be more complex and difficult because the elements that compose the horizon are far from our physical experience. The logical point of view (which was used more or less consciously in evangelization for centuries) is not the most interesting in the communication of faith because in



evangelization we try to reach the true essence of faith, and then to get in touch with the content of the information.

When we compare a man with something that is not a man (a man with a woman, the good with the evil, the same with the dangerous) all are polar oppositions if we set them in the context of true experience. True experience is alone capable of communicating faith. The complexity is more evident in comparing the human with the divine being, the earthly horizon with the eternal. In these cases, the influence of everyone's culture is more radical, and the opposition from one culture to the other is stronger.

For all such information and opposition, the one most suited to life is not the logical but the semantic perspective because the semantic view is closer to the experience and refers to life. In two cultures:

my concept of man <--(is opposed)--> against your concept of man
my idea of holy <--(is opposed)--> against your system of holy
things.
my relation to the world <----> against the relation you have.

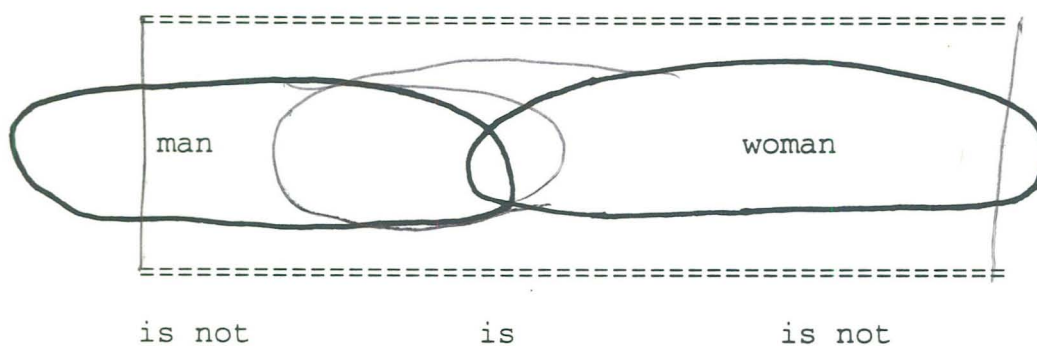
The statement: "God is a thing" against "God is not a thing" is only a polar opposition that admits some common understanding between two cultures if we establish the semantic context and the polar terms that generate its metaphysical understanding.

For it will be necessary to deepen our point of view from

the logical to the metaphysical level, or to the psychological or the experimental one which is the level of life. From the semantic point of view, the opposition is never absolute and complete because the polarity between these extremes allows for many related and overlapping meanings.

For example: "God is not a man." whereas in logical opposition there is a simple contradiction polar opposition we can encounter more similarities than differences. To understand the polar opposition then we must relate the meaning of the words to the general background of the culture which must be comprehended deeply enough to reach the level of its significance and life (the lebens-welt). If we take the example: "A man is not a woman," in logic this is only a negation. In the semiological view, however, we have two different images and nouns which in part are common and in part different. In the semantic perspective, the weight of the common substance and problems can overcome the dissimilarities.

We can represent this fact in the following scheme:



In preaching to the Ki 'che' people in Guatemala, we say, "This



mountain is not God," we must consider the same scheme. "The mountain is not --is --is not God." Because in their culture, there is not a clear division between man, the world, and God. At the level of life, the communication among them involves their whole existence, personal and social.

This is not a dialectical synthesis, but a polar whole. The polarity is not simply linear or between two, it can be among three, four or more. We can speak of bi-polarity, three-polarity, or multi-polarity. In this form, we can understand how this view opens our living experience to a culture and from our own culture to those of others.

To generalize, it is easy to contemplate a line, a segment A--B.



If we point out that A is not B we see only the logical aspect of the opposition. If we consider A as a point in space with a reference, we find only that : A depends on B; A is a function of B. In the same form: B is a function of A. The polarity is evident if we want to set the value of this line A--B. We can add a series of points from A to B: a1, a2, a3, a4, ... and other series from B to A: b1, b2, b3, b4, ... We can always use the logical view and say: A is not a1, A is not b1, or b2, and so on. This could be a good exercise, but not a communication of content and therefore is not practical for transmitting the faith.

