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Remark of the author

The contributions in this anthology were published in various media in the years 2000 to 2020.

Certain references to events, names, and contexts (biographical, political, cultural) may no longer be accurate today, but only at the time of the original publication.

References to the original publications can be found at the end of the anthology under «References to sources».

The contributions in this anthology have been proofread and corrected as a whole, so there may be still typing, layout or other errors.

March 2021

Josef Estermann

1. «Anatopism» as cultural alienation: Dominant and dominated cultures in the Andean region of Latin America

1. Introduction: From the *Chino* to the *Cholo*

The recent presidential elections in Peru – following the debacle of former president Alberto Fujimori – gave us a lesson in evaluating cultures and the symbolism transmitting their values and anti-values. Until 1990 the Peruvian political class had consisted almost exclusively of persons with white faces and European characteristics, except for a few *mestizos* who were able to enter the political scene. Economically speaking, the political elite represented to a very large extent the upper and the upper middle classes, despite the «socialist» or «social-democratic» political program of the leading party. But in reality, the population represented –in both ethnic and economic terms –amounted to less than ten percent of the population as a whole.

After the politics of bankruptcy of President Alan García in the final years of the decade of the eighties, the Peruvian population withdrew more and more from the «political clique» and from the traditional political parties. Notwithstanding that, the masses had not been looking for a mestizo (*misti*)¹ or even an indigenous representative, but elected a representative of the Nippon minority (of Japanese origin) by a huge majority: the *Chino*, Alberto Fujimori.² This act (together with constantly high support for him, even when the signs of corruption were already quite manifest) revealed one thing very clearly: Despite the fact that the Europeanised (or Westernised) way had been blocked by the disaster of Alan García, the people did not place their trust in an indigenous (or even *mestizo*) representative, but rather in a person who represents by his physiognomy and professional career (Fujimori was an agronomic engineer) the Asiatic worker, the «tigers» of the Far East that are supposed to have crossed the threshold to Western modernity.

This subtle but at the same time very overt racism (1. white – 2. yellow – 3. brown) returned also in the campaigns for the presidential elections in 2001. The very promising «Asiatic way» has been made impassable by the incredible manoeuvres of Fujimori and his personal advisor Vladimiro Montesinos to such an extent that the former admiration of the Japanese people has turned into deception and even enmity. It is part of the irony of history that Alan García, who had been wanted by Interpol until the beginning of 2001 because of bad administration of funds and corruption, rose like a Phoenix from the ashes and presented himself as the man who would save the country from the long arms of the *Fujimontesinista* mafia.

¹ This is the Quechua name for the Spanish «mestizo». The *mistis* generally have some occupation in commerce and business; many are also employees at public and private companies. Normally, they are bilingual, but the transmission of the native languages Quechua or Aymara to the future generations is going to be lost. It is the class which aspires to become *criollos* as fast as possible.

² Because of his Japanese origin and East-Asian physiognomy, Fujimori is known among his citizens as the «Chinaman» (*el chino*).

In the end, the *cholo* Alejandro Toledo³, descendent of an indigenous family and with very clear Andean physiognomy, won the elections in the second round only 3 percent ahead of García. What has happened? Has the cultural and ethnic «value» of the indigenous world suddenly experienced a paradigmatic revolution? Can we speak of the result of a process of conscientisation among the indigenous and mestizo majority?

Without getting into further details, we must consider the following points. First, the result of the elections does not demonstrate popular sympathy for the *cholo* Toledo, as much as antipathy for the «bourgeois» García. It was a negative election. Next, we should not under-estimate the fact that Toledo has had - in economic and cultural terms - quite an «orthodox» career: he graduated in economics in the United States and was a student at prestigious Harvard University. He is married to a Belgian anthropologist. I think that he has not been elected because he is a *cholo* and a representative of the indigenous population, but because of his capacity to link himself and – as a future president – the whole country to the globalising economic and cultural «centre» of the United States. Concerning the symbolism of his presentation it must be said that he tries to «dance at two weddings at the same time» (to use a Peruvian expression). On the one hand, he makes the foreign investors and the national *criollo* elite believe in his capabilities as an economist; and on the other, he nourishes among the indigenous and mestizo population the hope that he will identify himself in political practice with the common people.

What do I want to explain with this very contextual, passing anecdote? What does it have to do with the issue of «the asymmetry and interaction of cultures in the context of globalisation»? And finally, what has it to do with philosophy? I am convinced that this event has to do with all these things. Through it, the cultural problematic of neoliberal globalisation in relation to indigenous cultures like the Andean one can be expressed *in nuce* in a very clear and meaningful way.

2. Anatópism of academic philosophy

For the purpose of my exposition I have chosen a pair of analytical concepts which have been elaborated by two Peruvian philosophers, in order to describe the situation of the cultures in general, and philosophy in particular, in the Latin American context. Víctor Andrés Belaúnde (1889-1966) coined in his *Peruvian Meditations* the notion of «anatópism» to stress the de-contextualised character of Latin American thought, which simply «transplants» Western philosophy onto American soil (*topos*) without taking into consideration the proper reality and the specific context of Latin America. Augusto Salazar Bondy (1925-1974) spoke about a deep «cultural alienation» of the Latin American elites, in the sense of an inauthenticity of their thinking.

Hegel's phrase about Latin America, especially about the philosophical thinking of the continent, is supposedly well known: «What is happening here up to this moment, is only

³ *Cholo* has a positive as well as a more pejorative meaning; a *cholo* is considered to be one of the people, a comrade and companion, but one can also be called *cholo* to manifest that he/she is an uncivilized, rude, backward and non-educated person.

the echo from the Old World and the expression of a foreign vitality...».⁴ The two concepts mentioned above seem to prove the Hegelian verdict that Latin American philosophy is characterised by a strong mimetism and the internalisation of an Eurocentric position. Salazar Bondy talked about a «culture of domination»⁵ which seems to mark intellectual life in many parts of Latin America.

Although it is true that since the 1960s huge efforts have been made by a group of philosophers and intellectuals to overcome this situation of alienation and anatopism in Latin America, the character of the official academic philosophy at most universities and seminaries on the continent has not really changed. And the same should be – *mutatis mutandis* – the case also in other parts of the so called Third World.⁶ The occidental conception of philosophy is still dominating philosophical thinking in the periphery, and this is the reason why Western philosophy is still the dominant kind of thinking, even – or above all - in non-Western cultures.

The concept of «anatopism» reflects to a certain extent the situation of a colonised country: a minority of allochthonous (or ectopic) people dominates a large autochthonous (or entopic) majority.⁷ The coloniser builds up in foreign territory an enclave, a place (*topos*) or space which is culturally and economically different from the surrounding area. Thanks to military and economic power, this minoritarian and ectopic (foreign, anatopic) culture becomes the dominant culture; it has as its main objective to penetrate and «pollute» the autochthonous cultures in all their aspects. This cultural imperialism did not come to a halt with political independence, but continued to become even stronger, as the dominant culture is able to extend its power to the areas of education, communication, and cultural production. The colonising elite has been replaced by a colonised elite, without changing the ideological framework of the dominant ideas.

In the era of neoliberal and cybernetic globalisation, national intellectual elites are no longer exclusively dominant; on the contrary, they are at the same time dominated. The cultural domination very faithfully accompanying the different strategies of capitalist globalisation makes use of the Westernised (North-Americanised or Europeanised) *avant-garde* in most parts of the non-Western world, in order to bring to the «barbarian» cultures the «gospel» of individualism, hedonism and (neo-)liberalism. The intellectual elites of many so called Third World countries have the function and duty to be multipliers and transmitters of foreign ideas, values, and customs. Via the educational institutions (or institutions of knowledge) – high schools, universities, institutes, or seminaries – the former

⁴ „Was bis jetzt sich hier ereignet, ist nur der Widerhall der Alten Welt und der Ausdruck fremder Lebendigkeit...»; Hegel 1979, 114.

⁵ Salazar Bondy 1969, 27.

⁶ See the results of a worldwide opinion poll on the situation of philosophy in different regional and cultural contexts, together with the answers of 103 women and men philosophers, in: Fernet-Betancourt 1999.

⁷ The terminology refers to the native land (*autos chton*), respectively to the place (*topos*) of the most important contextualisation of persons and groups. It is worth mentioning that the strict distinction between autochthonous and allochthonous becomes more and more obsolete to the degree that there are more and more migratory movements. In the context of the colony, the colonizer was the allochthonous (or ectopic) group which has been replaced during the process of independisation by a legally autochthonous political and economic class (in other words: a national one), but which culturally and ethnically still remained allochthonous.

political and economic colonisation is going on by other means. As a result, a kind of cultural schizophrenia has emerged: A schizophrenia between the silent masses of those who do not have access to the temples of knowledge and skills –often referred to as «brutes», «ignorants», «pre-modern» and «superstitious» – on the one hand, and a national elite which has the ability to follow the latest post-modern and cybernetic cry of the West, on the other hand.⁸

The classical scheme of socio-economic analysis by liberation theologians and philosophers – the model of centre and periphery and dependence theory – has been displaced from the world-wide scale to the national economies and to the relationship between the dominating culture and the dominated cultures. Taking the example of the Andean area, it is obvious that both economic power and the production of knowledge are concentrated in the capitals and the most economically active places. This situation becomes even more critical because of a strong political centralism typical for most (and not only the Andean) Latin American states. Educational politics, the contents of most of the mass media, the study plans and programs for all levels and disciplines, the type of cultural production and even the manner of clothing and eating are decided in Bogotá, Quito, Lima, La Paz and Santa Cruz. One of the most conspicuous example are the commercials on television (including the famous soap operas), because people with white skin, European characteristics, a cultivated use of language and North-American customs bombard the majority having dark skin, indigenous characteristics, native languages and local customs, with the bounties and virtues of Western culture. In this way, the national «centres» continue strongly colonising the various economic, social and cultural «peripheries» of their territories.⁹

Most of the more influential intellectuals have received their academic and professional formation abroad, preferably in Europe and North America; Alejandro Toledo is not an exception. This is even true of the first and second generation of liberation theologians (almost all men).¹⁰ The West no longer needs to send ambassadors of its culture in order to be sure about the global propagation of its values; it has its faithful representatives already on the spot. These «multipliers» or «spokespersons» have often become more orthodox than their European or North American mentors, in such a way that the most «orthodox» and «authentic» European philosophy and theology can nowadays be studied, ironically, at universities in the so called Third World. One can debate in Lima, Nairobi, or Beijing with internationally recognised experts on Hegel, Ricoeur or Heidegger, who often turn out to be more experienced and learned than their colleagues at European universities.

⁸ The psychological mechanism by which one feels superior to the other has not changed at all: lowering the other with pejorative titles («barbarians», «pagans», «underdeveloped» etc.), one can define oneself as superior and with the (natural) right to dominate, just as a father has the authority to dominate his children.

⁹ In most of the so called Third World countries, the worldwide bias between the economic and cultural «centres» and the «peripheries» is repeated. In the «globalised» centres, one can find wealth and Western lifestyles, technology, and science; in the marginalized peripheries, poverty and struggle for survival determine the life of the people. The positive effects of capitalist globalisation only «trickle down» to some islands within a sea of excluded human beings; once more, the benefits are privatised, the damages and errors socialized.

¹⁰ J.M. Bonino studied in the United States, J.L. Segundo in Louvain, J.P. Miranda in Frankfurt and Rome, G. Gutiérrez in Louvain and Lyon, E. Dussel in Paris and Münster, H. Assmann taught in Münster.

The anatomic situation of wide sectors of intellectual life in Latin America – but also and in Africa, Asia, and Oceania – is a faithful echo of the globalising strategies of a dominant transnational «culture» upon autochthonous cultures. It is not essentially different from the situation in colonial times; what has changed are the means of domination, the overcoming of natural and political borders and the velocity of penetration and transculturation.¹¹ Although this anatopism (which is a certain kind of cultural alienation) turns out to be most perfect and complete among the national intellectual *avant-garde*, it has reached the most humble homes in the rural areas, too. Hedonist individualism which is preached as part of the neoliberal campaign to open new markets, has already weakened greatly the traditional order of trans-generational and communitarian solidarity. Children refuse in many families to talk their native language of Quechua or Aymara because they think it to be backward and an obstacle to Western style progress.

Concerning (academic) philosophy, the general situation is not very different. Of course, there have been a good number of initiatives and intents to foster and promote an authentic Latin American philosophy during the last 40 years. Since Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810-1884) spoke in 1842 for the first time of an «American philosophy» and called for it to be made evident,¹² various generations of philosophers (women philosophers only appeared in the second half of the 20th century) have made efforts to «normalise» philosophical life in Latin America, to compete with European standards and to lay the foundation for authentic philosophising from the perspective of the continent. In the second half of the last century, there were some valuable proposals to escape from the anatomic constitution, eurocentrism and occidental character of the philosophy produced and taught in Latin America. The different currents of liberation philosophy are the proof of such efforts, together with some very initial attempts to rehabilitate the indigenous philosophical thought of *Abya Yala* (the native name for America).¹³

¹¹ The West only very rarely resorts today to military force or economic sanctions (as in Iraq or Afghanistan). The means of domination are more subtle and do not violate formal political sovereignty. Electronic interconnection – which could also be an instrument of solidarity and dialogue – has contributed very strongly to the penetration of non-occidental cultures with the media's «idolatry» of the West. For financial capital, speculation on the stock markets, mass media and digitalized communication and information, there are no more political borders or natural limitations (except the speed of light).

¹² In his work „Ideas para un curso de filosofía contemporánea», published in 1842, Alberdi suggests that an «American philosophy» has to be in its topics «political and social», in its engagement «ardent and prophetic», and in its method «synthetic and organic» (Alberdi 1978, 12).

¹³ Parallel to Liberation Theology, in the 1960s emerged in Latin America a Marxist oriented «Liberation Philosophy» the most distinguished representative of which is Enrique Dussel (cf. Dussel 1980; Dussel 1977-1980). In the 1980s, a «Philosophy of Popular Wisdom» (Sage Philosophy) began to be elaborated, an ethico-cultural current of «Liberation Philosophy», which pretends to rehabilitate the autochthonous thinking of Latin America. The principal representatives of this current are R. Kusch, C. Cullen, and J.C. Scannone. See Kusch 1962; Kusch 1970; Cullen 1978; Cullen 1986-87; Scannone 1982; Scannone 1990a; Scannone 1990b.

I prefer the native expression *Abya Yala* (which means in the language of the Kuna in Panama «the land where we live») instead of «America» which is a result of the desire of the Italian conqueror Amerigo Vespucci to immortalize himself. Normally, contemporary authors make a distinction between «Ibero America» or «Latin America» on the one hand, that is; the culture and society under Spanish and Portuguese influence; and «Amerindia» or «Abya Yala» on the other hand, that is; the original native culture and society, the so called «Profound America» (Kusch).

In spite of this, philosophical life at many Latin American universities is still dominated by the contents and methods of European and North American philosophies, or at best by the legacy of its own reception of these currents, like Krausism, Latin American positivism and Marxism.¹⁴ But even more «anatomic» seems the situation of philosophical training of future Catholic priests at the seminaries. The type of philosophy taught at these study centres is a dogmatic (neo-)Thomism, totally isolated from the individual and social situation of the students. The modern (and post-modern) European currents become integrated parts of the curriculum only insofar as it is necessary to know them to combat them; no thought is given to the idea of teaching an authentic Latin American philosophy. Fortunately, there are some outstanding exceptions which seem to prove the rule.

Although most of the aspirants for philosophical and theological studies in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia are young indigenous (mostly Quechua or Aymara) men and (just a few) women, the curricular contents do not at all reflect this cultural background. In order to become a Catholic priest, seminarians not only have to make the Catholic doctrine in Roman garb their own, but they have to undergo a «Hellenistic circumcision»¹⁵, an occidental brainwashing, a very subtle and efficient process of «de-indigenisation». As the erroneously labelled «Indians»¹⁶ were unable to be priests for centuries because of their dark skin and speaking Quechua, Aymara or Guaraní, Latin American indigenous young men (and *mutatis mutandis* those in other parts of the world) could and still can only become priests if they manage to make the principal schemes of the Hellenistic-occidental thinking their own.

This *forced* «Hellenistic circumcision» which takes place within a centralised and authoritarian institution like the Catholic Church, is also accepted *voluntarily* by most «profane» educational institutions like secondary schools, professional institutes, and universities. When I was reviewing the textbooks for teaching philosophy on the high school level in the Andean area, I was astonished to discover that the Latin American context was non-existent. If there is mention – in the most progressive case – of one or another Latin American author, he or she has merely been inserted as a representative of a European or North American philosophical current; that is to say, they are considered to be the outstretched arm of occidental thinking. To consider the foreign and «ectopic» as one's own and authentic, is an expression of a very deep cultural alienation.

¹⁴ There are some initiatives in different countries to found and build up indigenous seminaries (Mexico, Ecuador, Bolivia) that lead on the other hand to powerful resistance by representatives of Roman centralism.

¹⁵ This (polemical) expression refers to the surrender of Saint Paul in the face of the philosophies of Hellenism, after he had been successful in his struggle against «Judaic circumcision», in his debate with Saint Peter. It is part of the tragedy of the history of Christianity, that the proclaimed «internal circumcision» in the Spirit (Rom 2,29) which should lead us to freedom in Christ, has slowly become an intellectual subordination to the philosophical paradigm of Hellenism. Tangible consequences of this intellectual «circumcision» are a strong metaphysical and anthropological dualism, devaluation of sensitivity, the body and worldliness, the different forms of sexism and racism, and a latent theological determinism (among others).

¹⁶ The term «indio» or «Indian» can be used only with a clarifying note. As a result of an historical error (Columbus thought he had arrived in India), the term was an exogenous determination for the autochthonous population of *Abya Yala* and very soon became a pejorative and racist expression. A person who is called «Indio» by the others, would never call himself or herself this, but, in the Quechua area for example, as *runa* (human being). Regretfully, there is no common and useful name which would be neutral (such as «indigenous, autochthonous, native person»). Concerning this problematic see Estermann 1998, 53-56.

The situation at most universities is not substantially different from this panorama. Although it is true that there is more stress on the thinking originated in Latin America, many texts of the history of Latin American philosophy, for instance, still begin the philosophical development on the continent with Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz's book *Recognitio Summularum*, published in 1554 in Mexico.¹⁷ Concerning philosophy, *Abya Yala* is considered virgin soil or a *tabula rasa* vis-à-vis philosophy which was introduced as part of European civilisation. For most philosophers at the universities in Latin America, talking about a pre-Columbian philosophical tradition turns out to be a *contradictio in terminis*, and mentioning contemporary indigenous philosophies (Andean, Mayan, Guaraní etc.) an antiquated romanticism.

3. The irruption of the indigenous

The «Toledo phenomenon» in Peru – with all its ambiguities – is neither an isolated fact, nor an accident, but the political expression of an evolution in the very heart of many Latin American nations that has barely been perceived. One has only to recall the uprising in Chiapas as an indigenous reaction to the neoliberal project of NAFTA (Free Trade Agreement) between Canada, United States and Mexico, the different waves of indigenous protest in Ecuador, or the continuing struggle of the coca peasants in Bolivia. After the «irruption of the poor» in the 1970s and 1980s – which took form in numerous popular and grassroots organisations and which has been expressed intellectually in liberation theologies and philosophies –, and the «irruption of women» in the contextual theologies and philosophies since the 1980s, we are now observing an «irruption of indigenous peoples» in the spheres of public life.¹⁸

Trying to liberate itself from a latent or even open eurocentrism and anatopism, Latin American philosophy relied in a first moment on so called «cultural mixing» (*mestizaje cultural*)¹⁹ as a very specific characteristic of a supposedly Latin American identity. But this concept turned out to be quite ambiguous and conflictive and can be applied only to one part of the population in Latin America, in some regions only to a minority. Something similar – in cultural and ethnic terms – has happened with liberation theology. The theological subject has been defined in a first phase almost exclusively in terms of economic poverty, as the lower social class («the poor»), independent of characteristics related to ethnicity, gender, language, and religion. The implicit cultural background (of the theological subject) has been

¹⁷ This work is the oldest philosophical treatise written and edited in Latin America, but it reflects by no means the context of the continent; instead it simply continues the tradition of renaissance Spanish scholastics which had arrived just some decades before in the New World. Cf. Bernabé 1984, 29-38.

¹⁸ The different «irruptions» are reflected, for example, in the evolution of EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians). The theological encounter in 1981 in New Delhi had as its title «Irruption of the Third World. Challenge to Theology». Already at that meeting (General Assembly), but above all with the foundation of the «Women's Commission» of EATWOT in 1983, the voice of women theologians – and with them the question of «gender» – came to be heard more and more strongly. Mercy Amba Oduyoye speaks in this context of an «irruption within the irruption» (Oduyoye 1983, 220). In the General Assembly of 2001 in Quito, the final statement spoke explicitly of the «irruption of indigenous peoples» and the challenge of «indigenous theologies».

¹⁹ Cf. Benedetti 1967; Zea 1985; Miró Quesada 1985.

the very same «cultural *mestizaje*» which had become the godfather for an incipient «authentic» Latin American philosophy.²⁰

With the «rediscovering» or «irruption» of the indigenous²¹ as a challenge for theology as well as for philosophy in Latin America, the panorama begins to change radically, even on the methodological level. The native population of *Abya Yala* makes its voice heard and refuses to be celebrated as «discovered» 500 years ago. The general concept of «cultural *mestizaje*» turns out to be more and more problematic, as the consciousness of the feminisation and indigenisation of poverty, and of cultural and religious diversity, increase.²² Many Latin American intellectuals thought that it was possible to take up and tackle the challenge of postmodernism and globalisation by defending some kind of cultural pluralism emancipated from the old occidental monoculturalism, without realising the danger that a globalised postmodernism or a post-modern globalisation could be nothing more than a very subtle recreation of the former Occidentcentrism.²³

Only the irruption of the «other» (and not his/her «discovery») in the forms of protests, resistance and acts of civil disobedience showed that the indigenous discourse could neither be easily incorporated into (nor absorbed by) the «grand narrative» of post-modern aesthetic cultural pluralism, nor into the authentic «*mestizo*» philosophies of the continent (which notwithstanding are still very Europeanising). This irruption not only questions the dominant Westernised culture of academic theologies and philosophies, but even more radically the very conceptions of what «theology» and «philosophy» are.

This means that in the very definition of what is and ought to be «philosophy», there is already an element of domination and exclusion. In its extreme form, it leads to the consequence that any form of non-occidental thinking (except for Indian and Chinese philosophies) is supposed to lack the necessary criteria to be a philosophical expression of humankind. Until now, for many philosophers – men and women – in different cultural and

²⁰ This does not mean that the questions of sexism and racism were not considered by the liberation theology of the first decades. But they were not yet considered as a proper *locus theologicus* for theological production. In recent times, there have been some proposals to include a theology of religions in a truly intercultural Liberation Theology in Latin America, taking into consideration that there is a religious pluralism on the continent which has not been included in the first phase of Liberation Theology. Cf. Knitter 1987.

²¹ As landmarks, we can mention the resistance of the population of *Abya Yala* to participate in the celebration of the Quincentennial of the so called «discovery» of America by Columbus (1992), the International Year of Indigenous Peoples declared by the United Nations, the Nobel Prize for Peace awarded to Rigoberta Menchú Tum, the Zapatist uprising in Chiapas-Mexico, and the indigenous movement with its political repercussion in Ecuador. In the field of theology, we can mention the continental meetings and workshops of Indigenous Theologies (*Teologías Indias*) in 1989 in Mexico, 1993 in Panamá, 1997 in Cochabamba and 2002 in Asunción (planned).

²² In the 1980s, the classical paradigm of social classes and reference to the poverty to a certain class has been corrected, in the sense that parameters of gender and race have to be included in the analysis of poverty and social discrimination. As a consequence, people became more aware of the fact that women and persons of dark skin are significantly more victimized by poverty and exclusion. This is called a process of «feminisation» and «indigenisation» of poverty.

²³ Concerning the Euro- or Hellenocentrism of postmodernism see: Estermann 1998, 23-29. On the critical debate about postmodernism from a Latin American perspective see: Betancur 1998; Sanchez 1998; Barrera 1998; Robles 1998; Galeano 1998. The debate between Liberation Theology and (Euro-American) postmodernism seems particularly interesting; on this see: de Schrijver 1998; Widl 1998.

geographical contexts, the notion of «Western philosophy» is still considered a tautology, and «non-occidental philosophy» therefore a *non datur*.

Some of the theoreticians of the *Conquista* legitimised the conqueror's domination of the indigenous people by relying on their definition of what is to be considered «human». As those wrongly called «*indios*» could not meet some of the essential requirements of such a definition, they fell outside the category of humanity and could be treated without religious or ethical scruples as «soulless animals». ²⁴ A very similar ideological strategy can be noticed among the defenders of patriarchy and different forms of racism: The others do not meet the self-determined criteria of «culture», «rationality» or «universality» of the human, and are therefore inferior.

Although the consequences of such a philosophical syllogism no longer lead to physical extinction, forced slavery or formal exclusion from human rights, the strategies of academic philosophy against the irruption of the indigenous into philosophical thinking do not differ in principle from the arguments of the first conquerors. Intercultural philosophy, which defends methodologically an ex-centric or poly-centric position, ²⁵ questions any intent to define «philosophy» from one determined tradition as ideology. But what is «philosophy» is not analytically (or *a priori*) given but takes shape synthetically through an intercultural dialogue ²⁶ and exchange. For this reason, the criticism of indigenous thinking expressed by (Westernised) academic philosophy must be eclipsed by a meta-criticism from the intercultural point of view. ²⁷

As in many other similar contexts, the situation of philosophy in Latin America reflects certain relations of power and domination. The academic philosophy produced by a minority of specialists in what the West defines as «philosophy» serves (conscious or unconsciously) a national minority with economic and political power in launching a project of neoliberal globalisation which has predominantly Western cultural characteristics and values. Even the

²⁴ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1489/90-1573) in particular defended – on the base of a Christian Aristotelism – the natural inequality of human beings and particularly the inferiority of the «*indios*». Consult, above all, Sepúlveda 1984, 34ff.

²⁵ This does not mean that Intercultural Philosophy takes a position above the particular cultural contexts (supraculturality), nor that it is located in the cultural vacuum between the cultures. Intercultural Philosophy is also contextual insofar as it poses the manifold relations and transformations between different traditions of human wisdom from points of view which methodologically change (*Perspektivenwechsel*). The «excentricity» means that the problem of cultural centrism is explicitly formulated and that the preferential optics and option is not from the «centre», but from the philosophical peripheries. The «polycentricity» means that Intercultural Philosophy only achieves its purpose insofar as it is involved and engaged in a multiple and permanent dialogue between persons of very different cultural contexts.

²⁶ The concept of «dialogue» could be understood in an Occidental way as a rational discourse between *logoi* but this would not conform to the intention of Intercultural Philosophy to overcome Occidental logocentrism. It is difficult to find a word which reflects this non-centric and open relation between different cultural traditions; the term «polylogue» which has been suggested by some scholars does not overcome the principal dilemma either. The Germanic equivalent «Zwiegespräch» («gesprek», «talking») at least has no «logical» connotation.

²⁷ This meta-criticism is not grounded in a certain rationality or a determined philosophical culture but intends to question any kind of philosophising which pretends to define itself as a norm for other ways of understanding reality. In this sense, the criticism of indigenous philosophy by some representatives of presumably «orthodox» Western philosophy turns out to be «ideology» in the sense of a Eurocentric conception of «philosophy». The methodological basis of such a meta-criticism is permanent and open intercultural dialogue.

kind of philosophy taught and produced in the seminaries contributes to guaranteeing the cultural control of the West in the field of theology and religion, and therefore impedes a real inculturation of Christian faith - which is more than just a superficial (liturgical) acculturation. This «de-contextualisation» of philosophy and theology²⁸ is the very foundation for their anatomic character: We are dealing with a foreign system of ideas in a land (*ana-topos*), only seeming to reflect its social and cultural reality.

The resurrection of truly indigenous thinking is considered by a Westernised elite as a threat to their cultural domination and to the vague concept of «cultural *mestizaje*» which serves as an ideological base for a supposedly homogenous Latin American culture. With the upsurge of some totally dissonant voices, the *intra*-cultural Latin American debate is becoming more and more *inter*-cultural.²⁹ On the level of theology it can be observed that the *intra*-religious debate in Latin America— because of the upsurge of indigenous theologies - is becoming more and more *inter*-religious, something considered thus far as specific to Asia and parts of Africa. It is not by chance that the nervous attitude of the Roman «Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith» has as its main targets both indigenous theologies (*teologías indias*) in Latin America, and the new Christologies in Asia; both question the Hellenocentric (and *a fortiori* Eurocentric) basis of official Catholic theology.

In the Andean area, the dominant ideas – as projected by the mass media – are almost always the ideas of a dominant culture, represented by a white and (partly) *mestizo* minority. The ideas of the (partly) *mestizo* and indigenous majority has no great impact on the cultural agenda of the principal mass media, except for folkloric, exotic, and esoteric purposes. Although one gets the impression of cultural diversity and pluralism (according to the post-modern trend), the relations of power and domination have not really changed. I think they won't change either in Peru with a *cholo* President who assumes office at the Inca sanctuary of Machu Picchu and declares himself an «*Indio*» and *Pachakutiq*, the Inca king who is said to have shaken the earth.³⁰ Not only the philosophical, political and social elite, but also many indigenous men and women have internalised dominant Western ideas, denying their

²⁸ In the strict sense, there cannot be a thoroughly «de-contextualised» theology or philosophy. Any product of human culture comes out of a very particular context and can be recognized by the characteristics typical of this context. Western theology and philosophy often present themselves as «de-contextualised» or «universal», «absolute» and «supracultural», but are in fact as contextualised as the so called «contextual» theologies and philosophies. Every «de-contextualisation» is *de facto* a «re-contextualisation»; the anatomic situation means that the «re-contextualisation» has as its point of reference a foreign and abstract context, and not the proper one belonging to theological or philosophical subjects.

²⁹ Until very recently, philosophical historiography in Latin America considered Ibero American philosophy as a monolithic bloc which had as its main ideological support the concept of «cultural mixing» (*mestizaje cultural*). Arguing from the «explosion of the philosophical plurality within Ibero American philosophy» (58) and the «polyphony in Ibero American philosophy» (57), Raúl Fonet-Betancourt calls for a radical change of the way of thinking, from *intra*-culturality to *inter*-culturality, in order to overcome a false Latin American monoculturality (Fonet-Betancourt 1994).

³⁰ The choreography and symbolism on the occasion of Toledo's takeover on July, 28 of 2001 in Machu Picchu contain many elements of the old indigenism: Cusco (or Qosqo) as the capital of the Tawantinsuyu (the ancient Inca empire); the Inca Pachakutiq as the emperor of national unity; Machu Picchu (the Inca city never found by the Spaniards) as a symbol for resistance against Westernisation. Toledo, however, refused to dress as a *cholo* (with *poncho* and *ch'ullu*), not to mention Fujimori's abuse of the symbolic value of these clothes.

own cultural richness and dreaming instead of a destiny like that of Toledo who emerged from being an Indian shoeshine boy to become a Harvard economist.

4. Strategies of philosophical domination

The reactions of established academic Western philosophy³¹ to the resurrection of indigenous philosophies in different parts of the world have revealed its «will to power» more than its «love of wisdom».

The first strategy consists simply in the negation of «contextual philosophies», recurring to the supposed universality of (Western) philosophy. This conception takes philosophy as a supra-cultural essence, a certain number of truths which are supposed to transcend cultures, spaces, and times (*philosophia perennis*). But this conception does not turn out to be totally free of cultural and contingent connotations, because it reflects a culturally determined model namely a Platonic-Aristotelian dualism - which has no reason to be universal.³² After all, a philosophy declared «universal» or even «absolute» (Hegel) by definition is in fact as contextual and culturally determined as any indigenous philosophy of *Abya Yala*.

In this (universalistic) argumentation, there is a strong ideological element: a certain conception of «philosophy» is universalised or absolutized to legitimate its explanatory power as the dominant paradigm. The plausibility of this *ideal* universal paradigm (ideal universality) gets stronger insofar as it imposes its *reality* on the whole world (transcultural universality). In this way, it disqualifies any attempt to interpret the world in a manner incompatible with the dominant paradigm, as «non-philosophical».³³ This dynamic can be observed not only in the relationship of Western thinking with non-Western cultures, but also in the historical attitude of the West toward its own autochthonous cultures, which have been called «barbarian». The occidental synthesis of Hellenistic philosophy and Semitic (Judeo-Christian) wisdom in the Middle Ages, for example, allowed for the imposition of this dominant paradigm in a hegemonic way on the different indigenous symbolic universes (Teutons, Celts, Normans etc.), to the extreme case of total extermination. When the

³¹ Not only on the part of the representatives in Europe and North America (if they have taken note of the irruption of the indigenous), but also the «anatomic centres» in the non-Occidental countries. The awareness concerning the existence of indigenous philosophies in different parts of the world is still totally absent or at best just rising; in this sense, the most frequent «strategy» is simply to ignore the existence of such voices.

³² A paradigm which presupposes a metaphysical and epistemological dualism between the «essential» and «accidental», the «individual» and «universal», the «necessary» and «contingent», has recourse directly or indirectly to some kind of Platonic dualism between the «ideal» (noetical) and «real» (aesthetical) and projects in this way a conception which has been rooted in ancient Greece as an universal, meta-temporal and meta-spatial position. Nevertheless, it is very difficult for an Occidental mind to understand that non-dualistic and multi-polar rationalities which are not based on an Occidental bifurcation of reality can exist.

³³ The present process of globalisation is contributing substantially to the «transcultural universality» (which is a kind of globalisation) of Western philosophy. The Hegelian program in which that (Western) spirit would penetrate all spheres of reality and turn back to itself in total universality (which is the absolutisation of Western thought), has met an unexpected ally in the financial, economic and cultural imperialism of capitalist neoliberalism. I merely note that we are confronting «false» universality, because it is the generalization of a particular culture; (neoliberal) globalisation and (intercultural and synthetic) universality is not one and the same thing.

Spanish Renaissance scholastics arrived with the *Conquista* in the New World, the same strategy was applied again, with a similar outcome.

Another strategy consists of insisting on the cultural exclusivity of the West concerning the production of «philosophy». If philosophy is essentially (etymologically, genealogically, and culturally) «Greek» (Heidegger)³⁴, then any type of «philosophy» either must submit to the occidental definition of what is «philosophy» or does not take part in this elitist enterprise. This means that any philosophical position or thought which has been produced in non-occidental contexts is to be considered «philosophy» only insofar as it is «occidental» or at least «occidentalizable». Taking this to its ultimate consequences, the categories «philosophy» and «occidental philosophy» are supposed to be equivalent, so the notion «occidental philosophy» turns out to be a tautology as I already argued.

In this argument, philosophy is supposed to be an immutable mono-cultural phenomenon which has its origin in a «superior» culture (the Occidental one) which is predestined to have a protagonist and monopolistic role in the global diffusion of philosophical thinking. This conception goes faithfully hand in hand with all the positions that defend the supremacy of the West over other cultures and which presuppose that «science», «modernity» and «rationality» (just to mention the most important ones) are exclusive children of the Western world. The philosophical anatopism existing in many non-Western areas has its basis in this conviction. A Peruvian or Nigerian philosopher, for example, feels himself or herself really a «philosopher» insofar as he or she thinks occidentally and meets the standards defined by academic philosophies in Europe and North America. All his or her effort is directed at imitating the Western philosophical prototype (mimetism), submitting to the «Hellenistic circumcision» as an academic rite of initiation and de-contextualising his or her proper philosophising.

It should be clear that according to this conception, there is no place for the Oriental «philosophies» (Indian and Chinese mainly), nor for the indigenous wisdom of Africa, Oceania, Asia or *Abya Yala*. As they don't have Western birth certificate, they cannot aspire to be recognised as real «philosophies».³⁵

This takes us to a third and more subtle strategy to marginalise indigenous forms of wisdom. One makes a methodological distinction between what is «philosophy» on the one hand, and all that is assumed to be «thinking», «cosmovision», «myth», «narration» or «wisdom». Since Hountondji's criticism of Placide Tempels' «*philosophie bantou*»³⁶, there has been ready and frequent recourse to the notion of «ethno-philosophy» to (dis-)qualify

³⁴ We can read in Hegel's writings: «...Philosophy does not begin until arriving in the Greek world... Philosophy begins in Greece. True philosophy begins in the West. It is here where for the first time this freedom of natural consciousness appears and gives wings to the spirit...» (Hegel 1955, 92, 95). And Heidegger repeated: «The expression «Western-European philosophy» is Greek in its essence -, Greek means here: philosophy is in the origin of its essence in such a way that before all it was Hellenism and only Hellenism which philosophy demanded in order to develop itself.» (Heidegger, 1960, 16-17).

³⁵ To paraphrase syllogistically Hegel's verdict: «True philosophy begins in the West» (see note 34); «indigenous philosophies by definition do not begin in the West»; *ergo* «indigenous philosophies are not true philosophy».

³⁶ Tempels 1945; Hountondji 1983. Hountondji's verdict on Tempels can be read in the original version as follows: «In fact, it is an ethnological work with philosophical pretensions, or more simply, if I may coin the word, a work of 'ethnophilosophy'. » (Hountondji 1983, 34)

any type of non-occidental philosophical thinking. The very concept of «ethno-philosophy», embraced openly by postmodernism, is very ambiguous and methodologically questionable. For which specific reason, «Bantu philosophy» is considered «ethno-philosophy» but not, for example, «German philosophy»? Are there certain manifestations of the human spirit which do not carry any (cultural) characteristic or trace of its origin, although they have originated in a determined culture (namely the Western one)?

It should be clear that such a Manichean distinction is supported by the monocultural self-definition of what is «philosophy» by the representatives of the Occidental tradition. Some indispensable parts of such a definition (which is always a kind of «domination»)³⁷ are for instance the existence of philosophical texts and therefore of the literacy of a certain culture, the individual authorship of philosophical production, an analytic-synthetic rationality, an institutionalised organisation of knowledge and a technical terminology that is to be used. There is no doubt about the fact that most of human wisdom is excluded from the philosophical enterprise by these very criteria. In the case of the indigenous philosophies in the Andean region, the cultures have remained unwritten until very recently;³⁸ the individual does not have the same weight and value as in the West, and wisdom is transmitted in a «subterranean» way by oral traditions and a collective network of rituals and ceremonies.

One could object to this criticism using the argument that the above-mentioned distinction does not intend to discriminate against any form of thinking and wisdom but, on the contrary, to grant them their own rightful place. This (postmodern) argument presupposes that there is an «equi-valence» between the different forms of «thinking» (as a generic term), and that «philosophy» (in the Western understanding) is just one of numerous elements. According to this (postmodern) position, the various forms of human wisdom can only be distinguished one from the other by aesthetic criteria, like different styles of paintings in art. We find mythical thinking, indigenous cosmovisions, archaic narrations, scientific narratives, religious beliefs, and philosophical currents. They are supposedly presented one beside the other as if they were merchandise displayed in a supermarket; personal or collective preference for one rather than the other is due exclusively to aesthetic reasons.³⁹

This (postmodern) argument does not consider the relations of power and domination which exist *de facto* between concrete cultures, and even within a single culture. In the dominant logic of neoliberal globalisation, the Quechua cosmovision for example does not have the same value, nor the same globalising power as Western science. In the multimedia and cybernetic game of the dominant paradigm on a world scale – which is a mixture of

³⁷ The «de-finition», tries by its very nature to «enclose» the meaning of something in a canonical framework and to «domesticate» it by this way. Through «classificatory mania» (Panikkar), the West has tried to conquer the world intellectually since the time of Socrates. Definitions include or exclude, according to the criteria of those who define.

³⁸ There are some indications that the Inca culture was not totally unwritten but had a very sophisticated and highly codified graphological system. For an illustration see Burns 1981. According to the author, the Incas were able to use different mnemotechnical systems of writing which are not necessarily alphabetical, but pictographic, hieroglyphical and symbolic. Concerning the question of the orality of African cultures and its implication for philosophy see Weidtmann 1998.

³⁹ On the postmodern conception of «philosophy» and its criticism by Intercultural Philosophy see Estermann 1998: 23-41.

liberal capitalism, postmodernism, and Occidental heritage⁴⁰ -, a «philosophical» academic expression has more weight than any category of Andean wisdom ever can. The real relations of power have allowed a Western philosophical concept such as «being» (*esse; on*) to be widely accepted as a *terminus technicus*, while simultaneously impeding an Andean philosophical concept like *pacha*⁴¹ from being incorporated into the philosophical canon.

Declaring the non-Western forms of philosophising mere «thinking», «ethno-philosophy», «myth» or «belief» is, in the concrete circumstances of the process of globalisation, neither innocent nor «value-free» (Weber), but rather another act of domination. To tell a certain people (ethnic group) or a determined culture that they don't have «philosophy», but just «thinking», is an act of exclusion and is the same as declaring that they do not count in the logic of the dominant paradigm. Today, there is a kind of postmodern tolerance which masks the real relations of power, even in the philosophical world.⁴²

5. An intercultural perspective

The difficulties which impede the indigenous traditions of the Andean area (and *mutatis mutandis* of other regions of the planet) from being heard and taken seriously by the dominant cultural current do not seem readily surmountable. Most of us know very well what is going on in Chiapas in Mexico. Some of us have also heard of the indigenous movement in Ecuador. But what on the political level already has some international public impact, is on the theological and philosophical level insufficiently considered of within its own context. Although it is true that the emergence of indigenous theologies (also called «Indian theologies»)⁴³ in *Abya Yala* has had some impact on Latin American liberation theology, it has been practically ignored by official academic theology. There are some attempts (by academic and ecclesiastic theologians and members of the Roman curia) to link such theologies to neo-pagan and animist tendencies – as happened in the «hot» days of liberation theology when it was denounced as «Marxist» – and via this strategy to degrade them in the eyes of so called «serious» theology.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ In the mainstream of what determines the preferences of people today, there are many factors of quite different origin and type: Individualism of Judeo-Christian origin, postmodern hedonism, the Protestant ethic, tecnomorphic determinism, worldly evolutionist eschatology, non-pathetic ecological indifference and an attitude of the *fast* and *light* type.

⁴¹ Quechua has only one word for «time» and «space»: *pacha*. This word refers in the first place to the «space of life» which is the earth and the globe, but also to time as present (there is no specific form for the future). So *pacha* means the «here-and-now», the spatial-temporal category of life. For the universe as a whole, the expression *teqsimuyu* («round world»), or respectively *tukuy pacha* («complete space») is used.

⁴² The postmodern current has disqualified as an ideological «meta-narrative» any philosophical intent to raise the question of «power», «domination», «ideology» and «interest»; that is, any ethical and political questions. Philosophy thus remains limited to merely describing – free of any value judgement - the sapiential mosaic of our planet.

⁴³ The indigenous theologies in Latin America can be divided into those currents which take the Christian elements as genuine indigenised contributions (*teología india*) on the one hand, and those which try to reconstruct a non-Christian or pre-Christian indigenous theology (*teología india india*), on the other. See López 2000; Steffens 2001.

⁴⁴ The 4th «Encounter-workshop on *Indio* theology», scheduled to be held in Asunción in November 2001, had to be postponed because of the obstacles the Catholic Church has put in the way. CELAM (the Latin American

Regarding philosophy, except in some small groups, the academic world has not yet taken notice of a pre-Columbian and even contemporary non-Western philosophy in Latin America. In the universities and seminaries of Latin America, the history of philosophy normally starts with Spanish scholasticism brought from Europe to the continent. Not the slightest mention is made of the rich pre-Columbian tradition of Inca, Nahua, or Maya philosophies. If a course on «Latin American philosophy» is ever offered, it generally deals with philosophy made *in* Latin America, but not with an authentic Latin American philosophy. The curriculum in most departments in Latin America is simply a copy of the European classical model.

The truly contextual contemporary currents of liberation philosophy – of either Marxist or more indigenised orientation – have resonance only among a very limited number of scholars.⁴⁵ Even more dramatic is the situation of the different indigenous traditions. In the Andean area, the academic worlds of Bogotá, Quito, Lima, or La Paz do not even take note of the existence of such philosophies. And if by chance it happens, they are marginalised by means of the before-mentioned strategies. Within institutionalised academic philosophy, indigenous philosophies have practically no place; their subjects work and move mainly in non-academic circles (centres, NGOs, institutes, churches).

The optic of intercultural philosophy allows us to take a different position toward indigenous philosophies. In the first place, it is conscious of the relations of domination and power existing in the organisation of philosophical knowledge, such as it is played out currently in the academic world. The established scientific standards, the applied methodology, the existent curricula, the technical terminology, the textual body, the normative rationality and the individual identity of the philosophising subjects are all very determinate cultural presuppositions which cannot automatically be universalised.⁴⁶ The indigenous philosophies make use of other sources (oral tradition, rituals, collective subconsciousness, arts, symbolic organisation, etc.), have a non-rationalist rationality, use a narrative methodology and a symbolic language, construct their own terminology and organize themselves in a collective and communitarian way.

Bishops» Conference) did not approve the proposals, so the organizers could not apply for funds vis-à-vis international agencies. It seems that after some lobbying, the CELAM officials did, however, reconsider their former decision; the event can probably take place in May 2002.

⁴⁵ Within Latin American liberation philosophy, one can distinguish four currents:

1. Philosophy of ontological tendency, cultivated by thinkers like Rodolfo Kusch, Marion Carlos Casalla and Amedia Podetti.
2. Analectic philosophy which has been represented originally by Juan Carlos Scannone, Enrique Dussel and Oswaldo Ardiles.
3. Historicist philosophy sustained by Arturo Andrés Roig and Leopoldo Zea (after 1968).
4. A current which problematises philosophy as such, with thinkers like José Severino Croatto, Manuel Ignacio Santos and Horacio Cerutti Guldberg.

As a fifth current, we could mention the very fresh attempts to elaborate contextual indigenous (Maya, Kuna, Quechua, Guaraní, Aymara) and Afro-American philosophies. I consider my work, mentioned earlier, as a contribution to this challenge (Estermann 1998).

⁴⁶ One of the critiques made by intercultural philosophy addresses the monocultural character of Western philosophy and its methodological and hermeneutical presuppositions. It does not deny the «universability» of philosophy but takes it as a heuristic point of searching through intercultural dialogue and a synthetic process of inter-trans-culturation, not as a supra-cultural essence that is analytically given and accessible to only one cultural tradition.

On the other hand, intercultural philosophy promotes intercultural dialogue between the (Latin Americanised) occidental tradition of Ibero America and the indigenous traditions of *Abya Yala*. In this dialogue, there should not be one normative position to judge the other position, nor a third «intermediate» position (*tertium mediationis*), because such a supra-cultural position is simply impossible.⁴⁷ Either of the partners can be questioned by the other, not in order to demonstrate mutual incompatibility, but rather to clarify the positions involved and the cultural presuppositions of both sides. Nor does this intercultural dialogue have as its objective to achieve a synthesis of the two paradigms. In many aspects, Andean philosophy and the dominant Western tradition do turn out to be incompatible.⁴⁸ What really should be achieved is mutual respect for the different human modes of representing the world and having an integral cosmovision.

We should not underestimate the problems involved in this kind of dialogue, however. Even when the attitude of degradation, negation and superiority - still common among the representatives of Western academic philosophy in Europe as well as in Latin America - is overcome, the problem remains how a dialogue between *de facto* unequal groups can take place in a *de iure* equal (or egalitarian) form. In this dialogue, the indigenous philosophies are from the very beginning in a position of disadvantage, because of a series of reasons: There are no well-defined subjects as in the case of Western philosophy (professors, teachers); there are practically no elaborated texts as a base for the dialogue; the (Western or Westernised) partners don't have sufficient knowledge of the native language (Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní); there is no canonical philosophical terminology; and the indigenous philosophies do not practise the academically accepted rules of the «linguistic game». In other words, it is as if a group of university professors from San Marcos University in Lima were seated at a table with a delegation of peasants, *paqos*⁴⁹, healers and wise men of the Peruvian altiplano and who speak only Quechua.

One specific problem in intercultural philosophical dialogue consists in the «translation» of concepts rather than terms or words. Raimon Panikkar has proposed a methodology which implies a diatopic hermeneutics, a process of mutual interpretation on the base of the connotations of certain concepts in the original context (*topos*) and their function within it. If we take, for example, the Western concept of «being» (*esse*) and the Andean concept of «*pacha*», these are not simply concepts which can be replaced one by the other, nor interchangeable translations, but «homoeomorphic equivalents»⁵⁰. Among the

⁴⁷ This is the crucial point that distinguishes intercultural philosophy from any kind of «comparative philosophy». Comparison always presupposes a prior (non-articulated) perspective from which it looks for similarities and differences. Intercultural philosophy rejects decisively the possibility of a *tertium mediationis*, because such a point of view coincides in fact with a supposedly superior or meta-cultural position, *de facto* culturally determined (namely the Western one).

⁴⁸ As representative examples, I mention the following crucial Andean conceptions: Cyclical understanding of time, symbolic representation of the universe, the principle of complementarity, relationality as non-substantiality, panzoism and non-duality.

⁴⁹ The indigenous wise men of the Quechua community who have functions as priests, healers, sages, and spiritual leaders.

⁵⁰ Panikkar 1996, specially 17-19. «It is neither a conceptual nor a functional equivalent, but rather an analogy of a third level. One does not look for the same function (which has philosophy), but that function which is

many meanings of *esse* in occidental philosophy, its function as a *transcedentale* is very prominent, and therefore its opposition to particular beings (*entia*). *Pacha* has, in the Andean context, both spatial and temporal meaning, but by no means any function of abstraction or dualization. Its *topos* (specific place and function) in Andean philosophy does not coincide with the *topos* which *esse* occupies in the Western *weltanschauung*.

Such a «diatopic hermeneutics» is much more complex than a simple translation of an expression, for which no equivalent exists in another language. As the «concept» is principally an occidental «creation» (by the Platonic Socrates), it is quite problematic to attempt to understand the most important categories of non-occidental philosophies via conceptualisation. On the other hand, a minimum of intercultural understanding is impossible without some conceptual and rational effort.⁵¹ A serious intercultural dialogue contributes to a demystification of established concepts, in the sense of their cultural (re-)contextualisation and reconstruction.

6. From *anatopia* to *polytopia*

In concluding, I'd like to return to the anecdote mentioned at the beginning to project the ideas set forth into a utopian future. Despite being indigenous and a son of Quechua-speaking parents, Peruvian president Alejandro Toledo is apparently unable to speak Quechua or any other Peruvian native tongue. As a Harvard alumnus, he can of course express himself perfectly in English. His wife Eliane Karp, of Belgian nationality and Polish origin, seems to speak Quechua perfectly and as an anthropologist she knows the Andean cosmovision and its symbolism very well.

Toledo's is the normal case: Indigenous intellectuals are quite familiar with the Western «cosmovision», even to the extreme that they forget (or suppress) the symbolic universe of their origin. The knowledge of the dominant culture is the key to get oneself a dominant position as well. Toledo has demonstrated that one can achieve it, despite a dark complexion, but at the cost of «Occidental circumcision». The opposite happens very rarely and is quite atypical: white or *mestizo* intellectuals insert themselves into the indigenous world, learn the indigenous language and familiarize themselves with the Andean cosmovision. Regretfully, most of these exceptions are foreigners who can afford the luxury of dedicating themselves to a dominated culture without being dominated themselves.

Most national intellectuals – Peruvians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians, Colombians – prefer *anatopia*, an exile in their own country, either through ignorance or simply because of professional aspirations. Very few identify themselves voluntarily with a dominated culture and philosophy (a kind of «option for the poor»)⁵². Nonetheless, the number of diatopic

equivalent to the one the original notion had in the correspondent cosmovision» (18). Concerning the concept of «diatopic hermeneutics», see: Panikkar 1997, 46.

⁵¹ It is worth mentioning that the effective history of the terminology related to «concept» reveals a very important change: In the very radical of the word, there is an quite organic and even passive connotation (*concipere* as *concebir* [to get pregnant]; this means in German literally «to receive»); through the centuries, a metamorphosis takes place, with the result that the terminology has become in some languages even an aggressive, demiurgic and mechanical meaning (*be-greifen*; *Begriff*).

⁵² Although the «(preferential) option for the poor» is in the first place a theological and pastoral position, it can be conceived as well as a hermeneutic principle for the social sciences and philosophy. In this sense, it has

identities and biographies is increasing every day, that is, women and men who move in two (or even more) different symbolic universes (bicultural identities).

To represent a multinational and multi-ethnic country like Peru, neither Toledo's nor Karp's formula would be able to unite all its aspects. For a multi-ethnic country, it is necessary to construct a polytopic identity (*polytopia*), represented by a network (federation) of cultural identities, linked to one another by a manifold and creative, open, and free dialogue (or polylogue). Such an identity belongs already to the realm of *utopia*, which could put an end to sort of intellectual and cultural anatopism.

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to be interpreted as a certain optic or perspective from which philosophical elaboration begins and develops. The «philosophical option for the poor» leads to ex-centricity and a decisive distantiation from occidental monoculturalism.

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2. Interfaith Dialogue and the Option for the Poor: Some methodological remarks

Interfaith dialogue has been declared as one of the main concerns and focuses of EATWOT for the next five years (2002-2007). The Institute of Missiology Missio (MWI) in Aachen-Germany has been supporting in its 30 years of existence many projects of interreligious dialogue and developing research projects on the topic. One of its focus of research for the period 2000-2005 is «Multiple religious identities / religious syncretism».

1. Clarification of concepts

Before entering the debate, it is necessary to clarify the concepts involved. The experience of the Fifth General Assembly in Quito (September/October 2001) and our various contacts with partners in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America have shown that not everyone understands the same under one and the same expression. Some talk about «interreligious dialogue» (*diálogo interreligioso*), others use «interfaith-dialogue», «interdenominational dialogue», «macro ecumenism», «interfaith-praxis» or even «transreligiosity». According to the geographic and cultural contexts, the same words do not mean the same thing and do not refer to the same reality. This causes (and has caused in the past) quite some confusion, as it was the case in Quito. I think it would be helpful if EATWOT could tackle this question of hermeneutics and intercultural understanding.

Asian theologians normally use the expression «interreligious dialogue» to point to the dialogue between different well-established religions which are present in the Asian context (Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism etc.). I have the impression that this very notion is more common among Catholic theologians (men and women) and has to do with a Catholic «theology of religions» as a referential framework. Protestant theologians (men and women) refer sometimes to the same reality by the notion «interfaith dialogue», stressing more the doctrinal than the cultural aspects of «religions».

In Africa, «interfaith dialogue» does normally not mean «dialogue between Christianity and Islam» or «dialogue between Christianity and traditional African religions» (which is rather labelled as «interreligious dialogue»), but just «ecumenism», i.e. dialogue between different Christian denominations. «Interfaith dialogue» is more a Protestant, «ecumenism» rather a Catholic terminology. Latin American theologians refer to «interreligious dialogue» (in the Asian sense of the word) by the notion «*macro-ecumenismo*» (macro ecumenism) and use «*diálogo interreligioso*» to indicate the reality of syncretic religious pluralism in Latin America, i.e. the incipient dialogue between Catholicism and the autochthonous indigenous religions and faiths (*creencias*).

In the Final Statement of the 5th General Assembly in Quito, one can read: «...the hope...needs to be realised in *inter-faith praxis* for justice and peace with an option for the poor, and integrity of creation. This focus on *interfaith praxis* is inter-cultural, *inter-religious* and inter-spiritual. ...we reaffirm our *macro ecumenical* vocation toward unity between Christian *denominations* and all *religions* of the earth». (Italics mine)

Arnold C. Temple talked in his report on the dialogue between Christianity and Islam in Africa about «interfaith relationship» and «interfaith dialogue». Mercy Amba Odoyuye referred in her opening address to the religious conflicts in Nigeria when concluding: «...interreligious relations and a theology of religions has not been the strong point of EATWOT». Marcelo Barros used in his exposition the notion «*macroecumenismo*», referring to the «communion and unity of life between religions and cultures». Tissa Balasurya talked about the relationship between a minority (Christianity) and majorities (other meta-cosmic religions), labelling it as «interreligious dialogue» and referring to «human basic communities» (i.e. multireligious or interreligious ones).

What are we talking about? What does it mean when one particular theologian (man or woman) from a specific cultural and denominational background uses in a peculiar context and situation a very specific notion like «interreligious dialogue», «interfaith dialogue», «macro ecumenism»? To clarify this is a prerequisite to establish some kind of «interfaith praxis».

2. The context determines the kind of dialogue and praxis

It is not the same if you establish a dialogue with members of other religions (faiths/*creencias*) from a minority or majority position. In the Asian context, interreligious dialogue – except for the Philippines – means for Christians (theologians as well as non-theologians) a *conditio sine qua non* of living together and survival. The impact of a document like *Dominus Iesus* has immediate political consequences (India), and exclusivism leads easily to some kind of fundamentalism and ghettoism.

In Latin America, interreligious dialogue has not been considered as an important topic in the first phase of Liberation Theology but became more and more important in the measure that indigenous peoples irrupted into theology, and with them their very religions. But it is still considered mainly an *intra-* rather than an *inter-*religious dialogue, i.e. a dialogue between a dominant paradigm of Christianity (Latin American Catholicism) and marginalized or suppressed forms of indigenous «*creencias*» (believes, cosmovision) rather than «religions». Indigenous and black theology (*teología india / teología negra*) have discovered the dimension of interreligious dialogue on grassroots» level rather than intra-religious academic dialogue between black, indigenous, *mestizo*, white Christian theologians.

In Africa, interreligious dialogue is put on the agenda because of increasing violence which is supposed to be religiously motivated (Nigeria, Sudan). But the main perspective of African theologies still is inculturation and interfaith dialogue in the sense of ecumenical efforts to find ways of communion and unity. There is some incipient dialogue of Christian theologians (women and men) with traditional African religions. Most of the dialogue is still *intra-*religious, between the mainstream churches and the African Independent (or Indigenous) Churches (AIC). But it must be clarified that this dialogue can be seen as an «inter-religious dialogue» because the AIC are rooted very much in African cultures and religions.

In Europe and North America, dialogue has been until recently inter-denominational. For example, the reactions to *Dominus Iesus* from this context have pointed almost exclusively to the issue of Ecumenism (relationship between Christian denominations) and not to the issue of interreligious dialogue and pluralistic Theology of Religion. Because of the change due to immigration, European theologians start thinking about intercultural theology, interreligious dialogue in Europe (but still from a majority position), replacing to some extent the former «dialogue» with atheism and secularisation.

3. Interreligious dialogue and the option for the poor

Within the present context of neo-capitalist globalisation, destruction of creation, demonisation of certain religious beliefs and exclusion of entire societies, cultures and symbolic universes, interreligious dialogue promoted by EATWOT must be undertaken under a clear and irreducible option for the poor. Many theologians – not only in Asia – have recognized the close link between Liberation Theology and a liberating Theology of Religions.

This option means in the first place to take as a starting point for theological reflection and dialogue the real social and cultural praxis of people, their «popular» religions (not an ideal abstract), their «syncretism» and their «dialogues of life». It also means an option for the «poor religions», i.e. those religious manifestations and rituals which are under pressure by a dominant orthodoxy or by a homogenized «global culture». «Syncretism» has not to be considered anymore as some impure «deviation» from a pure supra-cultural doctrinal ideal, but as an existential of human living together and historical interpenetration of cultures, symbolic universes, and world views.

(Liberation) Theology has discovered popular religiosity as *locus theologicus*. To interpret the religious manifestations of poor people as «impure», «syncretistic» (in a pejorative sense) and «immature», theologians marginalize them even more. We need a liberating theology of syncretism, of interreligious (or even trans religious) spirituality, of multiple religious identity.

The option for the poor does also mean that our efforts to dialogue have some specific aims, not missionary in a narrow sense (conversion), but liberating and hope-giving (subversion). Dialogue is the alternative to a mono-logical hegemony of one economic, political, and social model, to come to a globalisation of solidarity among the excluded and poor people belonging to very different religious traditions. Neo-capitalist globalisation does not know religious borders; nor has interreligious dialogue to know them which is engaged in the great macro-ecumenical issues of justice and peace.

3. Theology of Hope or Hope for Theology?

The Fifth General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, September 24 to October 1, 2001, Quito / Ecuador

«As EATWOT we are thankful for the graces of the past 25 years and are conscious of our inadequacies. We pledge to work together in the spirit to help realise Christian vision of a new earth and new heaven».⁵³ These words – the final part of the Statement emitted at the end of the Assembly – do not only summarise the theological guidelines of the Assembly in Quito, but do also express in concentrated form the struggles and hopes, which are embodied by EATWOT and its history.

1. A Jubilee in the Aftermath of «September 11»

The Fifth Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) has been characterised from the very beginning by a coincidence of strong symbolism and dramatic events. The venue, the beautiful valley of Tumbaco below Quito in Ecuador, is situated just a few miles from a place called by the Ecuadorians *la mitad del mundo* – the «middle of the world», referring to the imaginary line of the equator, which divides the world into two hemispheres. After the Third EATWOT Assembly in Nairobi, the Quito Assembly has been the second one taking place in the geographical south, just below the equator.

The Assembly started at a crucial point in human history, less than two weeks after the terrible attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, on September 11, 2001. Women and men coming from all parts of the globe, gathering in the «middle of the world», were still hypnotised by the images emitted by the television channels again and again, but also concerned about the language of retaliation and vengeance, and even threatened by the possibility of an out bursting war in many of the regions they came from. The whole EATWOT region «US Minorities» was not able to take part in the Assembly, due to fears and restrictions for international flights.

The Assembly in Quito was not only the Fifth General Assembly of EATWOT,⁵⁴ but also the Silver Jubilee of the existence of the association founded 1976 in Dar-es-Salam. Only two of the founding members were present at the celebration of EATWOT's 25th

⁵³ *Message of Hope. Statement of the Fifth General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians*, 6. This statement exists at the moment only in manuscript form but will be published shortly in *Voices of the Third World*. In this contribution, I refer to the document by the term «Statement».

⁵⁴ It is not easy to keep consistent the very method of counting the assemblies and conferences of EATWOT. In the beginning, all the meetings were labelled in chronological order, being intercontinental or continental ones, by «EATWOT I» to «EATWOT XI». This methodology was abandoned after the Fourth General Assembly in Tagaytay (Philippines). As «General Assemblies» are considered: 1. Delhi 1981 (EATWOT V); 2. Oaxtepec 1986 (EATWOT VII); 3. Nairobi 1992 (EATWOT VIII); 4. Tagaytay 1996 (EATWOT XI). The Foundation Meeting of 1976 in Dar-es-Salam is not considered to having been a «General Assembly». For a systematic and (almost) complete overview see: Missionswissenschaftliches Institut Missio (ed.), *Von Gott reden im Kontext der Armut. Dokumente der Ökumenischen Vereinigung von Dritte-Welt-Theologinnen und –Theologen 1976-1996*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1999, 340f. See also: J. Estermann, „Einführung – Die Rede von Gott im Kontext der Armut», in *ibid.*, 1-13, especially 7-11.

anniversary: Tissa Balasuriya from Sri Lanka and Maurice Assad from Egypt. The absence of some of the most outstanding representatives of EATWOT's starting years could raise the question if this fact had to do with a natural change of generations or if it reflected an internal struggle for the redefinition of lines and policies. However, many of the founders already have died; Gustavo Gutiérrez has been invited to the Assembly in Quito but could not come for flight reasons. Sergio Torres has retired from any public duties long before yet.