This distinction leads us directly to the encounter of two

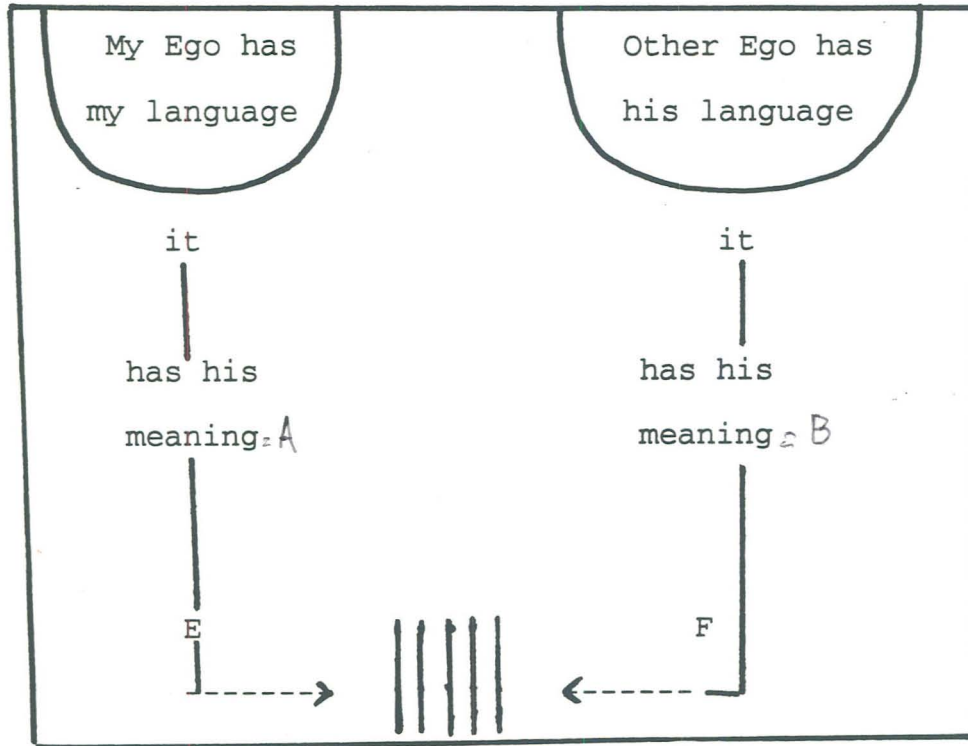
24 *Evangelization and Cultures*

cultures in evangelization. Two "idioms" are logically opposite (English=A, Spanish=B) but they have a semiological and semantical dimension and live with the life of the people. Two idioms are two different experiences of the world and are expressed in many languages. The experience is actual and the starting point of all the consideration which could follow. When they stretch a contact, it becomes part of the experience. I have the experience of my own idiom. I have the experience of the idiom of the other. I have the experience of the contact between the two.

From the experimental and living consciousness, I must establish a process that draws us together until it leads from bi-polar or pluri-polar oppositions to a coincidence of meanings. In this experimental framework, we can begin the task of evangelization as the search for common meaning.

The approach of logical positivism whose first reality is language is very different. Richard Rorty is a prominent example.⁴ For him, the idiomatic substance is a property of the subject and becomes a subjective reality that cannot be shared with neighbors. We can briefly summarize this as follows:





The individual as member of a particular culture shares the meaning with persons having the same idiom and language, and there can be no dialogue between cultures. The intellectual mood of the "New Age" is very similar, this and in some aspects very dangerous. It leads to a lack of ability to communicate between different small communities. Sometimes they explore a more general and partially common means of communication and discover a solution to real interchange between men. But that escape only translates the problem from a more restricted field to a bigger one without producing a true solution. *Our* *Have*

foundation is always experience and through the experience the human contact, the dialogue, the spiritual interchange deeply in the life.

*Drawed the split among meanings. They social anthropologists studying cultures from the perspective of their members and not only found separate images of themselves but some distinct understanding of the world. * 9*

(Clifford Geertz: Local Knowledge. -



C. Contact at the Emotional and Sensible Levels.

At the lower level the polar opposition is in the intimate perception of being as first and immediate experience: the emotional, axiological, aesthetic and practical.

And we find some contrast between these: good, bad, right, wrong, evil, beautiful, etc., or better, worse, best, etc. The polar opposition at his level is more rich and intense; it is not only an opposition between worlds as found among concepts, but opposition of sensibility and phantasy; it is historical, emotional, and more.