62 men and women from 29 countries, among them 8 observers and representatives of funding agencies from the North (Europe and North America), came together in Quito in a context of uncertainty and anxiety, but also of hope and celebration. As at former meetings, liturgical celebrations were cornerstones of sharing and empowerment, rich in symbolism and contextual inculturation. In contrast to the Founding Meeting of 1976 in Dar-es-Salam with only one woman taking part,⁵⁵ the Silver Jubilee Assembly in Quito had even a female majority: 34 of the participants were women theologians. The Women's Commission of EATWOT had held its intercontinental meeting just before the General Assembly took place.

The terrorist attacks in the USA had a strong impact on the Assembly, as a frame of contextual reference and as a real theological challenge. In a common statement emitted during the first days of the Assembly, the participants expressed the hope «that the global response to the present crisis will help us realize the folly of terrorism and war, and help build an effective human coalition for peace with justice to all»⁵⁶. Referring to the increasing hostility against Islam and Muslims, the statement insists that «our worldwide experience convinces us that the basic message and understanding of the two world religions invoked, Christianity and Islam, is one of peace with justice and promotion of our common humanity»⁵⁷.

2. Theology of Hope

The theme of the Fifth General Assembly was defined as: «Give an Account of the Hope that is in you: Weaving the Threads of our Continuing Struggle into a Tapestry of Hope in the Twenty-first Century». It was inspired by the text of 1 Pet 3:15-16: «Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you».

The final statement invokes a «theology of hope», facing the context of the Third World affected by the «phenomenon of globalisation», which – in spite of its impressive promises – «has resulted in a greater gap between the rich and the poor and [...] has intensified the sufferings of people» (Statement, 2). As major issues to which a true «theology of hope» must give an answer, the statement mentions the following three problems: abuse of mother earth; annihilation of peoples and invasion of the global market.

⁵⁵ The original list of invited theologians just contained men. Because of the criticism coming from supporting agencies, finally one woman (Beatriz Melano Couch from Argentina) was invited (according to Virginia Fabella, *Beyond Bonding. A Third World Woman's Theological Journey*, Manila 1993, note 35 of chapter 1).

⁵⁶ *EATWOT Statement on September 11, 2001*, 2 (exists only as a manuscript).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

One of the main forces of EATWOT always has been biblical reflection and its analytical power to deal with socio-political and economic problems. Bible studies have not only occupied much space and time during the Quito Assembly, but inspired very much the participants with hope and joy, as well as with the prophetic spirit of resistance and denouncement. I would like to mention especially the contribution on «Gender and Bible» made by Silvia Regina de Lima Silva from Brazil.

To immerse into the Ecuadorian context of these challenging issues, the organizers planned a quite extensive and touching exposure program. The participants got in touch with the problems indigenous and Afro-American peoples have to face, with the consequences of marginalisation in the prisons and the discrimination of women, the impact of capitalist globalisation on the Ecuadorian economy and migrant workers, but also with the manifold initiatives taken by churches and NGOs to propose alternatives and to be active and visible signs of hope. Most of the participants were touched by these encounters, which became the underlying ground for theological debate. I especially remember the emotional encounter between the marginalized members of an Ecuadorian Afro-American community with EATWOT members from Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana.

The theme of «hope» was elected as guideline for the Jubilee Assembly long before «September 11», facing the numerous problems that the so-called Third World is confronted with at the beginning of the third millennium. Since the foundation of the association, the situation of the big majorities of men and women represented by the members of EATWOT has not improved. On the contrary: The historical processes of exploitation have become even deeper, globalisation has achieved to marginalize whole continents such as Africa, indigenous people are deprived of their rights to ancestral homelands, languages, religions and cultures, women are still far from being equal to men, and mother earth is abused and exploited as never before, AIDS has spread to swallow whole generations. Is there any room for hope in such a depressing context?

Poor people use to say: Hope is the last thing one can lose! To lose hope is a luxury only rich people can do without! – In spite of the uncertainty and anxiety after the terrible terrorist attacks, in spite of the temptation of general despair if one looks carefully to what is going on in the world, the participants of the Assembly in Quito were looking for «signs of hope» in the middle of the world. Any session of the Assembly was methodologically dominated by this idea: «The people of the Third World are not resigned to their fate» (Statement, 2). Effectively, «in Ecuador [...] we encountered women and men who suffer and struggle. We listened to their cries and hopes for a better tomorrow. We sensed a deep spirituality in them, which is rooted in their struggle for survival and dignity. Their resistance itself breeds a theology of hope». (ibid.)

It is obvious that such a «theology of hope» is far from the European «theology of hope» developed in the 1960's and 1970's. It is a theology born out of a situation of despair, poverty, marginalisation and exploitation; it is a theology, which takes seriously the fundamental option for the poor stressed so much by Latin American liberation theology.⁵⁸ The Assembly mentions three major fields where the «threads of our continuing struggles are weaved into

⁵⁸ The Final Statement mentions explicitly the „option for the poor» (5) as the orientation for such a „theology of hope». This is remarkable considering the fact that theology in a post-modern context and even some branches of liberation theology do not longer stick to this option as a guideline for their reflection.

a tapestry of hope» (general theme of the Assembly): indigenous peoples, women and interfaith dialogue.

3. Indigenous Theologies

At the Third General Assembly of EATWOT in Nairobi (1992), the emerging theologies of indigenous peoples were not yet part of the main issues to be discussed. But the participants already acknowledged the importance of the irruption of indigenous people into civil society and Church: «The autochthonous peoples of our Third World, called *Indios or Indigenous* in the American continent, *are coming forth with new proposals for life, which question radically our modern societies, churches and theologies*».⁵⁹ At the Fourth General Assembly in Tagaytay (1996), a few participants took up the challenge and decided to establish an EATWOT Committee (not a Commission!) on Indigenous Theologies.

At the occasion of the Third Latin American Ecumenical Meeting of *Teología India* in August 1997 in Cochabamba (Bolivia), this group emitted a statement as an «EATWOT response in the Context of Globalisation»⁶⁰. This was the first intercontinental attempt to share worldwide experiences with indigenous peoples and their theological production. The Committee is constituted by representatives of Latin America (Domingo Llanque, Eleazar Lopez), but also from the Philippines (Rosario Battung), Kenya (Zachariah Samita) and North America (Tink Tinker). After insisting on the plurality of indigenous theologies, the statement mentions some of the main features of this new model of theologising: communitarian character; oral sources; celebrative in expression and creative in production. «Indigenous theologies today must necessarily be theologies of resistance» (ibid., 249).

At the Fifth General Assembly in Quito, indigenous theology was one of the main concerns; the panel on this subject was perhaps the most creative and innovative one, inspiring the participants and setting the landmarks for future challenges to EATWOT. It was obvious that the representatives from Latin America had a very strong impact on the discussion, due to the fact that at a continental level, the debate on indigenous theologies (called *teologías indias* in Latin America) already has a history of almost one decade. With respect to the other continents, there was just one representative from the Philippines. The final Statement reflects this discussion: «In all continents indigenous peoples are offering paradigms in their theology for promoting holistic life, distinct from foreign expressions. It is a sign of hope that we can draw upon native spiritualities with their reverence for mother earth, humanity, and all of nature». (Statement, 3)

Indigenous theologies will remain a very important topic for EATWOT during the next years. Hopefully, the experiences already made in Latin America will inspire the emergence of indigenous theologies in Africa, Asia, and Oceania as well. EATWOT's Indigenous Theologies Committee has an important role to play in networking between the continents and in stimulating the emergence and articulation of authentic indigenous theologies in the various contexts. It was very promising to realize that among the theological advisors

⁵⁹ K. C. Abraham and M.-B. Mbuyi Beya (eds.), *Spirituality of the Third World. A Cry for Life. Papers and Reflections from the Third General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians*, Jan 5-16, 1992, Nairobi, New York 1994; 194.

⁶⁰ *Voices from the Third World*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, June 1998, 247-252.

(professional theologians) assisting at the 4th Ecumenical Latin American Meeting of *Teología India* (May 6-10, 2002, Asunción-Paraguay), a good number were members of EATWOT.

4. Gender and Theology

As mentioned before, at the Assembly in Quito, women theologians constituted the majority (about 52 %). This is exceptional considering the history of EATWOT and the struggle of female theologians to be taken seriously within the association. At the Founding Meeting in Dar-es-Salam (1976), only one woman (among 21 men) was among the participants; five years later, at the First General Assembly in Delhi (1981), ten of 42 delegates were women. However, no woman theologian occupied a position in the Executive Committee, nor was asked to deliver a paper at the conference.

Nevertheless, Mercy Amba Odoyuye comments on the Assembly as the one where women raised their voices to denounce sexism and discrimination among Third World theologians and to criticise very strongly the arrogance of the male participants towards the female theologians present at the Assembly. She called this protest «the irruption within the irruption»⁶¹, a challenge to the male dominated theologies in the First, but also in the Third World. For the first time, a woman (Virginia Fabella) was elected as an executive secretary into the Executive Committee, together with six male theologians.

In the final statement of the Delhi Assembly, chapter 17 is dedicated exclusively and expressively to the discrimination of women in society and Church (not in theology!), and chapter 49 asks to incorporate the gender issue and the perspective of women into theological reflection, confessing that theology in the First and Third World has too long been a theology of the white man. Chapter 50 mentions the contribution of (European and North American) feminist theologians to deconstruct patriarchal presuppositions of dominant theologies and to read the Scripture from a feminist perspective.⁶²

But the main impact came at the International Conference 1983 in Geneva, known as «Dialogue between First and Third World Theologians», especially from European and North American feminist theologians. The ten female EATWOT members present in Geneva felt confirmed and empowered in their uneasiness and criticism about the male dominated association and its theology. As a concrete result, after the consultation, the EATWOT Women's Commission was established (January 14, 1983). This body was not only responsible for the elaboration and development of a rich variety of feminist theologies in the Third World, but also for a substantial change of EATWOT itself, concerning the gender issue.⁶³

⁶¹ M. A. Odoyuye, «Reflections from a Third World Woman's Perspective: Women's Experience and Liberation Theologies», in: V. Fabella and S. Torres (eds.), *Irruption of the Third World. Challenge to Theology*, New York 1983, 246-255, especially 247-249.

⁶² See: Fabella and Torres, «Final Statement of the Fifth EATWOT Conference, New Delhi, August 17-29», 1981, in: op.cit., 191-206; 193 (ch. 17); 200 (ch. 49 and 50).

⁶³ For the history of the EATWOT Women's Commission, see: V. Fabella, *Beyond Bonding. A Third World Woman's Theological Journey*, Manila 1993.

Before the Second General Assembly in Oaxtepec (1986), the Women's Commission organized its first intercontinental meeting, with 26 female participants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. At the General Assembly itself, women (17 out of 55 participants) tried to bring in their concerns and to challenge the male way of doing theology. The Women's Commission was recognized, and a whole chapter in the final statement is dedicated to the perspective and contribution of women to theology. But it has been the Third General Assembly in Nairobi (1992), where women theologians had the decisive breakthrough: They contributed to the discussions by fresh and new ideas, convinced by great competence and commitment and introduced the gender issue as a permanent task for EATWOT.

At the Fourth General Assembly in Tagaytay (1996), feminist theology and gender issues were explicitly discussed, although in a very controversial and even emotional way: All women left the room at some critical moment protesting against the male refusal to give more space to women within EATWOT. As a result of these hot debates, the recommendations by the Women's Commission⁶⁴ were integrated into the final statement of the Assembly. But the debate about the implications of feminist theology and gender perspective for theological paradigms and conceptions would be postponed to the next intercontinental meeting, the Quito Assembly. In the meantime, the Women's Commission realized a quite ambitious dialogue-program on the gender issue.

So, the Quito Assembly was a crucial test case for the «irruption within the irruption», the position of women in EATWOT and the overcoming of androcentric and patriarchal theology. One of the recommendations of the Tagaytay Assembly – half of the participants and speakers at EATWOT meetings must be women – was fully achieved: 34 out of 62 participants were women, and among the speakers, there was a gender balance. The gender issue was not only present in view of the panel on «Gender and Bible», but considering the report of the Women's Commission, the worships, and other theological subjects as well. You could say that in Quito, the gender perspective in theology changed from a sectorial theme («women and theology») to an issue underlying and transforming any theological subject whatsoever.

This gender-sensitive theologising was also notable on the level of theological method and language: Inclusive language,⁶⁵ narrative theology, the weight of everyday life, sensitivity, metaphorical speaking, dynamic forms of presentation, holistic celebrations, and grassroots experiences. The final statement gives plenty of room to the gender issue. The Assembly recognizes that «women's theology and women's leadership are still relegated to second place [...] [in spite of a continuing] struggle against the hierarchical and patriarchal structures in all institutions, be they families, governments, churches, or entire societies» (Statement, 3). However, it affirms «an emerging theology of the body» and asks to

⁶⁴ There were six concrete proposals, which were incorporated into the text of the final statement (C.2): All members should read at least five contributions on feminist theology; all regions should organize dialogue-meetings on the gender issue: at all meetings of EATWOT, half of the papers should be given by women; the meetings should consider more sensibility towards different kinds of experience; the experiences of grassroots people should influence our theologising; the gender issue must have its place in the analysis and theological reflection.

⁶⁵ The Constitution of EATWOT was discussed with a view to explicitly taking care of inclusive language. However, the headlines of official EATWOT documents still keep the exclusive male forms in French (*Théologiens du Tiers Monde*) and Spanish (*Teólogos del Tercer Mundo*).

«understand the word of God through gender perspectives, critiquing texts that are violent and affirming texts that bring wholeness to women and men» (ibid.).

Some of the male participants expressed the wish to redefine masculinity and broaden the gender perspective from feminist theology to a gender-sensitive theology, which is a common task of men and women. The final statement takes this concern up: «There is hope when men listen to women's voices, and when they critique their own socialisation as men for the sake of a new humanity. A particular challenge for men is to redefine their masculinity in the current patriarchal system, as part of human liberation». (ibid.) This will remain a big challenge for EATWOT – but also for Western theology – for the next years, contributing to the liberation of women and men, struggling for a new wholeness and integrity. The Assembly just gave some impulses, but the work has still to be done.

5. Interreligious Dialogue

The third field of special interest for EATWOT at the Fifth General Assembly was the issue of interfaith dialogue and praxis, which will remain a focus for its work during the next five years. During the Assembly, there was a panel on «Interfaith Dialogue» – the official nomenclature according to the general programme. However, in the presentations and debates, there was some confusion about terminology and the concepts involved. Not everyone understood the same under one and the same expression. Some talked about «interreligious dialogue» (*diálogo interreligioso*), others used «interfaith dialogue», «interdenominational dialogue», «macro ecumenism», «interfaith praxis» or even «trans religiosity».

This confusion – and the need for clarification – reflects the difficulty and challenge within EATWOT to interact and exchange between different geographical and denominational contexts. Asian Catholic theologians normally use the expression «interreligious dialogue» (as dialogue between different Asian religions), Asian Protestant theologians prefer the notion «interfaith dialogue». In Africa, this notion normally does not mean «dialogue between Christianity and Islam» or «dialogue between Christianity and traditional African religions» (which is rather called «interreligious dialogue»), but just «ecumenism» or «interdenominational dialogue». Latin American theologians often refer to «interreligious dialogue» (in the Asian sense of the word) by the term *macroecumenismo* and use *diálogo interreligioso* for the incipient dialogue between Catholicism and the autochthonous indigenous religions and faiths (*creencias*).

This confusion and lack of conceptual clarification is reflected in the final statement, where one can read: «[...] the hope [...] needs to be realised in *inter-faith praxis* for justice and peace with an option for the poor, and integrity of creation. This focus on *interfaith praxis* is inter-cultural, *inter-religious* and inter-spiritual. [...] we reaffirm our *macro ecumenical* vocation toward unity between Christian *denominations* and all *religions* of the earth». (Statement 5; italics mine).

In his report on the dialogue between Christianity and Islam in Africa, Arnold C. Temple spoke about «interfaith relationship» and «interfaith dialogue». In her opening address, Mercy Amba Odoyuye referred to the religious conflicts in Nigeria when concluding:

« [...] interreligious relations and a theology of religions has not been the strong point of EATWOT». Marcelo Barros used in his exposition the notion of *macroecumenismo*, referring to the «communion and unity of life between religions and cultures». Referring to the Asian context Tissa Balasurya spoke about the relationship between a minority (Christianity) and majorities (other meta-cosmic religions), labelling it as «interreligious dialogue» and referring to «human basic communities» (i.e. multireligious or interreligious ones).

Interreligious dialogue – used here in the Asian sense of the word as «dialogue between religions» – has traditionally been a concern mainly for Asian theologians. Since the beginnings of EATWOT, the Asian members have insisted on the religious pluralism as a *locus theologicus* and a challenge for Westernised theology. The final statement of the First General Assembly in Delhi (Asian context!) took into account the fact of religious pluralism (chapter 27) and recommended a theological renewal because «traditional theology has often not been able to enter into dialogue with the other world religions» (chapter 35). But it was the Quito Assembly that put interreligious dialogue on the agenda as an urgency and challenge for all geographical contexts, including Latin America.

The *teología india* (indigenous Latin American theology) sensitised liberationist theologians to the *inter-* rather than to the *intra-*religious dimension of the different types of dialogue on the Latin American continent. That is why the concept of *diálogo interreligioso* in Latin America indicates more the reality of syncretistic religious pluralism than a dialogue between (established) world religions. African theologians insisted on the need to establish a creative and innovative dialogue with Traditional African Religions, and not just with well-established world religions such as Islam.

The fact that the new Executive Committee of EATWOT invited shortly after the General Assembly to a workshop on «Hope and Interfaith Praxis», together with the theological partners in Europe and North America, is not only a good sign for a new attempt to overcome the «Geneva trauma»⁶⁶, but it also shows the importance the new Committee attaches to the issue of interreligious dialogue. The workshop took place at Bossey Ecumenical Institute (Switzerland), from June 10-11, 2002. It was a rich sharing of ideas, perceptions, and proposals in a sphere of solidarity and commitment to one and the same objective.

6. Hope for Theology?

As the General Assembly to be held in Quito was approaching, there were voices, which asked for a «refoundation» or even the dissolution of the Ecumenical Association of Third

⁶⁶ The famous Dialogue Conference between representatives of the First and the Third World, from January 5-13, 1983 in Geneva, was commented as a not successful attempt to bridge the theological gap between the Northern and Southern hemisphere. The frustration did not result from the lack of willingness and good will from both sides, but more from incompatibilities of theological method, academic, cultural, and scientific standards. For the conference statement and comments see: P. Potter, «Doing Theology in a Divided World», in: *The Ecumenical Review* 35 (1983), 289-296; E. Kamphausen, «Theologische Praxis in einer geteilten Welt. Beobachtungen und Anmerkungen zu einem Dialog zwischen Theologen der Dritten und Ersten Welt», in: *Ökumenische Rundschau* 32 (1983), 208-224.

World Theologians. José María Vigil from the Latin American region presented a document called *Plan mínimo para la Refundación de EATWOT* (Minimal plan for a refoundation of EATWOT) which was partly supported by other members of the region. From the US Minorities' region, there were also critical comments on some of the «deficiencies» the Association is struggling with; there were rumours that the absence of representatives of this region did not only have to do with «September 11», but also with some fundamental disagreements with the leaving Executive Committee.

Vigil's document proposing a «refoundation» mentions five important points for the renewal of EATWOT:

1. To enter really into the «era of information», using the global network for communication among the members, to edit an electronic journal and to publish it online.
2. To produce theology and to be a protagonist opinion maker.
3. To give priority to religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue within a liberationist perspective.
4. To become a more lively, efficient, and democratic organisation, e. g. to improve the mechanisms of decision making, the inclusion of young theologians and the active role of all members in the association.
5. To become economically more austere and look for new forms of funding.

I just want to stress point two (2.) because it seems to me to be the decisive point for the future of EATWOT. The association mainly owes its reputation acquired during the past 25 years to the high theological quality of the official statements, but also of the publications and testimony of outstanding members. Third World theology has been noticed by the academia and committed Church people in the North mainly because there exists an association speaking with one voice and being an advocate of the marginalized and poor regions of this world. There are many historical reasons for the fact that EATWOT did not have the same impact and importance in Latin America as it had in Africa and Asia; but most of the outstanding liberationist theologians sympathized with EATWOT in the past or were even members.

However, there can be observed some signs of «crisis» having much to do with a general uncertainty among «Third World Movements» facing unilateral and hegemonic globalisation and internal fragmentation. The world has changed dramatically since the foundation of EATWOT in the late 1970ies: The fall of «real socialism» has also destroyed the dream of «ideal socialism»; oppression and marginalisation have got new faces (cultures, religions, information); liberation has to be redefined; the bipolar world has become unipolar («the West against the rest»). This hostile global climate becomes even more hostile considering restauration tendencies in the (Catholic) Church and the threat of fundamentalism and sectarianism worldwide. To make the list complete, academic theology in Europe and North America is manifesting an increasing disinterest in or even indifference to contextual theologies of the South. The time of the «energizing inspiration» from Africa, Asia and Latin America is over.

In such times it is not easy for an association as EATWOT to be faithful to its very mission and vision and to look for new ways of being a «voice of the voiceless». Many

outstanding theologians (men and women) of the Third World do not fully identify with the cause of EATWOT; many of them were missed in Quito. So, one could get the impression that the most innovative and creative Third World theology is not developed within or related to EATWOT, but is done in other contexts, within other institutional frameworks and by theologians who are not EATWOT members. Does the Association still have the power and capacity to be the avant-garde and the mouthpiece of Third World theology? Or has it become – as some critics suggest – a club of people in search of spiritual warmth and nostalgic sharing?

It is true that at the Quito Assembly, only part of the participants were full-fledged theologians with sufficient analytical and synthesizing capacities; a good number were theologically interested pastoral workers and animators. But at the same time, EATWOT has always insisted on fostering a different theological culture and method, not comparable with the occidental academic tradition. This has been – and still is – a big force of the Association, the variety of expositions, celebrations, exposure, workshops, debate, roundtable etc. On the other hand, there must exist a networking with theological production outside of EATWOT, done by Third as well as by First World theologians.

EATWOT is looking for new forms of doing theology to de-Hellenise and de-Occidentalise traditional (even liberationist) theologies. The main challenge for the future consists in establishing truly intercultural forms of theologising and dropping a monocultural understanding of how and what «theology» must be. This new theology must be of high standard, able to enter dialogue with the dominant occidental tradition, in the regions of EATWOT⁶⁷ or in the North. At the Assembly in Quito, it was acknowledged that there are also «Third World minorities» in Europe (as in North America), which should be taken seriously for the purpose of EATWOT. Although the delegates ratified again the «Third World» terminology⁶⁸, it should be taken into account that under the present conditions of capitalist globalisation, «Third World» as well as «First World», «North» and «South» are anywhere, as the two sides of one coin.

6. From the «Middle of the World» to the Margins

After the Silver Jubilee celebrated at the equator, the «middle of the world», EATWOT has to put into practice the many signs of hope present at the Assembly and found also in the

⁶⁷ It is often observed that the most „orthodox» Western theology and philosophy is still defended in non-Western contexts, i.e. at universities and Church institutions (seminaries, faculties) in the Third World. EATWOT and the committed form of theology it stands for is not accepted by the huge majority of university professors, Church authorities and clergy in general in the regions where EATWOT is rooted. Such as the economic and cultural schism does not run just between North and South, the theological one doesn't either.

⁶⁸ This has been the case when discussing the EATWOT constitution. The delegates decided to keep the term «Third World» as part of the name of the Association (Article I), but to add an explanatory note: «In the Bandung Conference description. It was originally used in 1952 by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy [...] The term soon became a useful designation of the international reality... Currently «Third World» is used as a self-designation of peoples who have been excluded from power and the authority to shape their own lives and destiny. As such it has a supra-geographic denotation, describing a social condition marked by social, political, religious, and cultural oppressions that render people powerless and expendable. Thus, Third World also encompasses those people in the First World who form a dominated and marginalized minority.» (only in manuscript).

Ecuadorian contexts, wherever its members find themselves, committed to the people at the margins and faithful to the mission of the liberating Gospel. The delegates ratified their commitment to do «theology from the vantage point of the poor seeking liberation, integrity of creation and gender co-responsibility, racial and ethnic equality and interfaith dialogue»⁶⁹.

A new Executive Committee was elected: As the new president was elected the former vice-president, Diego Irrarázaval, director of the *Instituto de Estudios Aymaras* in Chucuito / Peru; as the new executive secretary and treasurer, Ramathate Dolamo, lecturer at UNISA in Pretoria / South Africa, and as the new vice-president, Meehyn Chung from Seoul / South Korea. There were also elected new regional coordinators and commissioners: Arnold Temple for Africa; Rohan Silva for Asia; Tania Sampaio for Latin America; Jung Ha Kim for the US minorities; Philomena Mwaura for the Women's Commission; Yang-En Cheng for the Theological Commission.

Diego Irrarázaval expresses his hope for EATWOT in the first «EATWOT Newsletter» after the Quito Assembly with the words: «A global world that is undergoing childbirth, demands for a global ethics, the gender perspective, ecological concern, the struggles of the poor... This implies that EATWOT may not just continue as before. It must deeply renew its vision, its networking, its theological symbols, and discourse. [...] May all of us work together in a local and regional basis and make plans for EATWOT Refoundation as a response to the signs of our times. It seems to me that in this way we will respond to the spirit of God who renews earth and heaven».⁷⁰

After 25 years of existence, the purpose and aims where EATWOT has been founded for, have by no means been achieved. Intercultural and intercontinental exchange and networking in the fields of theology and philosophy is still urgent; although there are now good theological networks and associations on a continental level – perhaps less developed in Africa – EATWOT is the only intercontinental ecumenical network in the field of contextual theologies. To resist and criticise monocultural economic and digital globalisation requires to join recourses and creativity on the side of the victims of history; to be and remain a «voice of the voiceless» is the true theology of hope EATWOT should promote also in the future. Doing this means that there is hope for a theology in the sense the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians has ever opted for.

There was a lot of criticism at the Quito Assembly and in the months before, but there were also a lot of signs of hope. As I was told, at no General Assembly before there had been such a constructive and cooperative spirit, such an inspiring sphere of mutual understanding, listening, and debating. Even the invited partners from Europe and North America – officially in the condition of «observers» – took fully part in the discussions, workshops, exposure program and celebrations. And the invitation for and the realization of a common workshop on «interreligious dialogue» shows that the «dialogue of the deaf» might have come to an end. This is a hopeful sign for all people and institutions committed to the cause of EATWOT, in North and South, West and East. The struggle for a better life, for justice and peace, for a «new heaven and earth» does not know any boundaries. The Final

⁶⁹ This passage was accepted to be included in Article II («Purpose and Aims») of the EATWOT Constitution (only in manuscript).

⁷⁰ *EATWOT Newsletter*, vol. VI, No. 1 (April 2002), 1-2.

Statement of the 5th General Assembly of EATWOT in Quito ends with an Akan (Ghanaian) word of life and hope:

« We know there is unity in heaven
Let it reach us
We know there is plurality in heaven
Let it reach us
We know there is coherence in heaven
Let it reach us
God, there is something in the heavens
Let it reach us.
Our hope is real. » (Statement, 6)

4. *Apu Taytayku*: Theological Implications of Andean Thought

1. Introduction

The numerous essays on Andean religiosity speak practically without exception of the predominantly syncretic character of the theological thought and ritual praxis of the peoples of the Andean region. Though for many, this syncretism can be an impurity and sign of heterodoxy, it is first and foremost a historical fact and has to do with an extremely complex history of imposition, resistance, and interpenetration. Religiosity is a cultural phenomenon, and as such it is subject to the organic processes which characterize social and ethnic groups.

Indeed, it is well to recall that the Christian religion itself, even in its purest «Catholic orthodox» form, is an eminently syncretistic product, fruit of the marriage between the Hebrew *ruah* and the Greek *logos*.⁷¹

If we are to speak, then, of Andean religious syncretism, it is surely to be considered as a real synthesis and not simply as some sort of a juxtaposition of two incompatible conceptions. Andean religiosity⁷² is a «religion of mixed origin» in that there persists neither the thesis of a non-Christian Andean religion (as the ancient Inca religion was), nor the antithesis of a pure Christian religion (if such a thing ever existed). Instead, the Andean elements are Christianized, and the Christian elements are Andeanized. Even the most Andean of rites has been penetrated by what is Christian, and the most Catholic liturgy is dyed by Andean colours and reeks of Andean fragrance. Now, of course, Andean religiosity cannot be described simply as a given and precisely defined phenomenon; it is rather what Max Weber would term an ideal type; it is manifested in one way or another, in form more or less complete, in the many separate peasant communities of the Andean region (Quechua as well as Aymara).

There are many works that offer phenomenological descriptions of the mestizo and syncretic features of Andean religiosity, its beliefs and rituals, its social organization, and its implicit ethics. The purpose of this work is somewhat different.

The religious explanation of life and the world corresponds with certain felt needs and existential problems; hence its general framework as a piece of semantic interpretation is a set of values, conceptions and relationships that Germans call «*Weltanschauung*», and which we can translate as «cosmovision». Each such cosmovision is a pre-philosophical paradigm

⁷¹ This syncretism can be appreciated even in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of John and in the letters of Paul. The intellectual situation of Palestine and the missionary activity of the first Christians strongly favoured the syncretizing of the Christian faith. Indeed, it can be argued that Christianity separated from Judaism, at least partly, as a result of its potentiality for inculturation and syncretisation.

⁷² It is important to differentiate between «Andean religiosity» and «popular religiosity». While Andean religiosity continues to exist under the influence of the most important conceptions of Andean thought, popular religiosity is the product of a gradual erosion of such conceptions due to the migration and the influence from outside. Theology of Liberation has as its main subject the «people», defined without reference to ethnic distinction. Hence, the results of a polis on popular religiosity in Peru may tell us not much about Andean religiosity. Further, I prefer to speak of «Andean religiosity» rather than «Andean religion» because I deal with a set of practices, conceptions and non-defined of less dogmatized rituals, and not with an established creed within a given institution. Correspondently, the term «Andean thought» is preferable to «Andean philosophy» [in my latter publications, I change this position: cf. Estermann, Josef (2006). *Filosofía andina: Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo*. La Paz: ISEAT].

determined by a series of cultural, socio-economic, and even climatological factors. No religious interpretation can be thoroughly neutral with respect to current cosmovisions; hence inculturation is as much an inevitable cultural event as an exigency of the Gospel. Religion is always inculturated. A certain «classical» theology wanted to ex-culturate it to define its a-temporal and universal conceptual content once and for all. But no religion is a supra-cultural and a-historic entity. And a Protestant thesis of the cultural immunity of the faith is highly disputable.⁷³

The conceptual horizon of the Christian religion in its origins was formed by the Semitic cosmovision, that is to say, oriental thought. However, the theologizing of this religion was accomplished within the Greek cosmovision, and the result was a very distinct westernization. Christian dogma manifests the fingerprints of Greek philosophy, and even today it is difficult to «deculturize» or better, to «*dehellenize*» Christian theology.⁷⁴

In the case of the indigenous peoples of the American continent, the Hellenic Western paradigm of the Christian religion was from the beginning confronted by several paradigms of native cosmovisions and an autochthonous religiosity. In spite of the fact that the Christian religion (the «cross») was imposed through political and military power, and was meant to replace gradually the autochthonous religions, this did not quite happen at the level of cosmological paradigms or «*Weltanschauungen*». Hence Andean religiosity (to limit our remarks to this concrete paradigm) is much more Andean than Hellenic. For example, although the official theological language gives expression to the Greek conceptions of essence, nature, person, substance, soul, and body etc., the Andean people understand these terms within the horizon of their own categories. They can speak of the Trinity in these terms, but they understand it differently from the catechism, and European theologians like Rahner or Schillebeeckx.