At this level, a speculative translation of terms is not enough; a living relation and emotional involvement are needed. At the emotional level, men are proud of their own cultures and feel the identity of their group and culture as the realization of human value and an expression of the true essence of the world.

At this level, the dialogue is deficient because the abstract concepts do not share the compact power of the cultural environment. The screen that separates the two cultures at this level is the strongest. But from the other side, there is a constant process of action and reaction among the cultures. The forms of acculturation and transculturation are particularly active phenomena. What could be lost in theoretical efficacy can be gained in acts of practical transference.

AN IMPORTANT IMPLICATION

If our analysis is not completely wrong then the

↳ We can observe this problem from outside, from the enemies of the Christian life.

If we reflect over the values that are ~~annihilated~~ ^{advertised} by television, the images of the success, the ideals of love, of prestige, that they offers and we compare it with the "standards" of the faith New Testament, this society does not look as Christian. - All this activity is against the content of revelation

— In spite of it
Notwithstanding,) nobody attacks theoretically the values of the Christianity, only
the practice is disliked, and dismantled with the practice
of the life " —

communication of faith has to be planned at a different level of the experimental knowledge, simplified by the three levels exposed here. There is some complementarity among them. The highest (logical and conceptual) level offers more credibility and security in terms of systematic knowledge of spiritual conceptions. As human structures and expressions, these are the most universal and have generally been employed through the history of the church.

But they are less significant for other cultures in penetrating the mysteries of the faith and the real nature of the Holy gospel. The more we descend to the deeper levels the substance of the communication expands, understanding grows and the power for the spiritual change and the effects of the application of the principles becomes more evident.

The lowest level is also the most capable (and speculatively the poorest); it has the force of life that communicates through mysterious and less evident media. We can summarize in the following graph the situation of evangelization from one culture to another. This scheme stresses the differences in order to bring out the perspective we developed in these pages. This allows us to observe that the polarity becomes more complex as the analysis focuses on progressively lower levels. The two cultures have approximately the same general structure:

* *William C. Placher* stresses this existential "need" in the contemporary delivring of the gospel. We reduced the faith to a set of concepts. The Christians try to assimilate these concepts, boring and ~~not~~ ^{very} interding. They do not digest it, and they don't live as true Christians. If "we wanted to persuade our fellow Christians to take the Gospel message seriously and to remain them, that it does not concern only some private corners of our lives but every aspect of our existence, then we could dream that a Christian vision might in important ways shape our national life" (paper enter) ←

The experience would be always the base and this experience with his pluralistic and differentiated dimension lead us to have many fields of contact with the things and with the others.

For example:

(A) I have the experience of the other Man B

1) My hand touch him on my hand and touch his hand and he touch me. The interchange is not a dialog but something new. Being, often in his sense of objectivity is apparently strong, but actually unsure - I am impressed by him.