For the *runa/jaqi*,⁷⁵ the Christian religion has been Andeanized in the depths of their hearts. One would speak also of the opposite process; the Andean has been Christianized, although this direction (as a moment of a dialectical movement) seems to be much more in accordance with the historical events of the evangelization. I think that the impact from the other side has been equally strong. Christian religion has experienced a strong reinterpretation from Andean thought, not only in its ritual and social manifestations, but also in its theological conceptions.

The present work intends to throw some light on this conceptual impact of the Andean cosmovision on the fundamental theological categories of Christianity. The approach is a sort of philosophical analysis applied to the phenomenon of Andean religiosity.

⁷³ It was certainly an advance in Protestant theology when Barth differentiated between 'religion' and «faith', to offset the devastating effects of the criticism of religion. However, an inadequate separation is the result, because faith is not an intangible nucleus of religion (that is itself a cultural environment), nor is it found as a platonic idea beyond all historical and cultural determination. Faith (and not only religion) as existential actuality and creed is always a product of a cultural and historical mediation.

⁷⁴ Even Liberation Theology breathes still a strong Greek spirit in spite of its starting point in a different culture.

⁷⁵ *Runa* is the Quechua term for «people», «human being», and *jaqi* is its Aymara equivalent. These terms are used either as a name for the Andean people (exclusive use), or for humankind in general (inclusive use).

2. General characteristics of Andean thought

Although Andean thought is not in all its aspects opposed to and incompatible with Western thought, we will have a clearer picture of its principal features if we contrast them with corresponding Western conceptions.

The most fundamental and determining feature of Andean thought is «relationality». The basic category is not the «entity as an entity» (*ens in quantum ens*) of Western metaphysics, but relationship.⁷⁶ Western philosophy has as ontological basis the substantiality of all that exists, whether in a realistic sense as «being in itself», or in a transcendental sense as the autonomy of the subject. Primacy belongs to the separate and monadic existence; the relationship between the particular *entities* is secondary.

For the Andean person the situation is the inverse of this. The universe is above all a system of inter-related entities which depend on one another; anarchical, heteronymous, and non-substantial. Relationship which in the West is really an *accidens*, or an *a priori* form of reasoning, is now the first ontological category; it is so to speak the real «non-substantial substance».

This basic conception of universal relationship manifests itself in a series of principles and axioms that at the same time are expressed in several cultural, social, and economic phenomena.

2.1. The principle of complementarity

Each entity and each event have as counterpart a complement that is for it a necessary condition to be «complete» and capable of existing and acting. An isolated entity (*monad*) is considered as incomplete and deficient if it is not related to its opposite complement. The opposition does not paralyze the relationship such as happens in a Western logic that is governed by the principle of non-contradiction. The opposition rather energizes the reality, as it is stated by the dialectical logic and Eastern thought in general. Heaven and earth, sun and moon, man and woman, light and darkness, day and night, kindness, and wickedness, coexist for Andean thought in inseparable ways. The real «entity», that is to say, the relationship, is a union of oppositions, a dialectical and dialogical balance.

We can see here the conceptual implications for theology and Andean religiosity: God cannot be conceived as self-sufficient substance, nor simply as an absolute being; in other words, stripped of all type of relationship. God also participates in the universally valid law of complementarity.

2.2. The principle of reciprocity

⁷⁶ Western metaphysics is in reality ontology or onto-theology. Aristotle defined the first principles or the first causes as the material object of metaphysics, in which the substance or essence of a thing occupies a privileged place. At the beginning of the Fourth Book of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle declares that metaphysics deals with «being» as «being» (*ens in quantum ens*). With Christian medieval philosophy, the being' is ultimately identified with God, who is the Supreme Being: metaphysics is converted into onto-theology.

This principle is the social and ethical application of the principle of complementarity. Each human act (and each divine act) gets its integral purpose when there corresponds to it a complementary, reciprocal, and equivalent act of another subject. A unilateral action distorts the delicate balance between the actors in the economic, organizational, ethical, and religious spheres. What the peasant takes from *Pachamama* (mother earth), he must return somehow, even though it is in a symbolic fashion.⁷⁷ The system known as kinship and *compadrazgo* is based on the reciprocity principle.

Religious relationship between man and God is not excluded from this principle; this substantially modifies both the Western theological conception of God's impassiveness as *actus purus*, and the theological conceptions of grace and justice.

2.3. The principle of correspondence

Complementarity as well as reciprocity is expressed at the cosmic level as correspondence between micro- and macrocosm, between what is large and what is small. The cosmic order of the celestial bodies, seasons, water's course, climatic phenomena, and even what is considered divine have their correspondence in the human being and its economic, social, and cultural relationships. The principle of correspondence questions the universal validity of efficient causality; the link between the micro- and macrocosm is not causative in a mechanical sense, but symbolic/representative. Therefore, the phenomena of transition⁷⁸ such as the clouds, rainbows, seasons, solstices, and phases of the moon have a sacred and numinous character. The people represent through symbolic acts what happens in a macro situation, assuring in this way the continuity of the universe and the continuance of the cosmic order. Andean religiosity has its *Sitz im Leben* in these phenomena of transition which always have a dangerous and precarious character.

2.4 The principle of holism

If the relationship of every being and happening is the basic principle of the Andean thought, we might conclude that everything is related to everything else. There are no entities which are isolated and atomic events, nor any *autarchical* subsystems. The whole universe is in a sense the only one substance and all its components are mutually related. What is big has to do with what is small, what is far with what is nearby, what is above with what is below, what is divine with what is human. This way, the human work is not limited to its consequences within the radius of individual responsibility,

⁷⁷ Many rituals exist with respect to mother earth which have the purpose of re-establishing the reciprocity between man and nature. With the «payment», the peasant requests permission from *Pachamama* to open her (to plough and to sow); with the *ch'allay* or *t'inka* (to scatter liquor or *chicha*), he returns in symbolic form something of her fruits, supposing that she is thirsty.

⁷⁸ This term has its origin in ethnology. It plays a decisive role in the description of the religious phenomena of many cultures. Religion wants to be assured in ritual forms that there will be continuity in the discontinuity of reality. The phenomena of transition have an ambiguous character because of their bridge function between two realities or ages: this ambiguity causes fear and insecurity compensated by the rites of transition. Andean religiosity has to do mainly with the transition phenomena in what is cosmic (solstices, moon change) agricultural (sowing, crop), social (marriage, festivities), and personal (birth, death, disease).

but it is extended to the community, the region, and to the entire cosmos. We can speak of a «cosmic ethics» that comprises the social and natural as well as the religious relationships. Religiosity in this sense is the symbolic and ritual (re-) establishment of the balance in universal relationships; the Andean person does not personify easily this *totum*, but he conceives it as an essential inter-relational network.

2.5. The principle of cycle

Due to the agricultural experience, the Andean person conceives time and space (*pacha*)⁷⁹ as something repetitive. Infinity is not understood as a line without end, but as circular movement or endless spiral. Each circle describes a cycle, whether it be with respect to the seasons of the year, the succession of the generations or different historical ages. The *novum* as something absolutely unknown does not exist for Andean thought. The cyclical sequence is dialectical and non-continuous; each cycle ends with a cosmic cataclysm (*pachakuti*) that causes another return, a new era on another level.

Andean eschatology is not a lineal projection of the present, but a radical break with a real apocalypse; yet without this catastrophic event being the absolute end of the whole cosmic process.

3. God as an organizing Force

Although evangelization has transmitted to the *runa/jaqi*⁸⁰ a quite orthodox conception of God, this nevertheless exhibits many features that have to do with the conceptual framework of Andean thought.

In the first place, there does not exist in the Quechua language (*runa simi*: language of the people) or in Aymara language (*jaqi aru*: tongue of the people) a specific word for God (as a generic name): the Andean uses the Spanish term for «God» (*Dios*), but it always goes together with some other name or title. The more common expression is *Taytacha God* or simply *Taytacha* (daddy), which demonstrates the strong impact of Christian evangelization.

The Andean conception of «God» is far removed from the Western philosophical conception which conceives of God as «infinite substance», *causa sui*, *ens necessarium* and *actus purus*, and which emphasizes the divine attributes of transcendence, eternity, immutability, omnipotence and absoluteness. Andean religiosity does not conceive of God as a transcendent and absolute reality, that is to say, as an entity that exists initially outside

⁷⁹ The Quechua and Aymara languages have just one word for «time» and «space»: *pacha*. This word indicates in the first place the «space of life», that is the earth and the globe, but also time as present tense (there is no form for the future); that is to say: *pacha* means the here and now, the category time-space of life. For the universe as a whole the Quechua expression used is *teqsimuyu* (round world), *tukuy pacha* (total space).

⁸⁰ I employ this term to delimit Andean religiosity to the Quechua and Aymara cultures here, though certainly Urus and Guaranies would share a large part of the proposed ideas. *Runa* (Quechua people) and *Jaqi* (Aymara people) avoid pejorative denominations such as «Indian», «indigenous» (which are highly ethnic), or peasant (which has economic connotations). One's idiom after all reveals one's view of the world.

of all relationship and beyond universe. Such an extra-mundane God seems like a deistic idea and has little to do with the Andean conception of God.

God is in a certain manner part of the cosmos, not as an entity among others, but as a definitive part of the universal system of relationships: God is all in all. This Andean panentheism perhaps has more affinity with the monism of Spinoza, who considers one substance as the totality of all the interrelated entities, which is at the same time God and nature (*Deus sive Natura*) — or perhaps with the theology of Schleiermacher, who substitutes creative force for substance, and sees God as the creative force working through all finite forces.

The Creative God as often conceived, therefore, hardly plays an important role in Andean religiosity. The Inca religion did not know of a creative deity: the universe exists from eternity, and the usual idea of *creatio ex nihilo* turns out to be something not quite intelligible. Everything comes from something; life comes from the ground, humankind comes from the womb of the *Pachamama*, but nothing comes from nothing.

The first missionaries identified the creative God of the book of *Genesis* with the Inca god *Wiracocha*, thus introducing a foreign conception to Andean thought. *Wiracocha* (or *Ticsi Wiracocha Pachayachachiq*) just like *Pachakamaq*,⁸¹ was not Creator nor Maker, but Organizer and Mobilizer of the universe. He has the task «to recreate» constantly a cosmos out of chaos (not from nothing), a chaos caused by a *pachakuti* (cosmic cataclysm); that is to say, to re-establish the universe in a secure and defined system of relationships. This is also the conception of the Yahwist in *Genesis* 2:5ff. *Wiracocha* as supreme god appears in the drawings of Pachacuti Yamqui Salcamaygua (1613), as a link between the oppositions of the sun and moon, morning and evening stars, that is to say, as the creative representative of the complementary relationship immanent in the universe (*ticsimuyu*).

God is then for the *runa/jaqi* of the Andes the necessary foundation of order in the universe, both natural and ethical. The first theological attribute is not that of omnipotence or creativity, but providence: God is above all caretaker (*arariwa*) and companion. In this sense, people dearly call him *Taytacha*: He is like a father who takes care of his children, maintaining the order that makes life possible.

Christian Trinitarian theology can of course substantially facilitate a mutual approaching of these two paradigms with respect to God. Trinity is the synthesis of absolute being and relationship in the Godhead itself, and therefore the Christian God also participates in the principal feature of Andean thought. The Triune God is in himself (*ad intra*) relationship and is still this in his transcendent aspects (*ad extra*). However, Andean thought does not work along the lines of triads as these are conceived in Western analogous and dialectical thought, but rather in dual polarities. It is a fact that for the *runa/jaqi* the duo of divine persons, Father and Son, has most relevance, while the Holy Spirit practically does not have a place of his own. There is a painting of the Cusco School in which the Virgin Mary occupies in the representation of the Holy Trinity the place of the Holy Spirit. The sexual complement also

⁸¹ Literally this title means «Lord of the universe, Teacher of time and space». *Pachakamaq* (Maker of earth and heaven) is a pre-Inca deity mainly in the coastal region. He was not considered Maker but «Mobilizer» of everything, that is to say, Lord of the celestial movements. He was coupled with *Pachamama*, establishing in this way a complement between heaven and earth.

competes for its place in the deity: God *Taytacha* and goddess *Mamacha* (Virgin Mary) beget the Son, fruit of the intra-divine polarity. Though the *runa/jaqi* very well know of the subordinate position of Mary, in their religious practice they frequently put her alongside *Taytacha*.⁸²

4. Jesus Christ as *Chakana* (Bridge)

Andean Christology affirms with the official church that Christ is Godson made man, who came to Earth to redeem us by his death on the cross. However, it has its very own elements that have to do with the background of Andean thought. Firstly, for the Quechuas and Aymaras, Jesus is stripped almost completely of his historical aspects. The two Christological milestones are the birth (Christmas) and the death on the cross (Holy Week); neither Jesus» preaching nor his resurrection play an important role in the Andean religiosity.

Secondly, Jesus is venerated as miraculous *Taytacha* under multiple sacred manifestations or hierophanies, and then he receives different names and titles. In Peru, for example, he is known as Lord of Miracles, Lord of Quakes, Huanca Lord, Lord of Qoyllur Rit»i, and Lord of Achajrapi. Each particular Christ (or each Christ-hierophany) manifests a given feature of the universal Christ.

Thirdly, Jesus is manifested in the symbol of the cross. The cross reveals a most important aspect of Andean Christology, due to the role it fulfils in Andean thought. The cross for the *runa/jaqi* is above all a *chakana*, a bridge between different cosmic regions, between above and below, left, and right. The *chakana* is the prototype of a «phenomenon of transition» that makes possible the relationship between different entities and the encounter between different levels. The cross on the top of the hill establishes symbolically the vital relationship between the micro- and macrocosm, heaven, and earth. The crests of the mountains (especially ones on which the snow never melts) have a numinous character because they are the place of contact and transition between *kaypacha* and *hanaqpacha*, earth and heaven.

Jesus as universal *chakana* is the mediator or bridge *par excellence*. His double nature (human and divine) privileges him in this cosmic task. The cross is not so much a symbol of death, but of life that buds, blossoms, and bears fruit, due to the cosmic relationship he institutes; crosses are green (a sign of the life) with no corpus. They protect the community, and at the same time establish a relationship with heaven that is indispensable for fertilizing the land.

Though the *runa/jaqi* repeats the formulation of the creed of Jesus Christ's divinity (God Son or *Diospa Churin*), in practice he rather considers him as one of the Saints, though supreme in the hierarchy of these agents of God. Jesus as exemplary Saint is the most important middleman and intercessor of popular religiosity, especially through the symbol of the cross. He is God disguised as a poor and old man, who shows up in the festivities

⁸² This Christian theogony substitutes for the sexual Andean complement between *Apu* and *Pachamama* that beget conjointly the plants, animals, and human beings.

to be taken in and cared for; otherwise he punishes the guilty with flood or other misfortune.⁸³

There also exists a strong identification of Jesus Christ with *Inkarri*, a mythical figure of the Inca Empire which survived under Spanish control. According to the legend, *Inkarri*⁸⁴ is pursued; he fled to the jungle (*uraypacha*) and continues living there, to come back to life one day among the poor, and to re-establish the great Inca Empire. For many, the revolutionary Tupac Amaru was the incarnation of the *Inkarri*, and the popular myth has many parallels with Jesus Christ: Tupac Amaru was a charismatic leader, fought against injustice and for the development of the indigenous people, he was cut into parts, but will resuscitate one day to gather his members from the four corners of the earth (*Tawantinsuyo*) to bring justice: Christ's Parousia in terms of the Andean utopia.

5. The Andean Pantheon

Though Jesus represents the very axis of the mediation between humanity and God *Taytacha*, he is not the only intermediary. The same holistic feature of Andean thought that we have noted presupposes a whole slew of relationships between the different spheres and levels. The mediation is accomplished in hierarchic form according to the importance and vitality of the relationship to be established. The *runa/jaqi* does not simply follow Western philosophy in posing such an ontological distance between a transcendent God and the created world. Such a break or separation is incompatible with the holistic principle and with the essential correspondence among all the spheres of the universe: what is divine is not differentiated *toto coelo* from what is human.

Since most Quechuas and Aymaras have accepted the androgynous or the straight masculine idea of God *Taytacha*, in the sphere of intermediaries they apply consequently the principle of complementarity. Jesus and Mary, *Pachamama* and the *Apus* are complementary couples. As we have seen, Jesus Christ (with respect to his many particular hierophanies) occupies through the cross the sacred place of the *Apus* or Andean deities of the hills. In the same way we can appreciate a parallel between the Virgin Mary or *Mamacha* with *Pachamama* (mother earth). The sexual complement in the Andean pantheon is manifested at all levels. Though God *Taytacha* occupies an extraordinary position, but without lacking the intrinsic polarity, the Andean sees him frequently as the masculine counterpart of *Pachamama*. The natural place of *Taytacha* is heaven (*hanaqpacha/alaxpacha*) with all the astronomic and atmospheric phenomena, while the *Pachamama* governs the earth (*kaypacha/akapacha*). However, the *Apu* is the real and effective complement of the *Pachamama*, which causes a certain rivalry and incompatibility between the masculine principles *Taytacha* and *Apu*.

⁸³ The legend about God who disguises himself as poor old man to find out what people think, is very common among the Quechuas and Aymaras. It cannot be determined if this reflects the evangelization (Matt. 10: 42) or if it is something that survived from the Andean tradition. It seems that the Inca gods also used to be disguised as beggars (especially Wiracocha). Many of the existing lagoons are interpreted as consequences of floods and deluges because of the rejection of the disguised God on the part of the people.

⁸⁴ *Inkarri* is the Quechua form of the Spanish words «Inca» and «king» (*rey*).

Apu, due to his mediating function between *hanaqpacha/alaxpacha* and *kaypacha/akapacha*, is responsible for the fertilization of *Pachamama* through the rain and sun, and for natural disasters in the case of the breaking down by humans of the ethical order. The *Pachamama* has a mediating function between *kaypacha/akapacha* and *uraypacha/manqhapacha* and gives the fruits as a result of the fertile relationship between her and the corresponding *Apu*. For the *runa/jaqi* life is always the product of a complementary relationship of two opposite forces; a totally transcendent and self-sufficient God is sterile and impotent, and he cannot be Lord of life. The theological reinterpretation of Christian orthodoxy through Andean conceptions reclaim with much force the feminine element of God in the figure of the Virgin-*Pachamama*.⁸⁵ It is significant that Andean religiosity has developed a feminine trinity as counterweight to the standard Christian Trinity with its strong masculine features. *Pachamama* is *Pacha* Earth, *Pacha Ñusta* and *Pacha* Virgin; the third person represents the Virgin Mary in her different hierophanies (Virgin of Carmen, Candlemas, Nativity, Assumed, Remedies, and Bethlehem). There is an interesting relationship with Jesus Christ in the sense that during the Holy Week the *Pachamama* does not listen because she is concerned about the fate of her partner Jesus; for this same reason she cannot control the evil spirits or *soq'a*.

The *Apus* as well as the *Pachamama* occupy a strategic place with respect to the mediation between different levels of reality (*pacha*). This gives them the function of keepers and protectors with relationship to the multiple phenomena of transition (rain, lightning, thunders, springs, rainbow, etc.) that for the Andean are hierophanies of inferior deities. A large part of Andean religiosity is devoted to protective rituals with respect to zones of danger and insecurity.

These inferior intermediaries have to do with atmospheric phenomena such as lightning (*illapa*), rainbow (*k'uychi*) and fog (*phuyu*); with astronomic entities such as the sun (*inti*), moon (*killa*), the morning star (*qolqa*) and the evening star (*qoyllur*), but also they have to do with agricultural entities such as springs (*pukyu*) and the round stones (*muyurumi*). Each one of the inferior deities has their sexual complement: sun and moon, morning and evening star, lightning, and fog. Only the rainbow due to its bridge function (*chakana*) incarnates the «bipolarity».

The Catholic tradition of the Saints has found here an auspicious and very user-friendly framework. In Andean religiosity, the concrete hagiographies of the Saints are not known; the whole emphasis is on the specific functions of each one. Each Saint is an intermediary with his own speciality for the resolution of problems and difficulties, as the Andean inferior deities are. To maintain the principle of complementarity, many of the Saints have their partner (for example, Saint Mark is accompanied by Saint Marcella).

In Cusco the Saints replaced the mummies of the Incas in the Corpus Christi procession. Two Saints deserve special attention due to their function of guaranteeing the cosmic continuity in the precarious moments of the June and December solstices: Saint John, and the Child (Jesus). As dawn and the late afternoon are critical moments of transition, so are the winter solstice (21 of June) and the summer solstice (21 of December). On these dates, *Pachamama* is untouchable. It is interesting that Quechuas and Aymaras venerate the different hierophanies of

⁸⁵ The peasant thinks *Pachamama* is virgin as long as she is not cultivated. In order to work the land - that is like the act of deflowering - he must request her permission (*licenciaykuwan*) through an offering.

Jesus Christ as if he were differentiated into different Saints: The Child (or *Niñucha*), the Holy Cross, Easter Resurrection, and even the Holy Trinity are sacred characters. The festivity of Saint John (also the Day of the Peasant) replaced gradually the Inca festivity of the *Inti Raymi* whose objective was to assure that days began again to lengthen. Christmas or the Child's feast took the place of other Inca holiday, *Qapaq Raymi*, the celebration of the great Easter of the sun.

Some Saints were incorporated as members of couples of an already existing Andean deity, as James with *Illapa* (lightning), or the Holy Cross with *Pachamama*. Others were inculturated as «brothers/sisters» along the ones of the autochthonous deities, as the Virgin with *Pachamama*, or Jesus with the *Apus*. God is the synthesis of Father and *Apu*: *Apu Taytayku*.

6. Religious Relationships

Since relationship is the fundamental characteristic of Andean thought, in a sense relationship is also religion (*religio*), an indispensable link with the universal order. The Western separation between secular and religious (numinous) spheres corresponds to the logic of exclusion (either-or), but it does not fit the holistic principle of incorporation (both-and). For a *runa/jaqi*, even agricultural labour has a religious character: to work the land is a form of prayer.

From the family, productive and communal relationships, to the cosmic and religious ones in a strict sense, all are governed by the principle of reciprocity that serves as guarantee to preserve universal justice through the established order. On the countryside, social security operates based on reciprocity: parents raise the children, but these have the obligation of returning this effort by taking care of their parents when they get old. In relationship with *Pachamama*, reciprocity is an indispensable condition for life and survival: for what mother earth gives us, peasants must give back, hence the symbolic price in the form of *despachos*, and they must strictly observe the untouchable days.⁸⁶ In all work, reciprocity of the *ayni* is a vital mechanism in the precarious economies of the High Plateau.

It should not surprise us that also the religious relationship in a more specific sense, as the relationship with God and the intermediaries, is to be understood within the framework of reciprocity and complementarity. All the sacramental economy obeys this principle. A mass or sacramental that is for free, in which nothing is offered by participants, is not worthy, in other words it does not achieve the intended effect because of its lack of complement on man's part. Many authors speak of a negotiating religiosity or blackmail and manipulation of God on man's part. If we do not pay attention to the conceptual backgrounds, the ritual behaviour of the Andean person can appear as such.

⁸⁶ The terminology of «payment» (*despacho* means «deliver») to the *Pachamama* indicates that there is a reciprocal transaction involved. The generosity of the land has its price that one must pay in caring for it, hence the symbolic offering. The untouchable days of the *Pachamama* are from 1 to 6 of August (before sowing), 21 of December to 1 of January (summer solstice), and 21 of June (winter solstice), Sunday of the Trinity and Holy Tuesday.

In the first place, one must reiterate that the Andean conception of God nullifies many of the theological attributes of Western philosophy, such as absolute self-sufficiency, impassiveness, and utter transcendence. As integral to the cosmic system of relationships, the Andean God is subject to the universally valid logic of reciprocity and complementarity. God suffers, feels sorry, gets sad and angry; the pains and injustice of the world affect him. He is not a transcendent and imperturbable substance, superior to all events in the universe, but he actively participates in worldly occupations. In a certain sense he needs his counterpart, he needs humanity to become a complete creator; he is not sufficient in himself, but only by and through multiple relationships with the universe.

In the second place it is necessary to be accurate and clear concerning the principle of reciprocity: it does not coincide with the mercantile attitude of negotiating to obtain the maximum profit. Those who criticize it from this perspective simply reveal their own individualistic philosophy of societies, both human and divine-human, in which individuals come first, and relationships between them are so often truly dehumanized by treating all things as commodities until eventually human beings themselves become commodities. In the relational philosophy of the Andes, on the contrary, the universal reciprocity is nothing else than the accomplishment of the universal justice, the fulfilment of a mutual duty, cooperative creativity that encompasses the whole of reality. The breaking of this principle would cause serious balance distortions in the natural, social, and religious systems.

Andean ethics is not based on altruism, as this is defined on the Western conception of individual and autonomous responsibility. According to the principle of holism, each human act affects the whole net of relationships: the responsibility radius is greater than that of any individual's freedom. A non-reciprocal behaviour severely distorts the social, natural, and cosmic order; natural disasters and familial misfortunes have their respective consequences. The ancient Inca's code: *ama suwa*, *ama llulla*, *ama qella* is based on the reciprocity principle. Robbery (*suwa*) is the lack of reciprocity in the exchange of goods; lying (*llulla*) in the exchange of information; and idleness (*qella*) is the lack of reciprocity in the workforce. We should add incest as a fourth breach that represents the lack of reciprocity in the exchange between sons and daughters, and that takes the form of the most serious distortion of the ethical and social order in the Andean world.

Religious relationship of reciprocity may still, of course, seem to be incompatible with some basic conceptions of Christian theology. Firstly, it may be said to exclude the grace concept as a unilateral divine initiative, and one which envisages no reciprocal contribution on man's part. But grace, however it is further defined, may well be entirely a divine initiative, yet not be such as not to request a reciprocal response. As one theologian puts it: «grace may be free, but it is never cheap». In any case, something free of charge, something which «costs» nothing in response, violates the reciprocity principle in social relationships, and returns us to the individualistic, not to say consumerist model of community. In sacred society, then, grace as any act disinterested in reciprocal response, and in that sense a unilateral action, does not exist (or should not exist) for the Andean, because it severely distorts the cosmic and social order. This view may be more compatible with the Catholic theology of grace and may involve some confrontation with a certain Protestant *theologumenon* in the Christian tradition.

The *runa/jaqi* in any case does not think so much about categories of «grace» as of «justice» and «ethical balance». Jesus' main commandment, interpreted as the disinterested love of the neighbour and even of the enemy, appears to him not only as a danger for the social and cosmic order, but as something irrational and absurd. Pure altruism in its individualistic mode destroys that universal justice that is achieved by reciprocity between the different actors and causes chaotic situations that Quechuas and Aymaras fear so much.

It does not surprise us then that the Andean conception of God has much more affinity with the just and zealous God of the Hebrew Bible than with the benign and altruistic God sometimes presented as the contrary picture of the God of the New Testament. One of the indicators for such affirmation is the very strong and common idea of a God who punishes in the creation he governs from within. In itself this does not imply the conception of a revengeful and violent God, but it simply envisages the possible ways to re-establish the victory of order over chaos, after a violation of that order which consists after all in the reciprocity principle. Some illustrations of this may need discussion: If God is said to punish a community with hail for a cattle theft, then «guilt» will be removed as a re-establishing of the relational and reciprocal order, which is continually created. This will always entail an inevitable link under God's universal providence between what one party does and another suffers. Universal justice through the reciprocity principle and the respective alteration of its deficiencies by a providential God is also, then, the Andean's response to the problems of evil and suffering.

An interesting fact in connection with this theology is this: while the classic Protestant churches achieve fewer acceptances, churches that make so much of the Old Testament - the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons and Adventists - find a very fertile ground among peasants of the Andes. A very special example, particularly in Peru, is that of the *Israelites* or the *Evangelical Association of the Israelite Mission of the New Universal Agreement*, that is based on many of the Old Testament rites, and that at the same time contains some of the features of the Andean world. Its Quechua nationalism and the emphasis in a just and zealous God, in addition to the apocalyptic ideas, are of great acceptance among the peasant population of Peru.

7. Andean Eschatology

Andean thought differs considerably from Western thought in the conception of time. The Quechua and Aymara word *pacha* not only means ground (*Pachamama*), but also space or level (for example, *kay/aka pacha*) and furthermore, time. This indicates to us that the Quechua or Aymara does not think in the categories of «the beyond» and «this side». As everything is mutually related in an ordered universe, so is time. Something that has happened is still present today, and the future is already anticipated and manifested in the present. The Quechua language does not know of a verbal form for the future and uses the form of the present tense. Time (*pacha*) is as an eternal present, a periodic repetition. This cyclical conception is based on the agricultural (ploughing, harvesting, sowing), astronomic (sun and moon), climatological (rain and drought times) and generational cycles (succession of the generations).

Western concepts of progress as unidirectional toward the future, the irreversibility and uniqueness of each moment and the perspective of what is absolutely new (the *novum* of Ernst Bloch), result in very strange impressions for the Andean. Linearity, continuity, and progressivity of time (from *alpha* to *omega*) is a conception with Judeo-Christian roots, secularized by the philosophy of history in the nineteenth century, and popularized in a technological and economic sense in the twentieth century.

For Andean thought time is not linear, nor continuous or progressive, but cyclical, non-continuous and static. There are breakings in time, decisive moments (*kairói*) and qualitative jumps that are known as *pachakuti* (cataclysm).⁸⁷ This is a dialectical movement, but without the feature of inherent progress.

Andean utopia is not located in an unknown and distant future, but rather in the past; it is a retrospective utopia. Many of the indigenous movements (*Taki Onqoy*, *Tupac Amaru*) intended the return to the Inca Empire.

Further, although Andean thought considers different levels of reality (*kay/aka*, *hanaq/alax*, *uray/manqha pacha*), it does not assent in any way to the Christian-platonic theory of two worlds (the world beyond and this world). The missionaries found in the tripartite Andean universe a perfect mould to fill with the Christian conception of heaven-earth-hell. But the two models are not compatible despite their similarity. For a *runa/jaqi*, the three levels of *pacha* belong to the same *pacha* (spacious-temporal whole). *Hanaqpacha/alaxpacha* (space above) is not referred to a transcendent beyond, but to the area of the atmospheric and astronomic phenomena. *Kaypacha/akapacha* (this space) is the natural and social area of life, the area of what is sensitive and concrete. And *uraypacha/manqhapacha* (space below or inside) is referred to what is inside the *Pachamama* that is both the area of life (many myths tell how animal and men came from caves and holes [*paqarina*] of the earth) and of death too. For the Incas, the *uraypacha/manqhapacha* was the jungle that harbours the paradise of *Paititi*, far from being identified with the Christian hell.

The great acceptance of the apocalyptic preachers by the *runa/jaqi* is explained above all by the affinity with the Andean apocalyptic conception. A new age can only begin after a cataclysm, a cosmic revolution (*pachakuti*) that turns cosmos into chaos, so that the cosmos can emerge from it yet again. Millennial ideas have a rich tradition in the Andes, and sometimes they are Christianized, for instance, by the theory of Joaquin de Fiore.⁸⁸

Though the great majority of Quechuas and Aymaras accept Christian conceptions of eternal life, final judgment, and God's Kingdom, they certainly have their very own ways of interpretation. The Andean anthropology does not fit the Platonic dualist conception that has strongly influenced Christian theology. According to the Andean idea, humans consist of

⁸⁷ Literally it is considered a return (*kutiy* means to return) of the universe (*pacha*). That is to say, a cosmic revolution by which the established order is turned into chaos; cosmos turns back into chaos again. Though *pachakuti* represents a break and a dialectical jump, it does not imply the progressivity of Western dialectical thought.

⁸⁸ The Andean overlapped the classic structure of five historical periods with the Christian tri-partition of history, successively governed by the three persons of Trinity, coinciding with the ideas of Joaquin de Fiore. There are many millennial testimonies to the effect that this world would end in the year 2000, when the era of the Holy Spirit would begin, in agreement with the teaching of some modern apocalyptic missionaries.

body and *animu* (Quechua/Spanish for «soul») or *ajayu* (Aymara) that very much resembles the *nefesh* (life breath) of the Old Testament anthropology (Gen.2:7). This *animu/ajayu* is very weak until the age of ten and can easily be disturbed by fright (*mancharisqa*). With death, the force of life (*animu/ajayu*) leaves the body and it is just right after the burial that the dead becomes soul. But this borrowed expression from Western anthropology does not coincide with the idea of «soul» as incorruptible spiritual substance. «Soul» (*alma*) is the human person that continues living (though invisibly) near by the place of earthly existence, who has powers that before it did not have. Some can cause evil things (the *hatun kukuchi* or «condemned»), and others accompany their loved ones as protective spirits. In any case, the principle of reciprocity continues valid until beyond death, which explains the countless rituals that have to do with the departed «souls» (who can become ancestral spirits: *achachilas*), especially on All Saints» Day.

For Andean religiosity, judgment does not take place in a world beyond, but will take place in this world (as is the case of Judaism). God judges with punishments and remunerations, but not always in personal and individual mode. The events of judgment can only be understood and interpreted within a collective context of cosmic relationships.

9. Sacramentalism of the World

Due to the panentheistic conception (God is in all) of the Andean thought, the world is not a place purely profane and secular. Though there certainly are animist features, the Andean cosmovision is not animist in a strict sense; rather we might speak of «sacralism», an effective omnipresence of what is «numinous» and divine. Parallel to the hierarchy of the Andean pantheon, there is also a hierarchy of the sacred and sacramental. In a wide sense, the whole universe is sacred because in each one of its parts the divine order is present through the system of relationships.

However, there are special places, events and times (*kairoi*) in which the deity is revealed in a dense and comprehensive manner. These hierophanies already had their importance in the Inca religion (*wak'as*, *intiwatana*, *Inti Raymi*, *Qapaq Raymi*). Moments and places preferred for such «numinous» revelations are without doubt the countless phenomena of transition in personal life, community, agricultural cycle, and in the astronomic events. These phenomena always have caused a certain preoccupation, and therefore require an accompanying ritual to avoid the irruption of chaos. Sacramentalism has a great importance in Andean thought, and Christian theology has only channelled this religious condition of the Andean. The result is that those Christian sacraments that have greater acceptance correspond with Andean sacraments and rituals that already existed. These are in this order: baptism, marriage, and the Eucharist.

Baptism finds among Quechuas and Aymaras the greatest acceptance of all sacraments. In the countryside, emergency baptism (*ununchachinku*) immediately after a child is born is very common, although its life may not be in danger. Christian baptism has many parallels among the different autochthonous rituals that have the function of «rituals of passage».

One of them is the first hair cut (*chukcha rutuy*) that is frequently done after the Catholic baptism, which highlights the passing from being a «breast child» (*nuna wawa*) to an independent one (*puqllaq wawa*). At the same time, the child is assigned a star as sign of special protection by a given *Apu*. The ceremony is accompanied by a *despacho* and a detailed list of the economic transactions for the good of the child.

Baptism then fulfils different functions. It is an initiation rite that commissions the child to the protection of *Taytacha* (to avoid the child to be turned into *kukuchi*); it's a health ceremony, and at the same time (through the *compadrazgo* or kinship) it fulfils an economic function of survival.⁸⁹ Catholic marriage also finds wide acceptance among the *runa/jaqi* although it is not done for economic reasons. Almost for all couples, the Catholic religious marriage or *kasarakuy* is only the definitive commitment after they have lived together for some length of time in *sirvinakuy*, the Andean marriage. This is not a «trial marriage» but a firm commitment of mutual help (reciprocity), implying economic transactions between two families. In a marriage (Andean as well as Catholic), not only the couple is involved but the whole set of family and godfather relationships. It is the nucleus and cell of reciprocity, representing the fertile cosmic complement in a small scale.

The Eucharist or mass has as Andean background: the «table» (*mesa*) or *despacho* to the *Pachamama*. To «perform a mass» and «to prepare the table for *despacho*» are expressed by the same Quechua words (*misata churay*). Like the payment to the *Pachamama* or the *despacho* for the *Apus*, mass is also performed on special occasions and with a very particular purpose: suffrage of a deceased, good health request, invocation of the Virgin or a Saint, or the celebration of a *Santo Patrón* festivity. The commemoration of Jesus» life, death and resurrection is secondary as compared to these personal intentions of the participants; benediction prevails over communion. Like the *despachos*, mass also has for the Andean the character of reconciliation with *Taytacha*, the Virgin and the Saints, to avoid misfortunes, although it also represents a «rite of passage».

The other Catholic sacraments find much less acceptance among the Andean population, due to their conceptual and ritual distance from the Andean world. The confirmation has in certain ways its counterpart in the Inca *warachikuy*⁹⁰ or the fifteen-year party. The priestly ordination is comparable to the ritual initiation of the Andean priests (*altomisayoq*). But priestly celibacy results in incomprehension and remains incompatible with the basic Andean principles of complementarity and polarity.

9. Conclusion

Trying to understand Andean religiosity in the Andean culture from the Western philosophical and theological points of view, may seem an impossible task, only because of the complexity

⁸⁹ In *compadrazgo* of baptism the links of reciprocity are established which in the rural areas are vital for the future of the child. Normally the godfather gives an animal (lama, sheep) as investment for the future. The *chukcha rutuy*'s godfather «pays» for each hair chunk in the form of money, candies, and something else from the modern world.

⁹⁰ Literally to put on the trousers. It was a male initiation ceremony that marked the passage of the boys to the fullness of manhood, which enabled them to exercise the occupations and functions of an adult man. As a sign of the new responsibility they put on special trousers (*wara*).

of the phenomena involved. But many of the conceptions, rituals and attitudes of the Andean can result in a good semantic interpretation and a more consistent hermeneutic, when one considers the characteristic conceptual horizon (*Weltanschauung*) of Andean thought. The inculturation and incarnation of Christianity in this cultural and conceptual framework is not without friction, incoherence and even inconsistencies. The Western and Andean thought-patterns represent in many respects two diametrically opposite worldviews.

However, Quechua and Aymara people experience in their own ways this difficult synthesis, this religious and conceptual mixture, and overall, they manage it without being either schizophrenic or unduly eclectic. Andean religiosity has acquired in these last 500 years a *sui generis* identity, an authentic Andean theology which is at the same time Christian.

In the development of Western theology, a similar problem occurred when the Semitic religion of the first Christians fully faced the world of Greek thought. From that deal emerged one of the most impressive syntheses of the Western history, the medieval Christian theology. Despite seeming incompatible on many points, the two paradigms were assembled into a very effective unity.

The same could be true for Andean religiosity if we do not think in terms of eternal conceptual purities. Even die apparent «inconsistencies» could be fruitful, not only for the Andean's own indigenous Christian identity, but also for Christian theology in general,

5. Like a Rainbow or a Bunch of Flowers: Contextual theologies in a globalized world

At the time when neoliberal globalization tries to impose by political and economic – sometimes even military – power one unique model of living and behaving for the whole humankind, there are countless movements of indigenous people, members of religious traditions and cultural ways of life which claim for cultural and social self-determination and look for alternatives to this «real world» of McDonald, Microsoft and Coca Cola.

The same apparently contradictory tendencies can be observed also in the field of Church politics and ecclesiastical movements: On the one hand, there are quite some restorative efforts to re-establish a monolithic Church and a monocultural Christianity, on the other hand, we observe the emergence of local and indigenous churches in many parts of the world, of Catholic as well as of non-Catholic nature.

This paradox is reflected – last but not least – in the efforts of theological reflection: While the adherents of an ongoing homogenization and universalization of some culturally determinate theological model insist on one global theology – as the Vatican and the Evangelical fundamentalist movements do -, many theologians (men and women) all over the world do not accept any more one supra-cultural theology as umbrella for different cultural, political, religious, social and pastoral circumstances. Under the label «contextual theologies», churches in non-Western countries try to escape the hegemony of monolithic European and occidental theological thinking and church-building.

1. About «context» and «contextuality»

It is well known that the notion «context» has its *Sitz im Leben* in the sphere of hermeneutics and exegesis. «Context» is to be thought of as the implicit and determining non-linguistic factors present in any «text». For the theory of exegetical interpretation, there is always some kind of «hermeneutical circle» between a text and its context, meaning that these two hermeneutical poles interpret each other mutually.

The use of the notions «context», «contextual», «contextuality» and «contextualization» in systematic and pastoral theology (not exegesis) has its historical origins in the late sixties and early seventies of the past century⁹¹, when the so called «Young Churches» started to express – within the boarder socio-political framework of the post-colonial emancipation processes – their determination for cultural and social, but also ecclesiastical and theological independence from European and North American hegemony and domination. We have to be aware of the emancipatory roots of «contextuality» in the liberation movements of anti-(neo-) colonial struggle of the so called Third World countries, if we do not want to use the notion «contextual» simply as an equivalent of «circumstantial», «embedded» or «situational» which very quickly can be interpreted as «relative» or even «casual».

⁹¹ See: F.R. Kinsler, *Mission and Context: The Current Debate About Contextualization*, in: *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 14 (1978), nr. 1, 23-29, spec. 24. For an overview of the origins, the development and the diversification of Contextual Theologies see: Fritz Frei, *Kontextuelle Theologie*, in: Giancarlo Collet (ed.), *Theologien der Dritten Welt. EATWOT als Herausforderung westlicher Theologie und Kirche*, Immensee 1990, 142-161.

As a reality however, «contextual theology» is by no means a phenomenon of the 20th and 21st century. Theology has always been contextual, even – or just – when it declared itself as «absolute», «universal», «supratemporal» or even «divine» (*theologia perennis*): As there is no text without context, there is no theology – as written or oral «text» about God – without contextual marks such as language, time, customs, cultural codes and geographical references. Theologically speaking: Although God as a transcendent reality is supra-contextual, his incarnated Word is always contextual, and the human reflection and talking about this Word (e.g. theology) is even more contextual.

The very fact that the Christian Gospel has been expressed not just in one version, but in four different gospels, reminds us to be aware of the essential contextuality of theology (and the gospels are theology). The first Christian contextual theology is St. Paul's reflection on the Good News in his letters to the communities in the Greek and Roman world of the first century. The «context» of St. Paul's letter to the Romans for instance is quite different from the «context» of St. Mark's gospel. These are different contextual theologies.

But we must be careful not to «trivialize» the whole issue of «contextuality» by referring to any theology whatsoever as «contextual», without considering the historical and social background of the struggle for liberation and independence. If we would do that, it would be the same as saying (theologically) that all human beings are «poor». As an analytical proposition, «all theology is contextual» is undoubtedly true (it can even be considered as tautological), but as a historical and empirical proposition, it is not true: there have been and there are still a good number of «de-contextualized» theologies, insofar as they are not sensitive to mechanisms of (cultural, political and social) domination and marginalization. The theology of the Spanish theologian of the *conquista*, Ginés de Sepúlveda, for instance, was of course very «contextual» in the broad sense of being rooted in Spanish Renaissance thinking, but was absolutely «non-contextual» in the strict sense of not questioning power relations and colonial domination.

We have therefore to distinguish between **two concepts of «contextuality»**:

1. «Contextuality» **in a broad sense** as a synonymous for «determination by cultural, social, historical and economic factors». In this sense, any theology – in so far as it is «human» – is «contextual».
2. «Contextuality» **in a strict and more technical sense** as a label for just that kind of theologizing which is aware of underlying structures of cultural, social, political, and economic domination on the one hand and marginalization and dependence on the other. «Contextual theology» in this strict (or narrow) sense is in its essence critical, committed and it comes «from below».

When I talk about «contextual theologies» within the framework of contemporary theology, I stick to the second concept and reserve the notion to those movements of theological thinking which started in the late sixties and early seventies of the last century. To be more precise, the origin of the theological notion of «contextuality» has to be found in a discussion which started in 1965 at the *Tainan Theological College* in Taiwan on «text and context in Theological Education»⁹². This movement aimed at emancipating the Asian churches from

⁹² See: Theological Education Fund (ed.), *Ministry in Context. The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund (1970-77)*, Bromley 1972.

being mere «mission fields» to become autonomous churches, establishing an indigenous staff in theological formation and creating a world-directed (and not just church-directed) ministry.

Under Shoki Coe as director of the *Theological Education Fund* (TEF) of the World Council of Churches (WCC), «contextualization» becomes a key word of this program: «By contextualization we mean the wrestling with God's Word in such a way that the power of the incarnation which is the divine form of contextualization can enable us to follow his steps to contextualize»⁹³. This conviction has already been expressed earlier, at a consultation on «Dogmatic or Contextual Theology» at Bossey in 1971, where «contextual theology» was described as «existential, fragmentary and dynamic», whereas «dogmatic theology» was supposed to be determined by denomination, tradition and doctrine.⁹⁴

During the third period of the TEF (1972-1977), there have been important inputs for the emergence of contextual theologies in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Contextual theology was at the time described as «essentially prophetic», and contextualization as «a passionate cry for the recognition of the significance of this time and this place ... without which the Word is a dear word and the Christ a non-living lord»⁹⁵. «Contextualization» is supposed to contain what the notion «indigenization» means but is broader than this concept; «false» contextualization is an uncritical form of assimilation and adaptation, «true» contextualization is committed, critical and prophetic.

There could have been some connection between Paul Lehmann's notion of «context»⁹⁶ which was fundamental for the theology of revolution and indirectly for Latin American Liberation Theology, and the concept of «contextual theology» mentioned by Shoki Coe at the first meeting of the North East Asia Association of Theological Schools in 1966. However, it may be, the «liberationist» concept of contextuality has passed in 1973 from Asia to Latin America and Africa.⁹⁷

2. Contextuality and inculturation

As we have seen, the very notion of «contextuality» in systematic theology has been in the beginning a category used more by Protestant theologians, although it was from the very beginning open to ecumenical exchange and was quickly assumed also by Catholic

⁹³ Shoki Coe, *Theological Education*, WCC Geneva 1974, 11.

⁹⁴ *Report of the Consultation on «Dogmatic or Contextual Theology»*, August 26-31, 1971, Bossey 1972 (manuscript). Louis J. Luzbetak mentions as predecessors of «contextual theology»: the journal «Practical Anthropology (1953) which became later «Missiology» (1973); Helmut Richard Niebuhr's (1894-1962) lectures «Christ and Cultures»; Eugene Albert Nidas' classical works «Customs and Cultures» (1954) and «Message and Mission» (1960) (Louis J. Luzbetak, *Signs of Progress in Contextual Methodology*, in: *Verbum SVD* 22 (1981) 39-57; spec. 53-57).

⁹⁵ Theological Education Fund (ed.), *Learning in context*, London 1973, 13.

⁹⁶ See: Paul Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, London 1963.

⁹⁷ For a brief overview of the development of contextual theologies in the seventies of the 20th century, see: R.J. Schreiter, *Issues Facing Contextual Theologies Today*, in: *Verbum SVD* 21 (1980), 267-278.

theologians.⁹⁸ Almost at the same time, in Catholic theology – more specifically in missiology – emerged a notion that is often used as a synonymous for «contextuality», i.e. «inculturation».

Although there are many reasons to defend the thesis that «inculturation» is as old as the Church⁹⁹, the concept was – according to some authors – used for the first time in 1959 by the Belgian missiologist Joseph Masson talking about the «inculturation of the Christian Gospel in non-Christian cultures»¹⁰⁰ and introduced later in the theological debate by the Superior General of the Jesuits, Pedro Arrupe, at a meeting of his Order in 1978¹⁰¹.

The (Catholic) notion of «inculturation» has its *Sitz im Leben* in the missiological debate in the aftermath of *Vaticanum II*. The missiological concepts of «acculturation» and «adaptation» which have been used before to describe the necessary *aggiornamento* of the Gospel in non-occidental cultures, should be replaced by a theologically more profound concept which is rooted in the central Christological event of the Incarnation. The analogy between «incarnation» and «inculturation» has been conceived as follows: The way God incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth, the same way the Church (and liturgy, theology etc.) have to be «inculturated» in the many cultures where the Gospel is announced.

Although the concept of «inculturation» has been of decisive power in the post-conciliary process of establishing local churches and genuine indigenous theologies,¹⁰² there has emerged also criticism, mainly from the so called «Young Churches» in Africa, Asia and Latin America.¹⁰³ First of all, the very concept of «inculturation» presupposes some kind of dualistic philosophical world view: On the one hand, there is the Gospel as a supra-cultural and timeless essence (in a Platonic or Aristotelian sense), and on the other hand, there are culturally determined changing circumstances. In this Eurocentric or Occidentcentric sense, «inculturation» could be conceived as cultural differentiation of the universal and supra-cultural core of Christian faith (whatever this may be).

Another problem with «inculturation» consists in the determination of the subjects and objects of this process: Who is inculturating what? The inculturation process after *Vaticanum II* started with liturgy and the ceremonial make up of church life, passed through the indigenization of clergy and ministries and reached theological reflection itself. Is it mainly liturgy (vernacular languages and customs), the Church itself (sacraments, ministries, organization), theology or the Gospel itself which should be «inculturated»? And who is

⁹⁸ In 1979 there took place the first International Colloquium on Contextual Theology of Asian Catholic theologians (Manila), organized by University of Santo Tomas (UST), Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines (ACUP) and the Missionswissenschaftliches Institut Missio Aachen (MWI).

⁹⁹ See: A.A. Roest Crolius, *What is so new about Inculturation?* in: *Gregorianum* 59 (1978) 721.

¹⁰⁰ *Mission et cultures non-chrétiennes. Rapports et compte rendu de la XXIXe semaine de missiologie*. Louvain 1959, Tournai 1959, specially 9 and 316.

¹⁰¹ P. Arrupe, *Discurso inicial a la Congregación de Procuradores* (27.9.1978), in: idem, *La identidad del jesuita en nuestros tiempos*, Santander 1981, 36.

¹⁰² For a very good and helpful bibliography on «inculturation» up to 1994 see: Missionswissenschaftliches Institut Missio (ed.), *Annotated Bibliography on Inculturation. Theology in Context – Supplements No. 9*, Aachen 1994 (with 1815 titles).

¹⁰³ As an example, see: S. Rayan, *Flesh of India's Flesh*, in: *Jeevadhara* 6 (1976) 259-267. Cf. also: Stefan Silber, *Typologie der Inkulturationsbegriffe: vier Aporien. Eine Streitschrift für einen neuen Begriff in einer notwendigen Debatte*, in: Missionswissenschaftliches Institut Missio (ed.), *Jahrbuch für Kontextuelle Theologien* 1997, Frankfurt a.M. 1997, 117-136.

responsible for this ongoing process: the missionary, the Church as a whole, the theologians or perhaps in the first place the Holy Spirit?

The Sri Lankan theologian Aloysius Pieris called this the «Greek-Roman model of inculturation» which – according to him - cannot be applied without serious difficulties to non-occidental cultural and religious traditions, because it presupposes a strict distinction between culture and religion.¹⁰⁴ Stefan Silber distinguishes four types of «inculturation»: 1. Inculturation as purification of cultures; 2. Inculturation as Incarnation of the Word; 3. Inculturation as en-culturation of the missionaries; 4. Inculturation as encounter of cultures¹⁰⁵. As any of these four models leads to an aporetic situation, Silber proposes the concept of «inculturated evangelization» to underline the process more than the content.

Despite these limitations, the notion of «inculturation» stresses an important element the notion of «contextuality» does not: it is a process category, an acting paradigm, and not just a description of a factual state. This focus had also an impact on the «contextual» paradigm of theology: Instead of «contextual theologies», more and more theologians started to talk about «contextualized» or even «contextualizing theologies».¹⁰⁶ Theologies are never fully «contextual», but rather involved in an ongoing process of «contextualizing» or «contextualization».

The same questions concerning «inculturation» arise also in reference to «contextualization»: Who is contextualizing what? Does the theologian «adapt» or «assimilate» an almost meta-cultural content (the Gospel? God? the Church? dogma?) to the concrete socio-political, historical, and cultural situation? But here again, we have to take into account what Lessie Newbiggin pointed out already in 1986, that «neither at the beginning, nor at any subsequent time is there or can there be a gospel that is not embodied in a culturally conditioned form of words».¹⁰⁷

Only that this statement refers to the broad (and even tautological) sense of «contextuality» and «contextualization» – and I am afraid that the same is the case with a certain understanding of «inculturation». It is absolutely necessary to specify our talking about «contextualization» and «inculturation» in a sense Shoki Coe or as the Latin American Liberation Theology did in the seventies of the last century, i.e. applying the criteria of social and political involvement, prophetic commitment, critical attitude and bottom up procedure.

At the first International Colloquium on Contextual Theology of Asian Catholic theologians (1979 in Manila)¹⁰⁸, the Filipino theologian Catalino G. Arévalo SJ – considered

¹⁰⁴ A. Pieris, *Theologie der Befreiung in Asien*, vol. 9 „Theologie der Dritten Welt», Freiburg 1986, 79-91.

¹⁰⁵ Op. cit.

¹⁰⁶ Shoki Coe mentions that the Theological Education Fund did not talk (from 1975 onwards) anymore of «contextual» or «contextualized», but of «contextualizing theology» (Shoki Coe, *Contextualizing Theology*, in: G.H. Anderson and Th.F. Stransky (eds.), *Mission Trends No. 3*; Third World Theologies, New York-Ramsey-Toronto-Grand Rapids 1976, 19-24).

¹⁰⁷ L. Newbiggin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, WCC Geneva 1986, 4.

¹⁰⁸ Official Proceedings International Colloquium on Contextual Theology. Organized by University of Santo Tomas (UST), Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines (ACUP), Missionswissenschaftliches Institut Missio Aachen (MWI). June 20-23, 1979, Manila, Philippines, in: *Philippiniana Sacra* 14 (1979), Nr. 40, 5-212.

the «father» of Asian Liberation Theology - made a distinction between three forms of «contextual theologies»: 1. An indigenized or inculturated theology which expresses its contents by means of autochthonous forms of conceiving and representing the reality; 2. A theology at the encounter with world religions which tries to understand the Gospel from elements of other religions; 3. A theology which takes into account the social, economic, political and cultural modern context. Arévalo calls this last form «contextual theology in the strict sense».¹⁰⁹

According to Arévalo, the first form of contextual theology is significantly present in Africa, the second form in Asia, and the third form in Latin America, although he is aware that there is more and more interpenetration between the three forms. The founding of EATWOT (*Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians*) in 1976 has contributed very much to a mutual enrichment between continents and theological traditions, as well as between the (more Protestant) notion of «contextualization» and the (more Catholic) notion of «inculturation».

What has happened since this initial debate on «contextual theology» in the seventies of the last century? We try to briefly review the main lines of development and the specific topics of contextual theologies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia in the last 25 years, and conclude these reflections with the question: What about Oceania? We leave now the very interesting issue of a contemporary European contextual theology unexplored.

3. Latin American contextual theology

According to Arévalo, contemporary Latin American contextual theology is characterized by the fact that it «considers the social, economic, political and cultural modern context». This statement reflects the fact that theologians and scholars of other disciplines all over the world identify recent theology in Latin America simply as «Liberation Theology».¹¹⁰ Although Latin American liberation theology was not the first explicit «contextual» theology of the so called Third World, it has been the one which became very well-known not only in Europe and North America, but also in Africa, Asia and Oceania.

This fact is due mainly to two factors: 1. Liberation Theology in Latin America has had in the beginning such a strong political and social impact that not only political parties and governments on the continent, but even the US-administration felt obliged to react (the famous Santa Fe documents). 2. The adherence of the Latin American Bishops» Conferences (CELAM) to Liberation Theology (Medellín 1968; Puebla 1976) caused much upheaval within the official Catholic Church, mainly the Vatican, and led to the famous «instructions»

¹⁰⁹ See: Catalino G. Arévalo, *Was ist kontextuelle Theologie?*, in: Den Glauben neu verstehen. Beiträge zu einer asiatischen Theologie, Freiburg 1981, 20-34, specially 23-26. Idem, *Some prenotes on «Doing theology». Man, society, and history in Asian contexts*, in: Emerito P. Nacpil and Douglas J. Elwood (eds.), *The human and the holy. Asian perspectives in Christian theology*, Quezon City, 1978, 189-212.

¹¹⁰ For a brief history and description in English language of early Latin American Liberation Theology, see: D.W. Ferm, *Profiles in Liberation*, Connecticut 1988, 114-193; idem, *Third World Liberation Theologies*, New York 1986, 3-58; Ph. Berryman, *Liberation Theology*, New York 1987; Ch. Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, Chicago 1991.

of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith «On some aspects of Liberation theology» (1984) and «On Christian freedom and liberation» (1986).¹¹¹

Contextual theology in Latin America was from the very beginning in the sixties a movement which emerged from below, from popular social movements, basic communities, trade unions and peasants' federations. The main «context» for the origin of Latin American Liberation Theology was the situation of poverty of huge segments of the population and the scandalous social and economic differences between the «happy few» and the marginalized masses. The sensitivity of church leaders and theologians towards this specific context caused a severe crisis of the former neo-colonial theology of *cristiandad* as a typical de-contextualized Eurocentric way of theologizing.

The new paradigm elaborated expressively in the seventies and consolidated in the eighties of the past century, can be briefly summarized by means of five «novelties»:

1. A new method: Liberation theology does not use the traditional deductive way, but uses an inductive and dialectical method, starting with a concrete praxis and experience, passing through a critical reflection in the light of the Gospel and resulting in a new and liberating praxis.
2. A new subject: The main theological subject is not any more the professional theologian or the *magisterium*, but the people of God as constituted in basic communities and social movements. Professional theologians come at the second place and are some kind of «midwives».
3. A new *locus theologicus*: Social and political struggle for liberation from dependence and poverty is no longer the exclusive field of moral theology, but the main *locus* for theological reflection. This implies that social sciences rather than philosophy are the main *ancillae theologiae* and hermeneutic mediation.
4. A new hermeneutical key: «liberation» becomes the fundamental hermeneutical key to understand the Christian message in all its aspects. Liberation Theology therefore is not a sectorial (or genitive-), but fundamental theology.
5. A new praxis: Liberation theology gives priority to orthopraxis above orthodoxy. This new praxis is guided by a prophetic option for the poor and the denouncement of the «structures of sin».

Due to internal as well as external factors¹¹², this program underwent in the eighties some important modifications, although the main concerns and principles remain the same. At the first General Assembly (after the foundation) of EATWOT, 1981 in Delhi, the African and Asian representatives questioned the implicit «economism» of Latin American Liberation Theology. According to them, classical Liberation Theology in Latin America ignores non-

¹¹¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (ed.), *Instruction on certain aspects of the «Theology of Liberation»* SACBC, O.J. Pretoria 1984 (Pastoral Action; 38); Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (ed.), *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, in: Samok, (1986)103-108, H. 106, 98-128.

¹¹² Among the internal factors, we can mention: An increasing awareness of the diversity of oppression and poverty; the «irruption» of women, black and indigenous people into theology and church life; increasing ecological consciousness. Among the external factors, there are: The collapse of real socialism; increasing pressure by the Vatican on Liberation theologians and the conservative politics of bishops' assignment; the debate within EATWOT on Liberation Theology.

economic factors as gender, culture, religious pluralism, and ethnicity as fundamental in dealing with poverty, oppression, and liberation. This interpellation led – together with other factors – to some kind of «cultural turn» in Liberation Theology in the late eighties of the last century: Discrimination based on gender difference and ethnic prejudices is recognized as essential for the situation of poverty and marginalization.

For Latin American theologians, this shift has not been a «betrayal» of the former principles of Liberation Theology, but rather a consequent evolution under new historical circumstances. Poor people do not belong just to a social class and are not only exploited by the international capital, but have also a colour, belong to a gender and to some culture and ethnic group. Liberation Theology began to diversify, according to the subjects and their specific situations. In the nineties, we can see the emergence of Latin American feminist theology, indigenous theology (*teología india*), black theology (*teología negra*), eco-theology, theology of religious pluralism and *Latino* theology in the USA.¹¹³

Latin American feminist theology has focused mainly on a theology of «every day's life», the oppression of women by *machismo* and patriarchy, as well as issues as complementarity, relationality, and reciprocity in the relationship between the sexes. Latin American *mujerismo* also questions classical occidental feminism as Eurocentric and not culture sensitive.¹¹⁴

Indigenous theology (*teología india*) emerged as an attempt to think theologically from the life experiences and cosmology of indigenous people. This attempt implies a severe criticism of traditional theology and philosophy which take as their framework some unquestioned principles of European philosophical thought. *Teología india* is not systematic theology in the technical sense, neither an academic issue, but rather an authentic expression of the faith and religious praxis of peoples marginalized because of their cultural and religious heritage. At present, indigenous theology in Latin America is very attentively observed by the Vatican, as it questions some sensitive issues of Church life (ministries;

¹¹³ All these movements have of course a larger history and can be traced back in some cases even to the seventies of the last century. From October, 1 to 5, 1979, there was held for example in Topeyac (Mexico) an international seminar on the topic of «Latin American woman and the praxis and theology of liberation», and one month later in Chiapas a conference on «The movement of the Indian's and Liberation Theology». – Although *Latino* Theology (theology elaborated by the Latin American immigrants in the USA) does not belong geographically to Latin America, it is part of the same tradition and understands itself explicitly as «liberation theology» (see: Orlando O. Espín and Miguel H. Díaz (eds.), *From the Heart of our People: Latina/o Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology*, New York 1999).