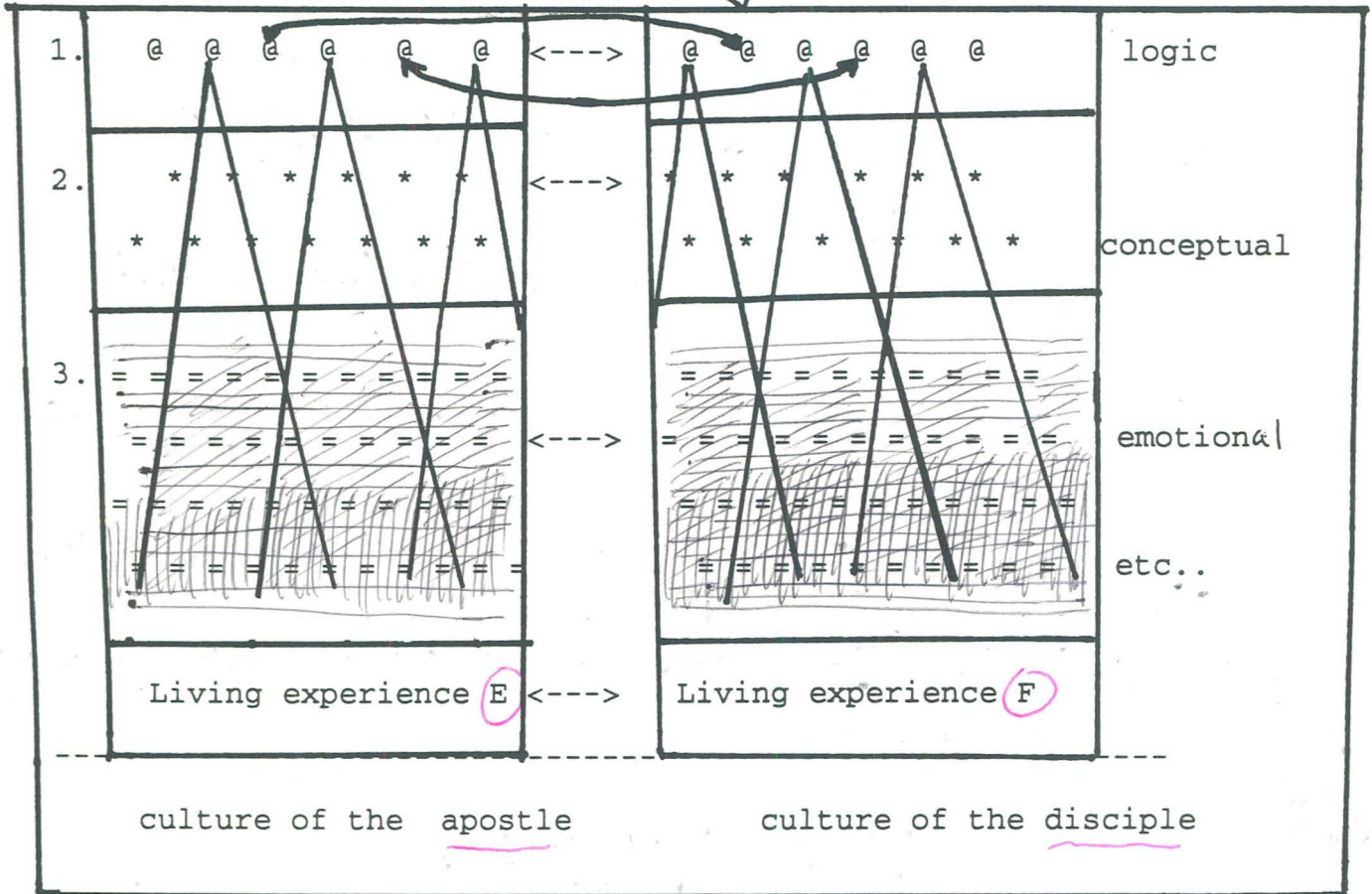
2) My impression of him meet his impression of me. This experience go to a different dimension, a new field a "new ludic-space". The understanding of the two at this level is more fine more high or more profoundly "sensitive" than the first. his sense of objectivity is broader,

3) I am speaking to him (A-B)

My word is given to him, and his word is given to me. This experience of words is immediate, is complex, and intellectual. - The interchange of words of our own understanding of myself and its understanding of him self. At this level the interchange of informations is at the same time: experience an epistemology. his sense of objectivity is "formal" is a real dimension of both. in a common experience: - categorical.

4) I am reasoning with him. To make a reasoning a deduction I have to open myself to him to be dynamic creative - but if I have a reasoning within, he is working to be is created dynamically with me - This is a three time dialog, an opens from one ego to the other and to the world. His sense of objectivity of "universal", "human".

5) I am reflecting over my own thinking and over his thinking. - This new field of "ludic-space", is different and his meaning is different. - But it has his own dimension of experimental reality. This new dimension is very transcendental as it the 4th step. but highest, he opens doors us to his sense of objectivity is "speculative" "essential" "structural", relativistic!



The deeper zone is the life zone. The lebens-welt not only alludes to the lowest level, it implicates all the levels where experience takes place. But here we focus on the zones of the immediate experiences that are more visible and far from the abstract speculation.

As we noted in the first point, the common ground of the faith is not the common ground of ordinary knowledge. This latter is natural and generally admits verification with some experiment; that is not possible in the faith. For this reason discussion about the true general concept is mere speculative and less highly flavored by content. Thus it will be necessary (at

Objectivity: in the "experience";

The "variation" of objectivity is not so materially distinguished, — into complexity of the life itself — by living. — There is a continuous and intermingling process.