¹¹⁴ For a first introduction: Ana María Bidegain, *La mujer en la historia de la teología de la liberación*, in: *Teología y Liberación. Ensayos en torno a la obra de Gustavo Gutiérrez*, Lima 1989-1991, vol. 3: *Religión, cultura y ética*, 43-70. Variae, *Teólogos de la liberación hablan de la mujer*, San José 1986. I. Gebara and M.C.L. Bingemer, *A mulher faz teologia*, Petrópolis 1986; I. Gebara and M.C.L. Bingemer (ed.), *María, mae de Deus a mae dos pobres*, Petrópolis 1987; L. Boff, *María, mulher profética e libertadora - a piedad mariana na teologia da libertação*, in: *REB* 38 Fsc. 149 (1978), 39-56; L. Boff, *O rosto materno de Deus*, Petrópolis 1979; M.C.L. Bingemer, «*Alégrense*» (Lc. 8-10) o la mujer en el futuro de la Teología de la Liberación, in: *Teología y Liberación. Ensayos en torno a la obra de Gustavo Gutiérrez*, Lima 1989-1991, vol.1: «Perspectivas y desafíos», 215-246.

liturgy) and proposes non-occidental approaches to Christology and theology (the conception of God).¹¹⁵

Black theology in Latin America has emerged almost isolated from similar movements in the USA and in (South) Africa. *Teología negra* in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and the Caribbean tries to integrate elements of African origin into theological discourse, but does not forget the aspect of poverty, racial discrimination, and marginalization in their societies. It is a Liberation Theology *sui generis*.¹¹⁶

Eco-theology has a strong feminist strand in Latin America (*ecofeminismo*), but also links to indigenous thinking and classical Liberation Theology of creation (Leonardo Boff). The emergence of indigenous theology has recalled to many theologians in Latin America, that the continent is by no means homogenous in religious terms, but rather a pluri-religious continent as Asia and Africa are taken for granted. This awareness led to a new form of theology of religious pluralism which explicitly understands itself as «liberation theology of religious pluralism».¹¹⁷

Latino theology in the United States has become a very innovative and interesting ecumenical effort to elaborate a liberating theology in the context of a capitalist country belonging to the so called First World. It is the theological expression of the Hispanics as a cultural, ethnic, and social minority and focuses on issues as global migration, transformation of religious identity, popular Catholicism, everyday life, and globalization.¹¹⁸

4. Asian contextual theology

Comparing to Latin America, the Asian context is quite different. Christian religion is in most countries a small minority, surrounded by other world religions with a long and rich tradition. Cultural and ethnic variety is significantly broader, and economical and political differences between parts of Asia are much more visible than in Latin America. Although it is true that one of the main contexts is religious pluralism and the challenge therefore consists

¹¹⁵ Concerning *Teología India*, see: Eleazar López Hernández, *Teología india hoy*, in: *Christus* 56 (1991) 648, 2-26; idem, *Indigenous contributions to the churches on the occasion of the fifth century*, in: *International Review of Mission* 82 (1993) 325, 51-56; idem, *Teología India. Antología*, Cochabamba 2000; Elisabeth Steffens, *Die Theologien der indianischen Völker Abia Yalas aus der Sicht ihrer Subjekte*, in: *Jahrbuch für Kontextuelle Theologien 2001*, Frankfurt a.M. 2001, 193-220; Thomas Schreijäck, *Auf der Suche nach der Erde ohne Leid*, in: *Orientierung* 18 (2002) 66, 189-193.

¹¹⁶ Referring to *Teología negra*, see: Antônio Aparecido da Silva, *La teología moral y la cuestión negra*, in: *Páginas*, 13 (1988) 89-94, H. 89-90, 67- 83; idem, *Existe um Pensar Teológico Negro?*, São Paulo 1998; idem, *Caminos y contextos de la teología afro en el panorama de la teología Latinoamericana*, Navarra 2001.

¹¹⁷ Concerning *ecofeminismo* and *mujerista* theology, see: Ivonne Gebara, *Ecofeminismo. Algunas desafíos teológicos*, in: *Alternativas*, 7 (2000) 15-17, H. 16/17, 173-185; Mary Judith Ress, *Las fuentes del ecofeminismo. Una genealogía*, in: *Con-spirando*, (1998) 23-26, H. 23, 2-8; Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *En la lucha - In the struggle. Elaborating a mujerista theology - a Hispanic women's liberation theology*, Minneapolis 1993; eadem, *Mujerista theology. A theology for the twenty-first century*, Maryknoll 1996; Concerning Liberation Theology and interreligious dialogue, see: Paul F. Knitter, *Hacia una teología de la liberación de las religiones*, in: *Alternativas*, 8 (2001) 18-21, H. 20/21, 37-64; idem, *Cosmic confidence or preferential option?*, in: *Bangalore Theological Forum*, 23, H. 4, 1-24.

¹¹⁸ For *latino* theology, see: Orlando O. Espín and Miguel H. Díaz (eds.), *From the Heart of our People: Latina/o Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology*, New York 1999.

in establishing a contextual theology of interreligious dialogue, it is also a fact that poverty and injustice are issues theology in Asia has to deal with.

Until the sixties of the past century, Catholic theology in Asia has been characterized by a neo-Thomist synthesis of the modern world, and Protestant theology in Asia followed the discussions Europe was struggling with. Church life and theology in Asia were like a European exclave in foreign territory; Asian Christians – especially ministers and priests – had to undergo first a cultural transformation of becoming Europeans and Westerners (to undergo the so called «Hellenistic circumcision»)¹¹⁹ in order to become Christians. With the Christian faith, the occidental cultural and axiomatic heritage has been exported as well. This colonialist and neo-colonialist attitude started to change in the sixties of the past century, partly due to political independence and the process of self-determination, partly due to intra-ecclesial and theological transformations.

It is not easy to find some common denominator of all Asian contextual theologies, from the Philippines to China, from India to Singapore, from Myanmar to Lebanon.¹²⁰ The religious, social, cultural, economic and political contexts are very different, and the theological answers to these challenges have to be of course very different too. Much more than in Latin America – where the common label «Liberation Theology» represents a good part of contextual theologizing – Asian contextual theology must be spelled out in a plural form: as Asian theologies.

Such as in other continents, we find actually in Asia, alongside with contextual theologies rooted in the concrete situation of people and their needs, many de-contextualized forms of theology which continue with a Westernized form of doing theology and building up the church. There is often the situation of two parallel paradigms of theology and church: On the one hand, you can find contextual theologies committed with the poor, the excluded and the marginalized (*Minjung-*, *Dalit-*, *Hwajeng-*, *Waterbuffalo-*theology), on the other hand there persist in Asia conservative theologies, either on the Protestant or Catholic side, which do neither worry about misery and discrimination, nor about religious pluralism and cultural self-determination.

¹¹⁹ The concept of «Hellenistic circumcision» – coined by the author – stresses the historical fact that after St. Paul's dropping of the Jewish circumcision as a necessary condition for becoming a Christian (Ac 15), the pressure to interiorize Roman-Greek culture and philosophy became stronger and stronger. This «Hellenization» of Christian faith and dogma resulted in the fact that for instance candidates for the Catholic priesthood in non-European cultural contexts were obliged to «circumcise» themselves in terms of the Hellenistic heritage in order to become priests. Up to the present days, the assimilation of Scholastic philosophy – and therefore of Occidental-Hellenistic culture and worldview - is a prerequisite for the study of theology and for becoming a priest or deacon in the Catholic Church.

¹²⁰ As a good compendium of Asian theology, see the series: John C. England, Jese Kuttianimattathil, John M. Prior, Lily A Quintos, David Suh Kwang-sun, Janice Wickeri (eds.), *Asian Christian Theologies. A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources*, Maryknoll – New York 2002ff. The first volume which came out in 2002, deals with Asia as Region, South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) and Astral Asia (Aotearoa-New Zealand, Australia). The second volume deals with Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) and will be published soon (2004). The third volume will be on Northeast Asia (China, Hong Kong, Macau, Inner-Asia incl. Tibet and Mongolia, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) and be published probably in 2006. It is surprising that Australia and New Zealand are included in a volume on Asian Contextual Theology.

As the Sri Lankan theologian Aloysius Pieris pointed out, Asian contextual theology must establish a threefold dialogue: 1. with the poor and the excluded; 2. with other religions; 3. with Asian cultures. This means that Asian contextual theology is a specific Asian variant of Liberation Theology¹²¹, taking interreligious and intercultural dialogue as main challenges to overcome oppression, poverty, and marginalization of the huge masses. On the occasion of the meeting of the Senate of the «South East Asia School of Theology» (GST), 1972 in Bangkok, the so called «Asian critical principle» has been discussed extensively which should become the contextual framework for Asian theologizing¹²². This «critical principle» is based on seven characteristics typical for the Asian context:

- a) Plurality of races, peoples, cultures, religions, ideologies, and social institutions.
- b) Colonial past of most countries.
- c) Ongoing process of national self-determination, development, and modernization.
- d) Struggle for identity and cultural integrity in the modern world.
- e) Alternative life forms and world views offered by other religions.
- f) Search for a social order different from the established western models.
- g) Minority status of the Christians.

Although Japan was the first Asian country which developed a contextual theology different from the Western tradition, countries as the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Korea have been the ones where most innovations in the field of theology took place in the seventies and eighties of the past century. Recently, there are also new impulses by theologians from Indonesia, China, and Pakistan whereas countries as Vietnam, Myanmar or Cambodia remain theologically isolated and de-contextualized. The founding of EATWOT in 1976 and the establishment of an Asian network (Ecumenical Federation of Theologians in Asia EFTA and Asian Theological Conferences ATC)¹²³, the founding of the FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops» Conferences) and its Office of Theological Concerns, the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) are just some of the marking stones in the development of an Asian network of contextual theologies.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Pieris considered Latin American Liberation Theology as a Western type of theologizing, using the concepts of development and Marxist socialism as methodological framework. However, he was convinced that it could contribute substantially in elaborating a genuine Asian Liberation Theology which takes into account the cosmo-teo-thantric context of religious pluralism and deep spirituality. See: A. Pieris, *Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation: Some Religio-cultural Guidelines*, in: V. Fabella (ed.), *Asia's struggle for full humanity*, Maryknoll 1980, 75-95.

¹²² See: D.P. Niles, *Toward a Framework for „Doing» Theology in Asia*, in: E. Nacpil and D.J. Elwood, *The Human and the Holy*, Manila 1978, 267-290.

¹²³ Under the umbrella of EATWOT, the Asian members organized the following Asian Theological Conferences (ATC): 1979 in Colombo, 1984 in Hong Kong, 1989 in Suanbo (Korea), and 1995 in Yogyakarta (Indonesia). The first General Assembly of EATWOT took place in 1981 in Delhi, and the fourth in 1996 Tagaytay (Manila); there has been an Asian Women Conference in 1985 in Manila, and a Filipino Women Conference in 1992 in Manila.

¹²⁴ The FABC was initiated in 1970 and constituted formally in 1971; the first Assembly was held in 1974 in Taipei. The FABC's Office of Theological Concerns has been a very dynamic organism of the Catholic Church to foster contextual theologies in Asia. The Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) was founded in 1997 and organizes a conference every two years.

The emergence of a contextual theology in the Philippines must be seen in the context of a situation of increasing social and economic injustice and political dictatorship in the seventies and eighties of the past century. As an answer to this situation, among the popular and rural movements, as well as from the basic Christian communities of the country emerged something like a «grassroots» Liberation theology in the sense of a theology of struggle and revolution.¹²⁵ It was Catalino Arévalo who introduced Latin American Liberation Theology in the Philippines (and in Asia) which underwent substantial transformation by cultural Filipino aspects.

Contextual theology in India had to cope with quite another context, as it is challenged by religious pluralism as well as by poverty and social discrimination (caste system). The first attempts to develop an autochthonous Indian theology in the seventies was almost entirely limited to theologians inspired by Indian philosophy and Hindu thought of the Sanskrit tradition (i.e. Amalorpavadass). Just in recent years, theologians have taken up the challenge of the *adivasi* (tribal people) and *dalit* (untouchables) and develop an Indian variant of Liberation Theology (Massey, Lourdu Swamy).¹²⁶ Religious pluralism remains a constant challenge to an inculturated Christology and theology, as the Vatican document *Dominus Iesus* points out very critically. Contemporary contextual Indian theology finds itself under two fires: dogmatic theology of Western style (Catholic as well as Protestant) on the one hand, and militant fundamentalist Hindu movements (Hindutva) on the other hand.

Contrary to Church hierarchy, which is quite conservative and Western minded, contextual theology in Sri Lanka took up already in the seventies of the past century the challenge of social misery, injustice, and discrimination, as well as the dialogue with Buddhism as the dominant religious tradition. Figures as Tissa Balasuriya and Aloysius Pieris tried to «inculturate» Christian faith in a fruitful and respectful dialogue with Buddhism, demonstrating that «theology in Asia is Christian revelation of non-Christian experiences of liberation»¹²⁷.

The situation in China is very particular because of the repressive political situation since the Maoist revolution; the most innovative and promissory forms of contextual Chinese theology have been elaborated in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan had a leading role in the seventies for the emergence of a contextual Chinese theology, committed to the worker class and the poor people. One of its theologians, Shoki Coe (Huang Chiong-Hui) coined the term «contextual theology» and developed together

¹²⁵ For some references, see Karl M Gaspar, *Group Media and the «Theology of Struggle» in the Philippines*, in: *Group Media Journal*, 6 (1987), H. 1, S. 7-10; Mary Rosaria Battung (ed.), *Religion and society. Towards a theology of struggle*, Manila 1988; Eleazar S. Fernandez, *Toward a theology of struggle*, Maryknoll 1994.

¹²⁶ As references: James Massey, *Ingredients for a Dalit theology*, in: M. E. Prabhakar (ed.), *Towards a Dalit Theology*, Delhi 1989, 57-63; Christopher Shelke, *Dalit theology. Emergence and emergency*, in *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 50 (1994), H. 4, 257-273; James Massey, *Movements of liberation. Theological roots and visions of Dalit theology*, in: *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, 12 (2000), 52-68.

¹²⁷ As Aloysius Pieris put it synthetically at the end of his keynote paper at the First Asian Theological Conference (ATC I) of EATWOT in Colombo (A. Pieris, *Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation: Some Religio-cultural Guidelines*, in: V. Fabella (ed.), *Asia's struggle for full humanity*, Maryknoll 1980, 75-95, 95). See also: Tissa Balasuriya, *Conceptional tools and framework for a new paradigm in Asian Theology*, in: *Theology for our times*, (1998) 5, 119-124.

with John E. Y. Cheng a theological current called «the love of God-man in action». Several theologians in Taiwan and Hong Kong try now to articulate their efforts with the movement of «cultural Christians» in Mainland China, considering the millenarian tradition of Chinese thought (Taoism, Daoism, Confucianism).¹²⁸

Church and theology in (South-) Korea have traditionally been very conservative and Westernized. In the sixties and seventies of the past century, however, they started to take the political and social problems of oppression and repression into account in their reflections and to elaborate a theology of the «oppressed people» (*minjung*) and fight against dictatorship and poverty. Protestant theologians as Suh Nam-Dong and Kim Yong-Bok developed a Korean Liberation theology, whereas Catholic theologians as Jemin Ri stressed more the aspect of «inculturation» and even «inconfucianization». Another challenge today is to include shamanistic thought and feminist theological reflection.¹²⁹

In times of globalization and the supposed «clash of civilization», Asian contextual theology is now perhaps the most promising as well as questioned form of contextual theologies emerging in the Third World. New approaches for a pluralistic and inclusive theology of religion (Dupuis), for a non-exclusivist Christology (Amaladoss) as well as for alternative ecclesiological models (de Mesa) experience harsh criticism from the Vatican *magisterium* and from evangelical circles in the Protestant churches.

5. African contextual theology

The African continent has not only the shortest history of Christianity – if we leave out of consideration the Christianization in the first centuries of North Africa¹³⁰ –, but also the shortest period of contextual theologies. This fact is due to colonial history and the process of decolonialization which started in most countries just in the sixties and seventies of the past century and has not yet ended completely, concerning cultural and economic dependence from the former colonial powers. The same – or it is even worse – can be said for the churches and theology, since the constitution of a native African church structure and an African contextual theology is of relative recent time.

Although most of the European missionaries applied in Africa a European theology, either of Catholic or Protestant origin, defending the superiority of Western civilization,

¹²⁸ For some references, see: Jean Charbonnier, *Towards a theology of the Chinese church*, in: *Indian theological studies*, 26 (1989), H. 1/2, 171-180; Baoping Kan, *Theology in the Contemporary Chinese Context*, in: *Chinese Theological Review*, 11 (1996/97), H. 2, 112-124; Shengjie Cao, *Feminist Theology and the Chinese Church*, in: *Chinese Theological Review*, 15 (2001), 63-71.

¹²⁹ See: Jin-Kwan Kwon, *Minjung theology and its future task for people's movement. A theological reflection on the theme of religion, power and politics in the Korean context*, in: *CTC Bulletin*, 10 (1991), H. 2/3, 16-22; Dong-Kun Kim, *Korean Minjung Theology in history and mission*, in: *Studies in World Christianity*, 2 (1996), H. 2, 167-182; Jong Chun Park, *A paradigm change in Korean indigenization theology. From theology of 'sincerity' (...) to 'interliving' (...) theology*, in *Korea Journal of Systematic Theology*, 2 (1998), 25-44.

¹³⁰ There are contemporary African theologians who remind us rightly of the rich African Christian traditions between the second and seventh century A.D. and the fundamental theological contributions by African thinkers as Tertullian, Origenes, Clemens and Augustine. On the other hand, this tradition was embedded into the Roman culture and there were included very few genuine African elements. See: E.W. Fasholé-Luke, *Footpaths and signposts to African Christian theology*, in: *Bulletin de Théologie Africaine* 3 (1981), 19-40.

some of them started to elaborate typical African forms of reflection. One of them was the Belgian missionary Placide Tempels who caused with his «Bantu Philosophy»¹³¹ a great impact among young African theologians and philosophers. But the first African contextual theologies did not emerge from the mainstream churches, but rather from the so called African Independent Churches (AIC) which stressed from their very beginning typical African topics such as pneumatology, prophecy, dreams, healing, and glossolalia.

Contextual theology in Africa – perhaps excepted South African theology – was from the very origins oriented towards ethnological and cultural research, and the main concern was not elaborating a socially and politically committed theology, but rather a methodological framework which does not rely any longer on the scholastic and dogmatic heritage of European and colonial theology. The debate about an «African Christian theology» started at the end of the fifties at the Lovanium University in Kinshasa and reached a first climax at the Conference on African theology in Ibadan (Nigeria) in 1966, organized by the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC).

With the founding of EATWOT in Darussalam in 1976 and the first conference in Accra the following year, the development of a contextual African theology entered a new and decisive phase. Influenced by Latin American Liberation theology, the challenge of «liberation» came to become the main focus of many African theologians, as the former «ethno-theology» did not afford sufficient theoretical background for the struggle of marginalized Africa. So African theology and the so-called Black theology – of US as well as South African origin – met and entered a mutual enrichment. The experience of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, where church leaders and theologians fought side by side with political leaders, had an impact on other African countries and their struggle for political, cultural, and religious self-determination (*négritude*; Africanity).

Contextual theology in South Africa has dealt mainly with the abolition of apartheid and the theological criticism of the fundamentalist theology of the white *boeren* which had legitimized the segregation of the races and the superiority of the whites for a long time. So contextual theology in South Africa has always been committed and politically relevant theologizing. It took elements from Black Theology in the USA, as well as the principles of Latin American Liberation Theology, but applied them to the very specific context of the anti-apartheid struggle and the ongoing process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). As examples, we can mention Bishop Desmond Tutu and theologians as Charles Villa-Vicencio, Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, John W. de Gruchy, James R. Cochrane and Denise Ackermann.¹³²

¹³¹ His thoughts were published first as series of journal contributions in Flemish (1945-46), before appearing in French in 1949 (*La Philosophie Bantou*, Paris 1949); the English edition was published ten years later (*Bantu Philosophy*, Paris 1959).

¹³² See: Desmond M. Tutu, *The Rainbow people of God. The making of a peaceful revolution*, New York 1994; Ch. Villa-Vicencio, *A theology of reconstruction. Nation-building and human rights*, Cambridge 1992; Tinyiko S. Maluleke, *Truth, national unity and reconciliation in South Africa. Aspects of the emerging theological agenda*, in: *Missionalia* 25 (1997), 59-86; John W. de Gruchy, *Christianity and democracy. A theology for a just world order*, Cambridge 1995; James R. Cochrane (ed.), *Facing the truth. South African faith communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Cape Town 1999; Denise Ackermann, *Becoming fully human. An ethic of relationship in difference and otherness*, in: *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* No. 102 (1998), 13-27.

Although many African countries were affected by wars, corruption, dictatorships, impoverishment and ethnic discrimination, few theologians took up the challenge and developed a genuine African Liberation Theology. Already at the EATWOT meeting in Accra (1977), the African theologians criticized their Latin American colleagues for being too dogmatic in their «economist» analysis of poverty and oppression. They rather proposed that a genuine African contextual theology should stress the ethnic and cultural dimensions of oppression and liberation. The concept of «inculturation» became in Africa something as a theological paradigm, and ethnological studies were taken as starting points for theological reflections.

So we can find innovative theologies in the field of Christology (Christ as the great Ancestor), ecclesiology (the Church as family) and ministry (healing; prophecy; empowerment), but also in liturgy (i.e. the Zairian rite in the Catholic Church) and moral theology (on polygamy and marital theology). The encounter with Latin American theologians of Liberation resulted in some African colleagues becoming conscious of the fact that theology cannot deal only with «inculturation», but has to give answers to the huge problems of social injustice, marginalization, lack of democracy, human rights and globalization.

In several countries, there has emerged recently a genuine African Liberation Theology, not based on Marxist analysis or class struggle as the «classical» Latin American Liberation Theology was, but more on biblical and indigenous elements. As the most creative countries in contextual theologizing can be mentioned Ghana, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and, of course, South Africa. Many of the famous African theologians teach at some European or North American universities (Jean-Marc Ela, Bénédet Bujo, Eugene Uzukwu), because of the political situation at home or because of the lack of academic capacities and facilities in Africa.¹³³

6. And what about Pacific contextual theology?

On most world maps, Oceania is cut into two parts by the right and left margins; it has geographically a marginalized position and has been theologically marginalized as well for a long time. Although the World Mission Conference in 1980 took place in Melbourne, most of the delegates were not yet aware of the emergence and development of a genuine Pacific Church and theology. Three years later – at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Vancouver – the South Pacific was already present, mainly due to the conscientization made by women on the nuclear colonialization of the South Pacific and the challenge this poses to theology.¹³⁴

¹³³ For some references, see: Gwinyai Henry Muzorewa, *African liberation theology*, in: *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 3 (1989), H. 2, 52-70; Jean-Marc Ela, *Toward an African liberation theology*, in: *Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection: Bulletin*, (1992) 12-14, H. 14, 10-12; Emmanuel Martey, *African theology and Latin American liberation theology. Initial differences within the context of EATWOT*, in: *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, 5 (1995), H. 1/2, 45-63.

¹³⁴ See: Marina Tu'inukuafe, *World Council of Churches and the Pacific region*, in: *South-Pacific Journal of Mission Studies*, 2 (1991), H. 1, 21-23.

Latin America, Asia and Africa have ever since been considered as Third World continents and their theologians have been included without hesitation as members of EATWOT. But what about Oceania, where a majority of the population (Australia, New Zealand) belongs rather to the First than the Third World?¹³⁵ Why is Pacific theology often mentioned in one breath with Asian theology?¹³⁶ Can we speak of some common features of Pacific theologizing, or rather of different forms of Pacific theology? Is Melanesian theology different from the Polynesian or Micronesian variant, and how do they relate to contextual theologies in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand?

If there was no genuine Pacific contextual theology, Oceania was considered either as a theological *terra incognita* or as an appendix to Western theology, either of Catholic or of Protestant type. With the emergence of contextual theologies in Oceania, this continent comes in the sight of theological reflection and at the same time appears as a heterogeneous enterprise, as a contextual theology in a plural form: Contextual Pacific Theologies.

In 1969, the *South Pacific Association of Theological Schools* (SPATS) was established; now, it has 25 member schools. In 1976, the third Assembly of the Pacific Council of Churches was held in Port Moresby and raised the quest for the «Pacific Christ».¹³⁷ In 1986, the first *Evangelical Consultation on Pacific Theology* took place in Papua New Guinea, where Sione `Amanaki Havea presented the outline of what would be called later «Coconut Theology».¹³⁸ In 1989, on the occasion of a workshop on *Women and Ministry* held by SPATS and the Pacific Conference of Churches in Tonga, «Weavers» (*Women in Theological Education Programme*) has been founded as the women theological education committee of SPATS.

¹³⁵ The use of a terminology as «First» and «Third World» becomes more and more questionable, not only because of the disappearance of the so called «Second World», but even more because of the processes of globalization that have created huge «Third World enclaves» within the «First World» and «First World enclaves» within the «Third World». So, what about «Maori-theology» in New Zealand/Aotearoa or «Aborigines-theology» in Australia? – Referring to the American context, the *US Minorities* (Hispanics, Blacks, Red Indians, Asians) have been included in EATWOT a long time ago as one of its sub-groups, but not so the Pacific: there is no regional Oceania-group of EATWOT.

¹³⁶ One of the latest examples is the inclusion of „Contextual Theology in Aotearoa NZ and Australia» in a three-volume standard work on „Asian Christian Theologians»: John C. England et. al. (eds.), *Asian Christian Theologies. A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources*, 3 vols., New York 2002ff., vol 1: „Asia Region, South Asia, Austral Asia» (2002). Under the heading „Austral Asia», we find the Neil Darragh’s contribution „Contextual Theology in Aotearoa New Zealand» (vol 1: 541-598) and Clive Pearson’s contribution „Australian Contextual Theologies» (vol 1: 599-657).

¹³⁷ See: Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere, *An Agenda for the Theological Task of the Church in Oceania*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 13 (1995), 5-12.

¹³⁸ Sione `Amanaki Havea, *Christianity in the Pacific Context*, in: *South Pacific Theology. Papers from the Consultation on Pacific Theology*, Parramatta 1987. All the papers were published in 1987 under the title «South Pacific Theology» (Regnum Books, Oxford). In his paper, Havea proposed a shift from the Pacific Christ as a picture to a Pacific Theology as a theme. As he pointed out, the Gospel has to be put from its «western theological pot» into local soil. For «coconut theology», see: Randoll Prior, *I am the coconut of life. An evaluation of coconut theology*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology*, 10 (1993), 31-40. See also: Sione `Amanaki Havea, *The quest for a «Pacific» church*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology*, 2/6 (1991), 9-10.

In 1990, Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere presented the outline of a «Oceanic Theology» and an agenda for the theological tasks of the Church in Oceania.¹³⁹ In 1994, the first *Pacific Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians* (EATWOT) took place in Suva (Fiji)¹⁴⁰. In 1997, there was the *Second Consultation on Quest for Pacific Theology*¹⁴¹. At the Fifth General Assembly of EATWOT held from September 24 to October 1, 2001 in Quito, Ecuador, there was just one participant from Oceania (Kafoa Anthony Salomone, Academic Dean at the Pacific Theological College in Suva/Fiji).

Several theological journals in Oceania took up the challenge of contextuality. The *Pacific Journal of Theology* which is the Journal of the *South Pacific Association of Theological Schools* (SPATS) and which is based in Suva (Fiji), has fostered from its founding in 1989 the study of contextual theologies in the South Pacific. There are two journals from the Melanesian context, which are worth to be mentioned: *Catalyst* (since 1971), the Journal of the *Melanesian Institute* in Goroka, and the *Melanesian Journal of Theology* (since 1985) of the *Melanesian Association of Theological Schools* (MATS), based in Lae, both from Papua New Guinea.

From the Australian context, there are specially three interesting journals to be highlighted which publish contextualized theological reflection: *Nelen Yubu* (Leura, NSW), *Pacifica*, edited by the *Pacifica Theological Studies Association* (Brunswick East, Victoria) and the *South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies* which is published by SPAMS (South Pacific Association for Mission Studies) and edited in North Turrumurra NSW. A relative new publication is *Vashti's Voice*, a «journal exploring theologies for a just future», based in Auckland.¹⁴²

In 2001, SPATS organized a *Contextual Theology Conference*, held at Nadave, Bau, Fiji, from October 7 to 10, where the three principal questions on *Contextual Theology* were tackled: 1. What is Contextual Theology? (by Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere); 2. Why Contextual Theology? (Keiti Ann Kanongata'a); 3. How is Contextual Theology done? (Jovili Meo). It is one of the first attempts to deal systematically with contextual theology (or theologies) in

¹³⁹ Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere, He began in Galilee and now he is here. Thoughts for a Pacific Ocean theology, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 4 (1990), 4-9. Idem, An Agenda for the Theological Task of the Church in Oceania, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 13 (1995), 5-12.

¹⁴⁰ See: *Inaugural Pacific Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians* (Suva 1994), in: *The Pacific Journal of Theology* 13 (1995), 1-48.

¹⁴¹ *Second Consultation on Quest for Pacific Theology – Pacific EATWOT 2*, in: *The Pacific Journal of Theology* 17 (1997), 2-91.

¹⁴² The *Pacific Journal of Theology* came out with the first issue in 1989; *Catalyst* already in 1971; the *Melanesian Journal of Theology* in 1985; *Nelen Yubu* in 1978; *Pacifica* in 1988; the *South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies* in 1989; and *Vashti's Voices* in 1997.

the South Pacific context.¹⁴³ The contributions for this Conference have been published in the *Pacific Journal of Theology*.¹⁴⁴

This conference (phase one) is part of a four years program established by SPATS. In 2002 and 2003, there will be sub-regional conferences on Contextual Theologies. The first one in Tonga, has already taken place in November 2002, organized by the *Sia'atoutai Theological College*¹⁴⁵. In October 2003, a group of Tongan theologians (mainly Methodists and Catholics) established the «Ecumenical Association of Tongan Theologians», dedicated to the further exploration of a specific Tongan Contextual Theology. In November 2003, the sub-regional meeting in New Caledonia is supposed to take place and will deal with the issue of «Identity and Citizenship». In 2004, the Fijian sub-regional meeting will take place at *Davuilevu Theological College* in Suva (it has been postponed from October 2003); the same goes up for the Melanesian and the Micronesian sub-regions.

After these sub-regional meetings (phase two), the outcomes of the sub-regional conferences will be systematized and will be the basis for a regional Pacific Conference in 2004 or 2005 (phase three), where also representatives of other continents should be invited. The final document will be used as a discussion paper for Pacific church leaders and theological educators to make a final paper to be Oceania's contribution into the world arena of contextual theology (phase four).

Comparing with the characteristics of Contextual Theologies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, we can appreciate a *sui generis* form of Pacific contextual theology which is neither classical Liberation Theology, nor theology of religious pluralism, nor mere theology of inculturation. It stresses the critical and Christological aspects, it deals in the first place with topics as «land», «place», «community» and «spirituality», it takes indigenous thinking and experience as a very important *locus theologicus*, and it just started to deal with the impact of globalization and its theological consequences. Especially for the Fijian context, interreligious dialogue and a contextual theology of religious pluralism will be vital issues for the future. The impact of feminist contextual theologizing in the Pacific becomes more and more important, due to the network «Weavers» and the increasing presence of women theologians.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Among the main figures of the (yet short) history of Pacific Contextual Theology, apart from Havea and Tuwere, the following scholars have to be mentioned: Keiti Ann Kanongata'a (*A Pacific women's theology of birthing and liberation*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 7 (1992), 3-11; idem, *Domestic theology*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 15 (1996), 73-75); Jovili Meo (*Smallness and solidarity*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 6 (1991), 91-96; idem, *Pioneering new perspectives in Pacific theology. Consultation opening address*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 15 (1996), 13-15); Kilonia Mafaufau (*Pacific time and the times.: A theological reflection*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 6 (1991), 22-30); Paulo Koria (*Moving toward a Pacific theology. Theologising with concepts*, in: *Pacific Journal of Theology* 22 (1999) 3-14); Mikaele Paunga (*Contours of Contextual Theologies from Oceania*, in: *chakana* 2 (2003), 47-67).

¹⁴⁴ The issue No. 27 (2002) has been dedicated mainly to this Conference and its main papers: Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere, *What is Contextual Theology? – A View from Oceania*, 7-20; Keiti Ann Kanongata'a, *Why Contextual?* 21-40; and Jovili Meo, *How do we Do Contextual Theology?*, 41-60.

¹⁴⁵ The contributions of this conference have been published in the *Pacific Journal of Theology* 29/2003: Sandy Yule, *What is Contextual Theology?* 11-25; Tevita Tonga Mohenoa Puloka, *Sisu Tonga*, 26-29; Ma'afu `o Tu'itonga Palu, *Pacific Theology. A Re-consideration of Its Methodology*, 30-59.

¹⁴⁶ The journal *Vashti's Voices. A journal exploring theologies for a just future* builds on the style of *Vashti's Voice* [the extra «s» makes a difference], a feminist theology journal published between 1978 and 1991. In

There is a world map called «The World Down Under» where the North is at the bottom and the South on top, where Oceania is in the upper half of the centre, and where Europe lies in the lower part on the left and right side, cut into two parts by both margins. World views (and maps **are** world views) are always contextual. For the Pacific perspective, Oceania is not just a «huge blue spot» – the «Liquid Continent» - at the edge of the world, but the starting point and *locus theologicus* for a genuine and authentic theologizing. Of course, it will take some time to des-Hellenize and des-Europeanize theological ideas and methods, but the first steps are made, and many more are planned.

1995, «Weavers» hold the first Consultation on «Women’s Theology – Pacific Perspectives» in Suva. See also: Marie Ropeti, *Feminist theology. A view from the Pacific*, in Ofelia Ortega-Montoya (ed.), *Women’s visions. Theological reflection, celebration, action*, WCC Geneva 1995, 172-176; Lydia Johnson and Joan Alleluia Filemoni-Tofaeono (eds.), *Weavings: women doing theology in Oceania*, Suva 2003.

6. Jesus Christ as *Chakana*: Outline of an Andean Christology of Liberation

1. Introduction

The «preferential option for the poor», defined at the II General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate in Medellín, and ratified at the III General Conference in Puebla, in the course of the last twenty years is finally be contextualized for human groups of different sex, race and cultural background. In the Andean context, it is spoken of a «theological and ecclesial option for the indigenous peoples», an «option for the forgotten and marginalized people», and an «option for indigenous religiosity and spirituality».

The faith of the original and indigenous Andean cultures turns out to be a *locus theologicus* – a «theological place» – favourite to develop and to re-elaborate the main theological subjects, in a critical intercultural dialogue with the dominant and classic tradition of the West. The condition of being marginalized and poor, of being «forgotten» and stigmatized, gives the indigenous peoples of the Andes an exceptional scope.

In the figure of Jesus of Nazareth as *Taytayku* («our father»), Christ occupies in the imaginary monk of the Andean community (mainly Quechuas and Aymaras) a favourite place, more visible and incorporated in the popular religiosity than the first (Father) and the third person (Spirit) of the Trinity. The religious celebrations are centred on hierophanies of Saints, the Virgin and Christ (Christophanies); these last ones follow the course of the liturgical year, with three great moments: Christmas, Good Friday (including Passover of Resurrection) and the Celebration of the Cross (Third of May).

It seems that the Andean *jaqi* and *runa* («people» in Aymara and Quechua, respectively), have followed closely the letter of the traditional catechesis of the creed that jumps from the birth right to the passion and ignores the preaching and praxis of Jesus. The image that Andean people have of Jesus seems to be centred in its cosmic, redeeming, and mediating function, and not in the historical figure of Jesus, carpenter, and Jew of Nazareth.

2. *T'unupa*: Jesus disguised as a beggar

In the Peruvian and Bolivian High Plateau, the myth of *T'unupa* (or *Tonapa*) is still alive between the Quechua and Aymara population, whose image was superimposed in the colonial time by the figure of Jesus Christ. According to the testimony of an Aymara *jaqi* from Juli (the extreme south of Peru):

«My grandfathers told us the myth of *T'unupa*; saying that *T'unupa* was the son of the god *Wiraqucha*. This god has ordered the Earth, the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, and all things. And later He has sent his son to teach humanity a harmonic life with nature. He passed through the villages and taught the farmers to get greater benefit from the Earth, without damaging it. He preached against laziness and drunkenness and emphasized the foundations of solidarity and mercy» (personal testimony).

The myth of *T'unupa* becomes especially interesting for a liberating Christological reflection because of the diverse manifestations it has. One of them is interpreted as «Andean Christ»: a wise, humble, and preaching man of mercy. In the same form, the figure of *T'unupa* is often identified with Saint Bartholomew or Saint Thomas. It is said that the legendary «proto-evangelization» of the Andes was done by the Apostle Thomas (*T'unupa*). The word *T'unupa* seems to have its origin in the language and the *Pukina* culture, lords of *Tiwanaku* (town and culture in present Bolivia, conquered by the Incas).

One of the religious aspects that called the attention of the first evangelizers was the mysterious [pre-colonial] Cross of Carabuco (which has its origin in the «Andean Cross»), attributed by some missionaries to Saint Thomas or Saint Bartholomew and associated in the last instance to the God or original hero *T'unupa* (*Tonapa*, *Tarapaca* and even son of *Viracocha* or *Wiraqucha*). This legendary hero has been called sometimes the «Andean Christ», because of his miracles, persecutions and finally liberation, after which he sailed the Titicaca Lake and created the Desaguadero River. Until today a volcano located at the north side of the *Salar* of Uyuni has his name.

«[...] a bearded, medium sized man with long hair, and somewhat long shirts had arrived at these provinces and kingdoms from *Tawantinsuyu* and he was seen a nobody, with grey hair, he was skinny, he walked with the pilgrim's staff, and was the one who taught with great love, calling all of them his sons and daughters. He was not heard neither followed by the locals, and when he travelled through all the provinces, he did many visible miracles. Just touching the patients, he healed them without any personal interest or attraction. It has been said that he spoke all the languages better than the local ones, and he was called *Thonapa* [...]» (oral tradition).

According to the myth, *T'unupa*, son of the supreme God *Wiraqucha*, walked disguised as a beggar from town to town, preaching the Good News of liberation and a worthy life, healing the sick and giving his love to the natives. Nevertheless, he was rejected by many, which brought natural disasters and petrification of the villains. In several occasions, a widow welcomed him and was saved from the fatal consequences.

The mythical figure of *T'unupa* was re-interpreted by the Andean population, through catechizing, as the figure of Jesus Christ, pilgrim and pauper, healer and lover of the humble people, the liberator of this nation subjugated by the Inca Empire and later by the Spanish colonizers. *T'unupa*-Jesus is a subversive figure of resistance and hope that has being fused with another very important myth of great weight until nowadays: the myth of *Inkarri*.

3. *Inkarri*: Jesus revived in the middle of the Andean people

Shortly after the Conquest, the Andean population created a myth that has apocalyptic elements (in the Biblical sense) of resistance and hope, and that simultaneously is a dramatic reading of the situation of the Andean people. According to the story, the supreme God *Wiraqucha* had two children: *Inkarri* (the Quechuaized form of the Spanish words «Inca» and «king») and *Españarri* («King of Spain»), according to other versions: *Inka* and Jesus.

Between both brothers, a conflict of life and death took place [Conquest], when *Inkarrí* was carved up by *Españarrí*, and his parts were scattered in the four directions of the winds (the *Tawantinsuyu* or «empire of the four parts», but now conquered).

Although in the beginning the native population identified *Españarrí* with the new «God Jesus», they very quickly saw him as the incarnation of *Inkarrí*, who suffered the same fate as Jesus Christ on the Cross, under another equally bloodthirsty and unjust empire [the Roman Empire]. *Inkarrí*-Jesus became, for the colonized and subjugated indigenous population, soon a figure of hope, liberation, and restitution of lost rights.

According to another version of the legend, *Inkarrí*, as Jesus, was persecuted because he defended his community against the invader, and was obliged to flee into the forest (*uraypacha* or *yunka*: conceived by the missionaries as «hell»; here we have the parallel of Jesus» «descent to the reign of death») and continues living there to resuscitate one day among the poorest and to restore the great Inca empire. For many, the native revolutionary Tupac Amaru (and Tupac Katari in the Bolivian case; both killed in 1780/1) has been an incarnation of the *Inkarrí*.

The popular myth of *Inkarrí*-Tupac Amaru has many parallels with Jesus Christ: Tupac Amaru (as well as his Bolivian equivalent Tupac Katari) was a charismatic leader, who fought against injustice and exploitation of the natives, and was carved up by the colonial power, but he would resuscitate one day gathering his pieces from the four regions (*Tawantinsuyu*) to re-establish justice: the *Parousia* of Christ in terms of the Andean utopia.

The myth of *Inkarrí* is as much a story of resistance against the power of occupation and the European civilization (even Spanish Catholicism), as also a sort of indigenous interpretation of the resurrection of Jesus and his last coming (*Parousia*), to carry out the *apocatastasis*, the total recapitulation of all creation. As the resurgence of the *Inkarrí* would revive the Andean indigenous culture, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (or *Cristorrí*) it will also revive the new community of God, to leave behind centuries of subjugation and exclusion.

4. Jesus Christ as a *Chakana* (cosmic bridge)

According to the surveys among Andean Christians, the popular Andean Christology affirms with the official Church that Christ is the Son of God becoming human, who came to Earth to redeem us through his death on the Cross. Nevertheless, it has its very own elements related to uttermost Andean thought and Andean mythologies (among them the myths of *T'unupa* and *Inkarrí*).

In the first place, for the Andean *jaqi* and *runa*, Jesus is almost completely dispossessed of historical aspects. The two greatest Christological moments are the birth (Christmas) and Jesus» death on the Cross (Good Friday), culminating in the Passover of the Resurrection and again remembered in the Celebration of the Cross (Third of May). Neither the preaching of Jesus, nor his miracles related in the New Testament play an important role in Andean religiosity. Resurrection is associated with Good Friday or the *pachakuti*, Andean cataclysm of the cosmic restitution of the order.

Secondly, Jesus is venerated as the «miraculous *Taytacha* (beloved father)», under multiple sacred manifestations or Christophanies, receiving many different names and titles. In Peru for example, He is known as the «Lord of Miracles», «Lord of Tremors», «Lord of Huanca», «Lord of Qoyllur Rit'i», «Lord of Achajrapi». Each particular Christ (or each hierophany of Christ) shows a certain characteristic of the universal Christ.

The legends of most of these Christophanies insist that «*Taytacha* Jesus» has revealed himself first to a poor shepherd, a marginal *campesino*, causing immediately a conflict with the official ecclesiastical power which tried, at a first moment, to deprive of authority the miraculous manifestation of *Taytacha*. The native community embraced, nevertheless, the miraculous Christ, despite the warnings and even prohibitions by the colonial clergy, appropriating Him as theirs (*Taytacha* Jesus). The artistic and legendary representations of these Christophanies display indigenous characteristics: dark skin complexion and revelations in Quechua.

Thirdly, Jesus is expressed in the first place in the symbol of the Cross. The Cross reveals the most important aspect of Andean Christology, due to the function it has in the Andean worldview. First, the Cross is for the Andean *jaqi* and *runa a chakana*, a bridge between different cosmic regions, between above and below, left, and right. The indigenous people of the Andes already knew the figure and the symbol of the Cross before the arrival of the first missionaries [for example the Cross of Carabuco]. The Southern Cross, named «The Great *Chakana*» (*hatun* or *jisk'a chakana*) by Quechuas and Aymaras has always been a very important element within the Andean worldview.

The Andean Cross (*Chakana*) has a horizontal and vertical symmetry, in such a way that it represents the cosmic balance in a two-way traffic: from above to below the balance of correspondence, and from left to right the balance of complementarity. In addition, it is staggered, emphasizing the mediating function. All the aspects together reflect the basic principle of the Andean wisdom: the principle of relationality which is the very core of Christology. Christ is both the definitive connector as well as the exemplary connection.

The Andean Cross – and therefore Jesus Christ – as a *chakana* or cosmic bridge connects the different levels and aspects of reality and is therefore the eminent symbol of divinity. The emptiness in the centre represents the divine mystery of the universal *Chakana* that tends bridges between the human and the divine, between living and not living beings, between the feminine and masculine, between past and future, but mainly between a situation of injustice, servitude and oppression (condition of non-redemption or sin) and a situation of harmony, freedom and inclusion (condition of redemption or grace).

In the Andes, the green cross without corpus marks the top of elevated hills. These topographic places have a double function. On the one hand, they continue being the sacred places of «*Achachilas*» or «*Apus*», that is to say: of the tutelary spirits who protect the people and who incarnate the presence of the ancestors, specially the mythical ancestor founders of the village. The names of *Apu* or *Achachila* have become honorary names for Jesus; in Quechua, it is common to say «*Apu* Jesus» or «*Apu Taytayku*» (our God Father). In Aymara, people distinguish more clearly between the *Achachilas* (tutelary spirits) and *Tata* (Father) God or *Tata* Jesus.

On the other hand, the hills with their tops are eminent *chakanas*, that is to say: cosmic transitions or bridges between the world of the daily life, called *kay* or *aka pacha* («this cosmic layer») and the world above, called *hanaq* or *alax pacha* («the cosmic layer of above»). With the visible symbol of the cross, the function of *chakana* is to empower in a certain sense: the top of the mountains as well as the cross, both are very powerful and effective *chakanas*, and altogether, have an immense redemptive power.

In the Andean popular religiosity, the Cross (also called the «Holy Cross») is not necessarily related to Jesus Christ but is accepted as a particular Saint. The Celebration of the Cross, which begins Third of May with the «descent» of the cross from the hills and culminates in Pentecost with the «ascent», in a broad sense follows the choreography of the procession of any Saint, and, in addition, obeys the logic of the *Apus* and *Achachilas*. The Cross is a «protective Saint» for the people (which is not the same as the Patron Saint figure), who closely watches from the hill for eleven months. The purpose of the Celebration of the Cross is to make sure this protective function, in which *Apu Taytayku* come close to the people, so that during a certain period of time (between the descent and the ascent) he can live among them (that is to say: on the main square of the town or in the church). But his main home is the top of the hill, due to his essential function as a *chakana*.

In the Celebration of the Cross, the reference to the passion of Jesus does not play any role. The Cross is considered a symbol of life (for that reason the green colour) and a symbol of the relation between the human and the divine. The Cross does not have a corpus (perhaps just outlines of faces, hands, and feet), but is embellished and «dressed» in clothes and flowers.

Another presence of the Cross occurs on Good Friday in memory of the «suffered Lord». The Cross incarnates all the pain and suffering of the people «deposited» literally in the wood, by means of tears, kisses, hugs, and sobs. If the cross itself does not have a corpus, a dying and bleeding figure of Jesus is placed at the head of the bed. In that scenario, they infer different types of Christophanies: as the «Lord of the Column» or the «Lord of the Agony», who – as the Cross in general – are and consequently exert functions of particular Saints.

It recalls our attention that the Andean representations of the passion and the suffering of Jesus emphasize with great intensity the suffering and agony. They are a symbol of identification of the suffering of the people, of exclusion and oppression with the dying and the suffering of God. Many observers of the Andean popular religiosity do not understand the fundamental role of Good Friday and its pre-eminence with respect to Passover of Resurrection. By no means, this is related to aspects of the original cultures like masochism or necrophilia that take place in a visible form in the rituals of Good Friday. As well as the crosses placed at the top of the mountains are symbols of life and hope, so is the Cross of Good Friday.

Good Friday and Passover are two complementary aspects of a single reality, the intrinsic dialectic of life and death. In the *Via Crucis* of Good Friday, normally a 15th station of Resurrection is included for the Andean believers. Good Friday is rather a sign of hope than a sign of death. It is certain that *Pachamama* is in mourning in the Holy Week because she cries the fate of her «partner» Jesus; for that reason, she is «untouchable» in these days.

But on the other hand, Easter is a period of much hope, of the conversion of suffering and death in joy and pain, of sterility in fertility, shortly: of the liberation of the people.

5. Andean Christology: bridge between suffering and liberation

What can we conclude theologically of the practices, beliefs, and rituals of the Andean myths of *T'unupa* and *Inkarrí*, as well as of the eminent place that the Cross has in the popular religiosity in the Andes?

In the first place, Jesus is seen like a companion on the path of the Andean people sharing humiliation, marginalization, and despoliation. He is a «God disguised as a pauper», embodying the suffering of the people, but full of hope. Jesus Christ is the «caring God» who joins the oppressed ones, who doesn't bond with the representatives of the power (*Españarrí*), but who undergoes the consequences of his opposition to the empire, as in the case of *Inkarrí*.

The identification of the Andean people with the suffering and passion of Jesus reveals their own martyrdom and the hope of the integral liberation that could be interpreted more in a cosmic than a historical sense. In the *imitatio Christi* the Andeans recover strength for their own liberation; *Taytacha* Jesus has identified himself so much with this culture that he was put to death on the Cross. The identification is mutual, although the initiative corresponds to *Taytacha* God to send us his Son; as an answer, the Andean *runa* and *jaqi* are identified with the fate of Jesus, through the personification of *T'unupa* and *Inkarrí*, but also through the representation of the «Christ of Agony».

The death of Jesus Christ on the Cross reveals the fundamental meaning of this event because the Cross is much more than a torture log; it is the ultimate symbol of the reconciliation, the restitution of a corrupted order, of the definitive mediation. The Cross is the cosmic bridge (*chakana*), and therefore, Jesus Christ is the *Chakana par excellence*, exemplary intermediary, insurmountable mediator.

On the Cross the divine and human, the region of «above» (*hanaq* or *alax pacha*) and the one of «below» (*kay* or *aka pacha*) come together in an intense way (like a «real symbol»), as a cosmic sacrament, as a definitive reconciliation of what has been divided before. The Cross incarnates the hope of the restitution of what has been broken (the fundamental harmony), of a damaged balance, of a disturbed order. The Cross is the symbol of the suffering and the Resurrection, of death and life.

The Cross as a universal *chakana*, represented by an endless number of crosses on the tops of the hills, symbolizes one of the most important *theologumena* of the Christian faith: God himself becomes a human being. Sky and earth are no longer totally separated, the human and the divine touch each other and communicate (in the sense of «communion»). The Cross incarnates this «bridge» and symbolizes the deepest Christological dogma: the integration of separated worlds, the anticipation of a «cosmic reconciliation» between what was once divided and disarticulated.

On the other hand, Andean people have incorporated very little of what the Cross historically meant, including Jesus» life and death. As in the case of the Saints as intermediaries, neither their lives nor their hagiographies are known; the same in the case of

Jesus Christ, where the most important are not his preaching, neither his destiny under the Roman regime, nor his belonging to the Jewish community, or his doctrinal and ritual dissidence. What matters are his «function» and his topological, or rather: theological place. In this sense, Andean Christology, even in its soteriological and harmatological aspects, is much closer to a Johannine cosmic Christology (of the evangelist John) than to a Christology «from below» of the synoptic evangelists.

It is true that the Andean people practically don't know the historical and political background of the symbol of the Cross. Nevertheless, they identify themselves – although in a more unconscious form — also with the political and ethical message: the injustice, humiliation, suffering, oppression, and exclusion. The Good News has arrived to *Abya Yala* (native name of Latin America) with the cross and sword, originally two instruments of aggression and mistreat. The symbolic and religious complementarity between the Christian Cross and the Andean *Chakana* made possible that this central symbol of the new faith was not identified in the first place with an instrument of torture and subjugation – although in fact it has been used frequently in this sense –, but as a symbol of cosmic reconciliation and total life.

The definitive liberation, anticipated in the Resurrection of *Taytacha* Jesus, is expected with the final return (*Parousia*) of Jesus Christ, conceived in a way as the reestablishment or restitution of the fundamental harmony, lost by sin, either structural or personal, mainly due to the rupture of the cosmic order (*pacha*) by the Conquest and its consequences. Jesus Christ will re-establish one day – as it is taught by the legend of *Inkarrí* – order and harmony, creating a «new heaven and a new earth». For the Andean people, this will be done through the *pachakuti*, «an apocalyptic» cataclysm which is a «revolution» of the present order of injustice, exclusion, and suffering.

7. Andean philosophy as a questioning alterity: An intercultural criticism of Western andro- and ethnocentrism

The famous saying of Carl Marx in his eleventh «Thesis on Feuerbach» that until today philosophy only had interpreted the world, but that from now on and further it would be about changing it¹⁴⁷, this adage could very well be modified in the following sense: Until now, the dominant philosophy only has been interpreted as philosophy of the dominators, but the moment is coming that the *kenosis* have to serve the dominated and have to change the world from below.

When the Spanish conquerors reached the continent of *Abya Yala*¹⁴⁸ – which they mistakenly identified with India and what abusively was called «America» -, they were carrying in their minds the scholastic philosophy of the Renaissance and the Aristotelian defence of natural slavery. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, after «having discovered a salvage Indian, without law or political regime, wandering through the jungle and closer to the beasts and the monkeys than to man», writes in his work *Democrates Alter*: «Compare these gifts of prudence, ingenuity, magnanimity, moderation, humility and religion of the Spanish with those of these little fellows in which one hardly can find human remains, and which not only lack culture but which not even use or know letters nor conserve monuments of their history but only some dark and vague memory of some facts laid down in certain paintings, they lack written laws, and have barbarian institutions and habits».¹⁴⁹

1. The problem of the philosophical «other»

Since the stories of the Hebrew Bible, that were passed on by the Greeks and the Romans and reaching the conquerors and cultural imperialists of all times, the misleading but always convincing syllogism has been the same: «We have civilization and reason; the others are totally different (*totaliter aliter*) from us; ergo: the others do not have culture and reason». The peoples conquered by the Roman Empire were called – just as does Ginés de Sepúlveda

¹⁴⁷ Marx, Karl (1845; 1888). *Thesen über Feuerbach [Theses on Feuerbach]*. In: MEW (1960-1968) (Karl Marx – Friedrich Engels – Werke) III. Berlin: Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim Zentralkomitee der SED. 5-7. 7. English edition: (1969). *Marx/Engels Selected Works*. Volume One. 13–15. Moscow: Progress Publishers. The title «Thesen über Feuerbach» was given by Friedrich Engels. Thesis 11 is literally as follows: «The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it».

¹⁴⁸ When looking for an appropriate and not Eurocentric name for the Latin-American continent, we clash with linguistic limitations: Simply calling it «Latin America», which was a whim of Genoan Amerigo Vespucci, in fact means to subordinate it to the Western linguistic domain (Latin and its derivatives), and to exclude in this way the indigenous languages. In spite of the fact that the term «*Abya Yala*» certainly is a *pars pro toto* – it is a *kuna* expression (Panama) – which refers explicitly to the indigenous continent (the «real America») with its non-Western roots. In Kuna culture, *Abya Yala* means «the fertile earth in which we live».

¹⁴⁹ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490-1572/3), Spanish priest and historian, chronicler of Carl V, assumed the traditional counter position in the dispute with Bartholomew de Las Casas about the legitimacy of the Conquest and the submission of the «Indians» to slavery. The citation of de Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in Spanish was taken from: Pereña, Luciano (1992). «El Proceso a la Conquista de América [The process of Conquest in America]». In: Robles, Laureano (ed.). *Filosofía iberoamericana en la época del Encuentro [Iberoamerican philosophy in the era of Encounter]*. Madrid: Trotta. 193-222. 209, and subsequently translated into English by the author.

with those disrespectfully called «Indios» – «barbarians» (*barbari*), having beards and therefore «closer to the beasts and the monkeys than to man»¹⁵⁰.

This psychological law – «I am the denial of the other (*alter alterius*) or put in other words: I am the other to the other» – has served during millenniums to affirm the own identity and to conquer, destroy and subject the other simply because of the fact of being «the other». The philosophical problem of «being different»¹⁵¹ is becoming aware of the political, religious, cultural, and economic problem of the other, which more than a problem is a tragedy, a holocaust, a permanent genocide.

After that the new School of Salamanca (Francisco de Vitoria) knew to oppose – based on the same philosophical and theological foundations – the ideas of Ginés de Sepúlveda and affirm the «humanity» of the discourteously named «Indians (or in Spanish *indios*, which refers to males only, women would be *indias* and weren't even mentioned), the «being different» of the original peoples had to be established and positioned within the human species, and this time not as «bestiality» or «animality».¹⁵² The fact that one gave «rationality» and «*animus*» (the capacity to have a «soul» and to reason) to the indigenous, was not so much a gesture of magnanimity so distinctive of the Spanish (according to Sepúlveda)¹⁵³, but was a prerequisite in order to baptize and evangelize them. One cannot baptize «beasts», nor preach the Good News (*eu-angelión*) to them – however those have been Bad News (*dys-angelión*) for many inhabitants of *Abya Yala*. The fact to share (with the «Indians») the same human nature required of the rationality of the conquerors to search and determine other characteristics to distinguish between «us» and «them», between sameness and alterity.

One of the most used indicators for this purpose until today, are racial and gender characteristics: The other is defined and differentiated from oneself by race and gender. This, together with a value judgement – «the other is by definition inferior to oneself» – leads to racism and sexism present in all supreme and conquering monocultural projects. If Western philosophical and theological books would have colour and gender, certainly the great majority would be white and male.

From the words of Ginés de Sepúlveda until today, the argument hasn't changed principally, but only gradually. Step by step, the disrespectfully called «Indians» have acquired human features, that is to say: they have been converted into «non-barbarians», as is shown by the imposition of the Spanish or Portuguese language, by written language, by education, by decent clothing, by the European way of eating and drinking, by the logical

¹⁵⁰ See footnote 149. This is a citing of Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, referring to the indigenous of the American continent.

¹⁵¹ Discussed for the first time in its profound and philosophical dimensions by Emmanuel Levinas (1905-1995) in *Totalité et Infini: Essai sur l'Extériorité*. The Hague: De Gruyter. 1961 [*Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press. 1969].

¹⁵² The racist scheme of «marking the differences» with respect to the other is neither typical nor exclusive of the Spanish conquerors, but it repeats in many other «differences of opinion» between peoples until today. For the Greeks and the Romans, the slaves were not «human», for the Brahmins, the *dalit* (outcast) are not part of «humanity»; for Origenes, women were only half human; etc.

¹⁵³ See the citing that footnote 149 refers to.

rationality and even by citizenship. But certain «defects»¹⁵⁴ always remain which allow to perceive and appreciate the others as «others». One of these «defects» – to which corresponds on the other hand an «ideal» or «excellence» – that remains as ultimate refuge of the supposed superiority of Western civilization, is the absence of a philosophy (in a Western sense).

The philosophical problem of the «other» is also the problem of philosophical alterity, that is to say: of the «other philosophy». In other words: When stating that philosophy is an (exclusive) creature of the Occident that only can expand itself towards other cultures conserving its inherent Occidentalism, the «other philosophy» (a people that has a distinct philosophy) has no reason to be. The underlying syllogism that parts from this solipsist premise is as follows: «Philosophy is essentially Greek (Heidegger); there are philosophies all over the world, ergo: these philosophies have to be essentially Greek».¹⁵⁵ When we replace the attribute «Greek» by attributes less crude or monocultural, such as «reasoning», «written», «produced by individuals», «systematic», «bi-valued» or «rational», we end up with the same result: The «others» do only possess philosophy as they would meet all requisites Western philosophers and philosophy (the «ones» or the philosophical «selfhood») defined as essential to deserve that title.

Already in the verdict cited by Ginés de Sepúlveda are mentioned a lot of these criteria which the Western philosophical academy nowadays uses against the supposed «indigenous philosophies»: «culture», «letters» (textuality), «history», «written laws».¹⁵⁶ We are dealing with a violent and excluding act of «definition» that excludes *a priori* the other. When one defines «philosophy» as a product elaborated by individuals (philosophic persons) and expressed in written texts (essays, articles, books), using a binary logic and a discursive rationality, thus one excludes *per definitionem* all philosophical expressions that don't have an individual author, that aren't put down in writing, that don't obey the logical principle of the formal non-contradiction and that apply a non-discursive rationality. Ergo: *non philosophia est*.

¹⁵⁴ A «defect» is only defined as such from the viewpoint of an ideal that corresponds in this case to the Western culture in all its manifestations which include philosophy. The conquerors couldn't imagine that «the indigenous alterity» might contain more valuable elements than those that contained their own culture. Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala was one of the first that dared to question the moral «ideal» of the conquerors and raise the matter of their own «defects». Nowadays, the same scheme repeats itself, when for instance the US Administration cannot imagine that there could be other cultures and democratic forms more advanced than their own and that there could be certain «defects» in their own way of living. This way of conceiving and appreciating the alterity, is typical for a mono-cultural (or centro-cultural) way of thinking.

¹⁵⁵ The major premise is a *petitio principii* in the sense that it stipulates the origin of Western philosophy as the essential definition of all kind of philosophy. However, Heidegger expressed this position in a very clear and excluding way, the great majority of Western modern philosophers even of the contemporary era in other parts of the world maintain the position of fundamental westernness of «philosophy». See: Estermann, Josef (2003). «Anatopism as cultural alienation: Dominant and dominated cultures in the Andean environment». In: Raúl Fornet-Betancourt (ed.). *Cultures and Power: Interaction and Asymmetry between cultures in the Context of globalization*. Frankfurt/M.: IKO-Verlag, 137-163.

¹⁵⁶ Here once more the citing, with the mentioned terms in italic: «Compare these gifts of prudence, ingenuity, magnanimity, moderation, humility and religion of the Spanish with those of these little fellows in which one hardly can find human remains, and which not only lack *culture* but which not even use or know *letters* nor conserve monuments of their *history* but only some dark and vague memory of some facts laid down in certain paintings, they lack *written laws*, and have barbarian institutions and habits».

The «other» philosophy – that is to say: the non-Western philosophy – is for the Western philosophy a philosophical problem, provided that it conceives itself as the denial of its own denial, as the alterity of the other, and it is defined in a monocultural or culture-centric way («true philosophy is occidental»). Until the dominant Western philosophy is not conscientious of its own culturality (culture-centrism), raciality (ethnocentrism) an even masculinity (androcentrism), other philosophical paradigms will not be recognized as «philosophies», but at the best as «thinking», «cosmovision», «mythology», «religiosity» or simply «ethno-philosophy»¹⁵⁷.

2. The case of «Andean Philosophy»

This is the state of the debate regarding «Andean philosophy». The Academy (dominant university philosophy) rejects this title sharply and denies the existence of a similar case. It keeps on pushing aside its contents to (inferior) categories of «mythical thinking», «religiosity», «cosmovision» or at the best: of «ethno-philosophy». With this view, it uses practically the same arguments as Ginés de Sepúlveda, however this time not to deny the «humanity» of the original population of this continent, but to deprive them of the «philosophicity» of their way of thinking and representing the world. The underlying syllogism of Western rationality is as crude as convincing: «In the Andes, there are neither written sources nor particular philosophers that express the indigenous wisdom; philosophy necessarily requires written sources and individual authors; *ergo*: the indigenous Andean wisdom is not philosophy».¹⁵⁸

Post-modern philosophy supports (in an unintentional way) this mono-centric and excluding attitude in the sense that it abstains from any value judgement referring to «philosophy», «thinking», «wisdom», «cosmovision» and «myth». All these labels are equivalent alternatives of cultural expressions and one can't argue that one would be superior or more advanced than another. That, what at first sight seems a rehabilitation of indigenous thinking¹⁵⁹, under the relationships of power between existing cultures (Huntington calls them «civilizations») simply results in an irresponsible idealization. The economic and military power of the Occident in fact results in a definitive power that draws a very clear dividing line between «philosophy» and the other «wisdoms», with all its axiomatic and curricular consequences.¹⁶⁰

The defence of an «Andean philosophy» is not an academic issue, nor simply an imaginative debate or a whim of some «andeanophiles», but the rehabilitation of a complete

¹⁵⁷ The term «ethno-philosophy» was created by the African philosopher Hountondij, in a response to the work of the Belgian missionary Placide Tempels «Bantu Philosophy» (Paris 1959): «In fact, it is an ethnological work, with philosophical pretensions, or more simply, if I may coin the word, a work of «ethno philosophy»» (Hountondij, P.J. (1983). *African Philosophy: Myth and reality*. London. 34).