The difference between a level of "objectivity" and the other is a fact of everyday life — not a speculative product. — We can separate it, from our analysis and describe every level separately with all characteristic relationships, — But the unity of the experience at all its levels is a actual whole not separated from the Lebens-Welt. — The concept "objectivity" must be too a whole to be true, with a lot of internal and external variations.

(a propósito de Lopez-Quintanilla: The knowledge of values p. 4 y 5)

this level as well) to attend to the meaning given by the other culture to the terms of the faith we are transmitting.

Bunzel Ruth in his book about Chichicastenango, a famous town of the Ki'che's, collected a large number of pagan prayers (c. 1930). To our modern sensibility these prayers have the sense of God that the Christian faith has proclaimed for centuries in a different cultural context. Our conception of God not only is confirmed, but improved by such prayers.

If at the first level we can use directly the structures in different cultures, in the second level we cannot use these structures, but must translate the content and in some measure change it. Finally at the lower levels, we have to share the life to achieve a common experience of the divine. The third level is an existential one which blends in to life the limits of rationality. The evangelization of cultures is actually the evangelization of the people by living with them and by sharing with them our complete spiritual experience.

This has the greatest significance for the missionaries. They need to plunge into the host culture with all the modern means to decipher it, penetrate it and make possible the translation of faith to his culture at every level of opposition. Even more he or she must establish a permanent dialog with this *strange* culture in all its dimensions in order to allow it to assume and assimilate with its own means the essence of the Christian message. *

There is an important book (the Pop Vuj) from the XVI

As ~~under~~ Jose Holiday reported - a Dominican man, from the ^{and his whole family} Troqueis tribe, "every spirituality must be embodied in one's cultural identity." - (La Voz Católica, Miami, January 1992)

century about their history, traditions and thinking of the Ki'che' people. But beyond this is also a living tradition that this people knows and renews in the daily manner of family living.

Other Guatemalan cultures such as the Mam, Kakchikel, Ke'kchi', Tzutujil, Ixil, etc. do not have an old book, but their tradition has been collected by the studies of many anthropologists and other researchers in linguistics, sociology and social sciences. It would be frustrating for the true apostle to learn their language without its making possible an adequate communication of the essential content at the semantic and psychological levels. For this a true work of hermeneutics, following the thread of Gadamer or Ricoeur would be more useful. As many as two or three hundred printed works of scholars offer momentous material for an analysis of this area. Similar basic material for the study of ethnic groups must exist in countries throughout the world.

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NOTES

① Robert L. Steinback, *Miami Herald* (June 28, 1992).

② Friedrich Schick, "Liberty, Equality," *Social Research* (Summer, 1992), p. 297.

③ Michel Werner, "Humanism in the Post-modern Age," *Religious Humanism* (Spring, 1992).

④ *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979).

⑤ Richard Cobb Stevens: *Humor and Analytical Philosophy*. *Strenuosa* 16, Dordrecht, Kluwer Acad, Press 1990 (p. 91, 11.)

⑥ William C. Flecker: *Preaching the Gospel in Academy and Society*, "Theology Today" April 1992. (p. 5)

« Evangelization as a cultural action »

(A frame for an epistemological problem)

Abstract =

- Evangelization is considered as ^{an} act to communicate the faith from the culture of the missionary to the other culture.
- From the phenomenological point of view the act is examined at different levels of abstractions ~~to find~~ a path to generate inside the new culture the meaning of the traditional faith of the Gospel.
- The analysis drives the evangelization to a necessary concern about culture of other people in order to make contact with them at their deeper levels and have a true conversion of the mind and life.

p. 11. (2) (4) Karl Marx: ^(Weologie Allemagne) ~~German Ideology~~ cited by J-P Durand and R Weil in: "Sociologie Contemporaine" - Paris 1989 ^{edifed. 1989 p. 56}

p. 29 (10) We have some important testimonies among Catholics of different cultures who experienced the difficulty of making their own, ~~on~~ the style of life and the tradition of ~~foreign~~ cultures. One of the recent ones is Sister Jose Hobley, a franciscan nun, from the ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~quilt~~ ^{quilt} Indians. She said: "every spirituality must be embodied in ones cultural identity" and cited a known ~~work~~ ^{work} Thomas Merton: "Who don't study the nation-american spirituality, as something imported."

p. 25 (12) Clifford Geertz. Local Knowledge, 1989. NY. -----