¹⁵⁸ I deal profoundly the question of textuality and individual authorship, respectively the orality and collective authorship as prerequisite for philosophy, in: Estermann, Josef (2006). *Filosofía Andina: Sabiduría indígena par un mundo nuevo* [Andean philosophy: indigenous wisdom for a new world]. La Paz: ISEAT. 73-85.

¹⁵⁹ Post-modern philosophy opens new possibilities of «philosophies» and explications of the world that go beyond the «meta-story» of Western modernity. However, the great majority of the post-modern philosophers stay trapped in the cultural parameters of the West; their criticism towards modernity is pre-eminently intra-cultural. This is the principal point in which it differs from an intercultural attitude.

¹⁶⁰ Till this date, the curricula of philosophical studies do not include the indigenous philosophy and wisdom.

and integral humanity, of a typical way to conceive and represent the world, of a thousand years old wisdom covered by culturalist and ethnocentric prejudices. Furthermore, it shows to be a decisive step towards the «liberation of philosophy»¹⁶¹ dominated by its solipsism and dogmatism. «Andean philosophy» – just like other indigenous philosophies (Nahua, Maya, Amazon, Bantu, Munda, etc.) – questions certain «blind» presuppositions of the dominant Western philosophy, before all its ethnocentrism (in the sense of Hellenocentrism) and its androcentrism (the strong masculine rationality).

Given that the conceptual framework of the dominant philosophy of the West has been and is still determining the theological idea of «God», «the world» and of the «human being», a deconstruction of Western ethno- and androcentrism also brings with it a change of theological paradigm, pointing at an alternative model that in this context can be called «Andean theology»¹⁶². A deconstruction as mentioned could be brought about by a post-modern posture (Derrida), but this remains a deconstruction from the inside of Western philosophy (and theology). It doesn't question the necessity and reach of a similar monocultural deconstruction in order to reveal the secret and suppressing history of the Western philosophy (popular philosophies, philosophical ideas, marginalized and forgotten ideas, etc.) and to free it from its androcentric diseases called «dualism», «instrumentalism», «rationalism» and «egocentrism»(and many more –isms). But I think that a true mutual «liberation» and recognition of the other only can be obtained as fruit of an intercultural deconstruction of philosophy.

When I speak of «Andean philosophy», I don't think of a «pure» thinking, not contaminated by Western or other ideas; it doesn't imply a pre-colonial Inca, Tiawanaku, Pucara or Wara philosophy.¹⁶³ I don't doubt the value of reconstructing a pre-colonial philosophy, for historical reasons of in order to recuperate an intellectual and cultural heritage lost and ignored. It seems legitimate to me and even necessary to do this historic work. But I think that what is called «Andean philosophy» represents an actual and alive thinking in full evolution, a syncretic and complex «wisdom» in a process of development, which contains both elements of the original pre-Hispanic peoples and cultures (which by itself already were intercultural), as well as foreign elements that were incorporated in the orienting matrix of the Andean cultural paradigm.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ The turnaround of the known «Liberation Philosophy» is a result of its self-revelation as dominant and dominating. If the «dominant philosophy is the philosophy of the dominators» (a variant to the famous saying of Carl Marx), the «Liberation Philosophy» necessarily leads to a «liberation of the philosophy» which is only possible from the «philosophical alterity».

¹⁶² See: Estermann, Josef (coord.) (2006). *Teología Andina: El tejido diverso de la fe indígena* [Andean Theology: The diverse tissue of indigenous faith]. 2 vols. La Paz: ISEAT/Plural.

¹⁶³ There are attempts to recuperate a «pre-columbine philosophy» that certainly have their historic and recognitive value (for instance: Pacheco Farfán, Juvenal (1994). *Filosofía inka y su proyección al futuro* [Inca philosophy and its projection towards the future]. Cusco: Universidad San Antonio Abad; Díaz Guzmán, Víctor (1991). *Filosofía Antigua en el Antiguo Perú* [Antique philosophy in Ancient Peru] Lima). «Andean philosophy» is not understood as pre-Hispanic or indigenistic but is understood in the sense that it takes in consideration the syncretic process of the mestizo culture of the last five hundred years as a constituent process.

¹⁶⁴ In this context, one has to question oneself for instance with all sincerity (*mutatis mutandi*) if Christianity can simply be qualified as «occidental» (as some authors suggest), given that it at least has another root evenly determining: the Semite rationality of the Orient.

An intercultural deconstruction of the dominant Western philosophy cannot be realized without an open dialogue with other traditions, in this case with the Andean philosophical tradition. And through this dialogue – if it's not simply an academic exercise – the two partners will be mutually affected and both will have to «deconstruct themselves».¹⁶⁵ We could call this a «hermeneutical diatopic» process¹⁶⁶ or an «inter-paradigmatic» one, in which the own philosophical identity (the Occidental or the Andean) constitutes and «deconstructs» itself always face to face to the philosophical alterity of the other. I don't think it would be possible to elaborate an «Andean philosophy» from the inside, without the help of a Western language (for instance Spanish) and without a conceptual work of «reflection» (the Western tradition as «mirror» and «background of projection»). Neither do I believe that it would be possible to make a true deconstruction of the dominant Western philosophy without the intercultural dialogue with culturally distinct traditions, as is the case with «Andean philosophy».

Speaking of the two *topoi* (in «diatopic hermeneutics»), I refer to cultural suppositions, not questioned by the Occident and by the Andes that only can come to daylight and to reason by the work of and thanks to the «other». Neither the Western tradition nor the Andean can reach, really get to know, and detect the essential limitations, the inherent possibilities, and the paradigmatic «prejudices» (in the sense of Gadamer) of their own *topos*. This is not only a psychological axiom that governs the interaction between individuals, but it is also valid for the interaction between cultures and philosophical paradigms.

No single culture and no single philosophical *topos* could cover every possibility of humanity. This might be the fundamental *hybris* of the Western philosophical tradition: in its great majority produced by white men of the middle-class, presenting itself as «universal», «super-cultural» or even as «absolute». In theology, this ethnocentric arrogance, this «universalization» of a culturally specific point of view, this «super-culturality» of a position strongly rooted in a certain culture, one could call «idolatry». In philosophy it is a fallacy, but a fallacy unrecognized and therefore perpetuated by the Academy.¹⁶⁷

When assuming the fundamental complementarity of the human *topoi* of living, experiencing and reflecting on the great richness of life, the cosmos, of the divine, of the human being, of the existing and of the imagined, the intercultural philosophical dialogue between the Western tradition and the Andean paradigm (and lots of other paradigms) is

¹⁶⁵ In the theological field, Sri Lankan theologian Aloysius Pieris defends that the (interreligious) dialogue is never a conservative enterprise, but that it always opens new possibilities to modify positions. When one of the partners enters the dialogue with the preconception of keeping his position unchanged, we are not talking of a true dialogue. The same holds true for the intercultural dialogue.

¹⁶⁶ The «diatopic hermeneutics» (Panikkar) search an understanding of the «being different» by means of an intercultural dialogue between two cultural «places» (*topoi*), without recurring to a third point of mediation (*tertium mediationis*). See: Panikkar, Raimon (1997). *La experiencia filosófica de la India* [The philosophical experience of India]. Madrid: Trotta. 46.

¹⁶⁷ It is part of the own problem of Western monoculturalism that it cannot reach at a self-revelation as «idolatry» while it doesn't expose itself to the interpellation by other cultural paradigms. The «deceit» of the superculturality resolves (and dissolves) itself when the Occident enters in a symmetric dialogue with philosophical paradigms that are culturally distinct.

imperative for the self-revelation of the partners in the encounter. But at the same time, we must warn that this dialogue today is not taking place under the condition of a «discourse without domination» (Habermas), but in a political, economic, and social framework with strong asymmetries.

The situation of the era of Ginés de Sepúlveda essentially hasn't changed: the Occident – now more the North-American stream than the Spanish – remains convinced of its «cultural superiority», convinced of the right to bring its civilizing gospel to the whole world and transmit philosophical ideas to the «barbarian» peoples for their redemption. The conditions of the process and the actual strategies of economic and cultural globalization do not favour an inclusive dialogue between the dominant Western philosophy and the Andean philosophy in which both play an equivalent role.

Seclusion could be a tactical manoeuvre, but in no way a strategic one on the long run. In this sense, I don't believe in the philosophical viability of an extreme «Indianism» or «Andeanism», although they certainly have their heuristic value and their value for the recuperation of identity. One can compare the problematic with the dilemma faced by classic feminism: either isolate oneself from the androcentric world and create «liberated islands» or enter in a dialogue of unequal participants with the masculine world. When applying to the theme of interculturality, Andean philosophy is facing the following, decisive dilemma: Either isolate itself from the Western world and create a symbolic world totally incomparable (the attitude of «Indigenism» o «Andeanism»), or enter in a dialogue of unequal participants with the Western tradition (the attitude that defends the «Andean philosophy»). Despite the dangers of the second alternative, there are several reasons that come from the inside of the same Andean wisdom that encourage entering this dialogue. Andean thinking by itself is inclusive and searches for complementarity. It is not looking for a decontextualized «universality», but for a philosophical, cultural, and civilizational «pluriversity».¹⁶⁸

Both Western philosophy and Andean philosophy are by nature intercultural, although they might not recognize this. Western philosophy is in no way homogeneous, nor monocultural in its genesis; during the 27 centuries of existence, has it incorporated elements from different cultures as Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Semitic, Arabic, Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, and Hindu. Just alike, Andean philosophy is the result of a philosophic syncretism with elements of the cultures of Wari, Pucara, Aymara, Inka, Tiawanaku, Western cultures etc. But in the case of the Western tradition, the dominant history tends to forget and hide this intrinsic interculturality and to suppress dissident currents and postures (just likes to happen with the ideological «Incaism» in the Andean context).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ It seems to me that the paradigmatic presuppositions of Andean thinking are averse to being culturally and philosophically wrapped in an ethnic and cultural «purism» or in a search for a not-contaminated world. The Indigenism is a recurring current that resists and forms an opposition to a cultural and political project to homogenize cultural, economic, and political suggestions in name of a Western messianism called «cultural colonialism» and «neo-liberal globalization». We're not dealing with a freely assumed position that corresponds to the very profound Andean sentiments of complementarity and inclusiveness.

¹⁶⁹ Apart from the attempts to re-establish a pre-Hispanic «Inca philosophy» (see note 16), there are political and social movements in the Andes that pretend to restore a «pure» pre-columbine order with a strong reference to the Inca Empire of the *Tawantinsuyo*, ignoring the actual history of a living and through the ages developed

3. Andean criticism of Western androcentrism

The rise of indigenous theologies (and to a minor extent of indigenous philosophies) in the last years have made manifest the strong and large inculturation of the official Christian theologies of the different churches in a Western cultural context. Or expressed in a more concrete and punctual way: the strong occidental and Hellenistic colour of its language and its conceptualizations, both in the Catholic Church as in the protestant ones. Since the nineties of the last century, when Liberation Theology has supposed to be domesticated, the guardians of Vatican's orthodoxy are principally drawing a bead on two theologies: the theology of India and the Indian theology.¹⁷⁰ In both cases we are dealing with a strong questioning of the Western conceptual paradigm as the philosophical frame for the theological expression of certain dogmas, like for instance the position of Jesus Christ or the image of God.

The last letter of the of the Vatican's *Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith* (the successor of the Holy Inquisition) about the role of man and wife demonstrate even more the fear of the theology of the Catholic hierarchy for those postures that radically deconstruct the androcentric fundamentals of Western culture, theology and philosophy, such as feminism or indigenous and non-Western philosophical paradigms.¹⁷¹

At this moment I see two great challenges for contextual theologies in the whole world, whether from a Catholic or a Protestant nature: on the one hand, the challenge of a radical de-Hellenization of the conceptual and philosophical – often unconscious and symbiotic - framework, and on the other hand, a deconstruction of androcentrism current in the greater part of classic Western theologies. These challenges require articulated double hermeneutics, an intercultural or «diatopic» hermeneutics, and hermeneutics of gender, which is more than a feminist hermeneutics.¹⁷²

interculturality, even during the period of the *Tawantinsuyo*. In Peru, recently surged the movement of «Ethnocacerism» (referring to the former president Cáceres), similar to «Katarism» and «Neo-Katarism» in Bolivia.

¹⁷⁰ With respect to the Indian theology (especially the «Dalit theology»), see Massey, James (1989). «Ingredients for a Dalit theology». In: M. E. Prabhakar (ed.). *Towards a Dalit Theology*. Delhi. 57-63; Shelke, Christopher (1994). «Dalit theology: Emergence and emergency». In: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 50-4. 257-273; Massey, James (2000). «Movements of liberation: Theological roots and visions of Dalit theology». In: *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* 12. 52-68. With respect to the «Indian theology» of Latin America, see: López Hernández, Eleazar (1991). «Teología india hoy [Indian theology today]». In: *Christus* 56-648. 2-26; idem (1993). «Indigenous contributions to the churches on the occasion of the fifth century». In: *International Review of Mission* 82-325. 51-56; idem (2000). *Teología India: Antología* [Indian Theology: anthology]. Cochabamba: Verbo Divino; Steffens, Elisabeth (2001). «Die Theologien der indianischen Völker Abia Yalas aus der Sicht ihrer Subjekte [The theologies of the Indian peoples of Abya Yala from the point of view of their subjects]». In: *Jahrbuch für Kontextuelle Theologien 2001*. Frankfurt a.M.: IKO. 193-220.

¹⁷¹ In his speech to the Academic community of the University of Regensburg (southern Germany), on September 12 2006, the actual Pope Benedict XVI (and former head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Joseph Ratzinger), affirmed that Greek *logos* is a necessary prerequisite of Christian theologizing (see: www.protestantedigital.com/new/pdf/Papa_Islam.pdf).

¹⁷² In the same manner as Intercultural Philosophy is not a sectorial philosophy, but a habit or a transversal perspective that has repercussions for all themes and approaches of the philosophical work, I consider a hermeneutics of gender not as a «philosophy of gender» nor as a «feminist philosophy», but as a «philosophy

As I have just made explicit, to me it seems that philosophical alterity, in this case the Andean philosophy, can contribute enormously to formulate these challenges and to design some routes for deconstruction and reconstruction, as well as for the philosophical work as for theology. In the following I would like to offer some input for a «diatopic» hermeneutics of gender¹⁷³ in the sense of an Andean criticism of the current androcentrism of the occidental tradition.

Andean philosophy departs – just as the Vedic tradition of India¹⁷⁴ – from the concept of the «non-dualism» of reality which is not the same as a metaphysical monism. Reality – the whole of what exists and is imagined – is not conceived as divided in incomparable or even contradictory aspects and spheres: the divine and the humane, the true and false, the heavenly and the earthly, the religious and the profane, the masculine and the feminine, the living and the inert, the eternal and the temporal.

In contrast, the dominant Western philosophy – since Platonic philosophy until the phenomenology and the analytical philosophy of the 20th century – is strongly marked by this type of (theological, metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, logical) dualism which is expressed in a more explicit way and with major impact in the principle of exclusive logics (non-contradiction, identity, exclusion of the third (possibility)): Either the one or the other, but there is no third possibility (*tertium non datur*). Either God or man; either spirit or matter; either culture or nature; either male or female.¹⁷⁵

Andean philosophy thinks in polar dualities and not in dualisms, and the founding principles are the principle of relationality, of complementarity, of correspondence and of reciprocity.¹⁷⁶ Divisions between subject and object, between the religious and the profane, between the divine and the humane, between the living and the inert, these typical Hellenistic (and to a minor extent also Semitic) *diástasis* are not valid within the Andean cosmivision. It seems to me that the urge to separate and purify analytically the different aspects of reality is a typical male characteristic. I (as a man) practise it as well in this very work. And it is not bad in itself, but when this androcentric model of conceiving and managing the world is

sensible to a gender approach». Also, the latter is not sectorial, but assumes a transversal perspective. In synthesis: Intercultural Philosophy has to be sensible to a gender approach (deconstruction of androcentrism), and a philosophy sensible to a gender approach has to assume an intercultural perspective (deconstruction of ethno-centrism). One can speak of a second and third «epistemological revolution» (with its respective ruptures).

¹⁷³ «Diatopic hermeneutics» practices an intercultural dialogue between two paradigms or philosophical *topoi*, in this case between the *topos* of the dominant Western philosophy and the *topos* of the Andean philosophy. A diatopic hermeneutics of gender brings about this dialogue under the perspective of asymmetries or symmetries between the masculine and the feminine (in the sense of «gender»), existing in both traditions.

¹⁷⁴See: Panikkar, Raimon (1997). *La experiencia filosófica de la India* [Philosophical experience of India]. Madrid: Trotta.

¹⁷⁵ In spite of the fact that the principle of non-contradiction (if A is true, -A cannot be true at the same time) which is logically equivalent to the principle of identity (A is A; A is not -A) and of the excluded third (either A or -A is true) affirms a formal relation between propositions, in the Western tradition it is at the same time applied on a material and ontological (theological, cosmologic, psychological) level.

¹⁷⁶ For more extensive explications, see: Estermann, Josef (2006). *Filosofía Andina: Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo* [Indigenous wisdom for a new world]. La Paz: ISEAT. 123-148. The principle of relationality is fundamental because the principles of complementarity, correspondence, and reciprocity, are derived from it.

converted in the only possible approach, in the universally valid paradigm, in the unique true road to salvation, it makes one neurotic and devastating.

The famous roman *adagio* «*divide et impera*» (divide and govern) is maybe the most clear and politically most consequent expression of the androcentric urge to conceive (the same words of «conceive» and «conception» already reveal a conquering masculinity)¹⁷⁷ reality, the world and history, and even the divine, and convert them in «concept». The masculine analytical spirit (*análisis* literally means «to unmake», «to cut in pieces») is anatomical (*tomein*: «to cut»), dissectional, mechanical, instrumental, destructive. In order to analyse life (a plant, an animal, a human being), we have to cut it in pieces – dissect it – and separate the parts that are organically inseparable, with the consequence of destroying the same life. Every synthesis based on the result of a real analysis will prove to be artificial and robotic.¹⁷⁸

Andean philosophy tries to represent the essential complementarity of all that exists in the form of wholeness (holism). The complements can only be analytically separated of the whole at the cost of their wholeness; this holistic principle, in the last resort, coincides with the principle of life. There is no life in an isolated form, but only in and by a network of complementary relations. One might characterize Andean thinking as «gynosophic»¹⁷⁹, under the condition that we identify the ability to synthesize, to establish relations and bindings, to mediate and to unite as something typical feminine. I am not referring to «Pachamamism»¹⁸⁰ or to a form of Andean matriarchy, but to the same founding structure of Andean thinking, probably unnoticed by the same protagonists (Andean people). The transversal and paradigmatic principles of relationality, complementarity, correspondence, reciprocity, wholeness and cyclicity seem to adapt better to a feminine than a masculine way of living and way of «being in the world» (Kusch)¹⁸¹.

Andean philosophy postulates that sexual complementarity not only is a fundamental feature of the human species, but that it extends far beyond humanity, and that it even goes further than animal and plant life, onto the entire cosmos and until the divine. On another occasion, I have called this transcendental feature of the Andean cosmovision «cosmic

¹⁷⁷ Although the semiotic group of the Latin root *concipio* (en. *conceive*, sp. *concebir*; fr. *concevoir*; it. *concepire*; por. *conceber*; ger. *konzipieren*) has been adapted (at least in English and Spanish) to the feminine field of sexuality and of theology (the Immaculate Conception), it has conserved a significantly active, possessive, aggressive, that means: typically masculine meaning and use (in the sense of «grasp», «incorporate entirely»).

¹⁷⁸ The modern (and post-modern) tendency to replace organic processes and organisms by mechanic processes and robots reveal the male urge to substitute his deficiency to create life by the «conceptual creation» of an artificial world and in this way to dominate it as he likes.

¹⁷⁹ This neologism (*gyné* and *sophía*) tries to avoid centrism («gynocentrism») and logicism («gynologism») and pretends to emphasize the prevalence of a «feminine» rationality (and wisdom).

¹⁸⁰ The so-called «Pachamamism» (of *pachamama*: «Mother Earth») exalts the feminine element (of fertility and regeneration) at the cost of its masculine complement (of fertilization and cultivation), which results in something that is incompatible with the principle of sexual complementarity that is so important in the Andes.

¹⁸¹ As is known, Roberto Kusch makes a distinction (which is possible only in Spanish) between the modes of «ser» (to be, as a personal characteristic that doesn't change [«I am tall»]) and of «estar» (to be, as a state that can change in time [«I am in the house»]) and identifies the last one with the cosmovision of the original peoples of *Abya Yala* («Profound America»). See: Kusch, Rodolfo (1970). *El pensamiento indígena y popular en América Latina* [Andean and popular thinking in Latin America]. Buenos Aires: Hachette; Idem (1962). *América Profunda* [Profound America]. Buenos Aires: Hachette.

sexuity»¹⁸² that exceeds both biological sexuality (sex) and social gender. Cosmic sexuity implies that all phenomena obey the principle of complementarity between the feminine and the masculine that certainly has to do with sexuality and the question of gender, but that transcends these aspects in a lot of ways. The «sexuated» complementarity of the sun and the moon, for instance, retakes aspects of the human experience and of the construction of gender (day and night; bright light and dimmed light), but it transcends them at the same time. Life reproduces itself only because of this «sexuated» complementarity and it would destroy itself if one of the complements would disappear.

For theology, «Andean gynosophism» poses a series of very profound questions, both on the level of «theology» in a strict sense (concept and image of the divine) as well as on the level of the Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, and ethics. I won't discuss the consequences for the ecclesiastic institutionality, the offices and charismas, the pastoral care, and the theological education. I will not consider these aspects at length on this occasion, because there are others that can do this with more competence, and in addition it is a vast area still uncultivated.

For the dominant Western philosophy and its androcentrism, the Andean paradigm is a severe questioning and an invitation to repose and deconstruct its own ideological fundamentals. I will only mention some areas that according to me in a more than evident way have to do with androcentric rationality, not to mention the fact that (masculine) men stay to be the protagonists of this philosophy and that one normally forgets the few female philosophers in the history of Western philosophy.¹⁸³

- In the first place, starting from a hermeneutics of gender and from a diatopic hermeneutics (in dialogue with Andean «gynosophism»), one will have to deconstruct the multiple dualisms of Western philosophy that not only have contributed to the plundering of the environment, to the mechanization and instrumentalization of life, to the subjection and extinction of the other (*alius et alia*), to the quantification and rationalization of the unquantifiable and the irrational, to the monetarization of values, but also to a strongly dualistic Christian theology, in spite of the *theologumena* of the incarnation and creation which are clearly non-dualistic.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Estermann, Josef (2006). *Filosofía Andina: Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo* [Andean Philosophy: Indigenous wisdom for a new world]. La Paz: ISEAT. 223ss. We are facing the terminological problem: In the West, the concept of «sexuality» is limited to living beings, and, in a strict sense, to human being. Therefore, it has a biological (and anthropological) acceptance in the sense of vital reproduction. For Andean philosophy «sexuality» has a much wider significance (as in tantric and Taoist traditions of the Orient); it is a cosmic and transcendent feature in a biological ambiance. When speaking of «sexuity», I pretend to underline this cosmic and pachasophic feature of the polar condition of the elements of the three *pacha*, and not the reproductive, erotic, and genital dimensions in a stricter sense.

¹⁸³ Feminist (Western) philosophy is step by step correcting the idea that women don't play a role of importance in the development of Western philosophy. Nevertheless, this rereading of the official histories of the West still does not include the diatopic perspective of gender and, therefore, still doesn't realize a deconstruction of current androcentrism.

¹⁸⁴ In a lot of theologies, there was not imposed the Semitic (Judaic-Christian) paradigm of the «communion» between the divine and the humane (as is expressed in the «creation» and «incarnation»), but the Hellenic (Platonic) paradigm of a radical and absolute *dieresis* (gap) between the super-mundane and the mundane. Up to the theologies of the twentieth century, these dualisms determine the political, ecclesiastical, soteriological,

- In the second place, one will have to submit oneself to an intercultural and gender criticism of the predominant Western rationality that certainly has highly contributed to scientific and technological progress, but at the cost of wholeness and organicity of life in its various manifestations. One will have to question seriously the intercultural validity of the principle of the «exclusion of the third» (*principium tertii non datur*), as an axiom that contributed very much to the exclusion of the other and that reflects a combating and imperialistic rationality. One has to denounce Western analytical rationality as monocultural and ethnocentric and one has to complement it with a synthetic and inclusive rationality of non-Western traditions.
- In the third place, also the acceptance in the West of the androcentric concept of linearity, progressivity, and irreversibility of time, needs to be questioned and be complemented with a more «gynosophical» approach of periodicity, cyclicity and wave characteristic¹⁸⁵ of time. The fragmentation of time dominant in Western culture as well as its monetarization (*time is money*) not only have contributed to the dominant division of work between women and men, the separation of public and private spheres, but also to the forgetting of the quality of time and the historic density of some decisive moments (*kairoi*). Meanwhile that the West favours a «corpuscular» (or *quantum*) and atomic posture of time and history that obey masculine attitudes, the Andes emphasizes much more a «wave» and molecular vision of time and history, which much more obey feminine attitudes.
- In the fourth place, one will have to deconstruct ethical presumptions of dominant Western philosophy as strongly andro- and anthropocentric. The very concept of ethical «virtues» refers etymologically and genetically to the male virility (*vir* is the man), with the consequence that the «*muliertues*» (from *mulier* [woman], in order not use the contradictory term «female virtues») like solidarity, compassion, sensibility, care and practical corresponsibility haven't had considerable impact on Western ethics.

Since Aristotle until Heidegger, the dominant ethics of the West have been ethics of the male soldier [*vir*] (strength, prudence, bravery, perseverance) and of the anthropologic conquering subject (*conquiro ergo sum*), that have as objective to subject the «other» (women, nature, indigenous peoples, homosexuals etc.) to their ethical criterion of male and autocratic patriarchal responsibility. An ethical justification of the so-called «preventive war» in Iraq is only possible because of androcentric presumptions. Andean philosophy offers a cosmocentric ethics that includes a lot of elements of feminine spirituality, as care for the cosmic order (*arariva*)¹⁸⁶, the joint responsibility

and ethical debates, questioned with rising zest by contextual theologies of non-Western regions in the last fifty years.

¹⁸⁵ There are works that intent to reflect on the complementarity of Western and Andean paradigms by means of the physical principle of complementarity (Heisenberg), identifying the West with the quantic theory of light being composed of particles (photons) and the Andean with the wave theory of light. See: Medina, Javier (2000). *Diálogo de sordos: Occidente e Indianidad. Una aproximación conceptual a la educación intercultural y bilingüe en Bolivia* [Dialogue of the deaf: the West and Indianity. A conceptual approximation of intercultural and bilingual education in Bolivia]. La Paz: CEBIAE. Specially 183-206.

¹⁸⁶ For Andean philosophy, the human being is the «caretaker» (*arariwa*) of nature, and not its exploiter or even its enemy. The central pachasophic function of the human being consists in maintaining the cosmic order and safeguarding the equilibrium between all spheres and complements (by means of the ritual).

(corresponsibility), preservation of life, compassion, and reciprocity as base for solidarity.

4. Andean criticism of Western ethnocentrism

The second moment of self-revelation of the philosophical condition of the West is the fact that the aspect of cultural- and ethnocentrism are still current, even in the last post-modern expressions of the West. The philosophical tradition of the Occident has demonstrated an admirable capacity of criticism and auto-criticism, by means of distinct paradigmatic «shifts» that have occurred in the course of its evolution.¹⁸⁷ Either the shift of a naïve position to an epistemological critical attitude in the beginning of the modern age (the so-called «Copernican shift»), or the «becoming aware of» the material base (economic, social, political) of certain philosophical ideas by the Marxist tradition, or the questioning of Reason as unquestionable base of reflection by distinct irrational postures of the 19th century (existentialism, Nietzsche, Freud, Romanticism), or the post-modern deconstruction of the «great stories» (*meta-récits*) of modern philosophy: this effort is impressive because of an each time more critical and sincere attitude by Western philosophy with respect to its own philosophic condition.

However, the West has shown to be practically immune and resistant to two types of systematic criticisms with a paradigmatic reach: The intercultural criticism of monoculturality¹⁸⁸ or ethnocentrism on one side, and the gender criticism of the androcentrism of the dominant Occidental philosophical tradition on the other side. Both vectors aim at a radical deconstruction of this tradition, with the consequence that this not only means awareness of its culturally contextual character, but also of its strongly androcentric and patriarchal character.

In both cases, dominant occidental philosophy (the «Academy») would have to abandon its universal and androgen claim (neutrality with respect to gender): It would convert itself – and in fact it does, but only without being aware of it – in a contextual philosophy (just like all philosophies) with particular cultural and gender presumptions. «Universality» in the sense of a «supra-culturality» and of a «meta-sexuity» (neutrality of gender) would not be a characteristic of a sole philosophical tradition, but the synthetic result of an intercultural dialogue – or better said: «polylogue» – in which the occidental tradition would be a strong and powerful partner in the dialogue, but not the only one nor the one with universal validity.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ To mention only the most important «shifts»: the «anthropological shift» of the Renaissance, the «Copernican shift» of Kant, the «voluntarist shift» of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, the «economical shift» of Marx, the «psychoanalytical shift» of Freud and Lacan, the «linguistic shift» of structuralism and the «deconstructivist shift» of Post-Modernism.

¹⁸⁸ The systematic «suppression» by the (mono-)culturality of Western philosophy is being «rationalized» (to use psychoanalytic terminology) in terms of «universality», «supra-culturality» and even «absoluteness» of this philosophical tradition, equating «Occidental philosophy» with «PHILOSOPHY» as such and with capitals.

¹⁸⁹ Intercultural philosophy does not deny the universal pretension of philosophy, but only interprets «universality» as the «heuristic ideal» of a large process of intercultural dialogue between different contextual traditions, and not as an *a priori* of a certain tradition: a *petitio principii* as a violent act of self-definition.

For the defenders of the *a priori* universality and supra-culturality of the philosophy *made in the West*, this step from monologue to polylogue¹⁹⁰, considered by the West as a retreat and tremendous humiliation, has a high cost (there are even feminine defenders that sometimes are more conservative than their masculine colleagues). Today, this supposed «universality» traduces itself in terms of globalizing processes, through the mediation of the neo-liberal economy, of cultural and mediatic (of the mass media) imperialism. The pandemic blindness of the Academy towards «philosophical alterity» – as demonstrates the categorical refusal of the Andean philosophy – does not permit that the Western philosophical tradition reveals itself (in the sense of a *Selbstaufklärung*) as contextual, provincial, patriarchal, monocultural y ethnocentric. There doesn't exist any intercultural philosophical reason to call, on one hand, Andean thinking «ethno-philosophy», but, on the other hand, refuse to apply this term to the Hellenic-Roman cosmovision of the West. Personally, I do not denominate neither the one nor the other with this label but sustain that both are (culturally) contextual philosophies.

The Andean alterity reveals the «ethnocentric» face of Western philosophy¹⁹¹ in a diatopic hermeneutics, through an open and symmetric intercultural dialogue. In other words: it puts it in its (contextual) place, as «Western» philosophy (and not as philosophy as such). It is difficult and may be unnecessary to separate Andean criticism of Western androcentrism and ethnocentrism, but methodologically one deals with two distinct, however complementary, themes. Here I would like to signal some complementary themes to those presented in the anterior chapter:

- An intercultural criticism of the dominant Western philosophical tradition by the Andean philosophy (as philosophical alterity) in the first place would reveal the clandestine heterodox tradition of the very same Western philosophy just as I have pointed out before. Even in this tradition, there are *logoi spermatikoi* of concepts that are of major importance in Andean philosophy: Haeckel's hylozoism or panpsychism, Pythagoras» cosmic symbolism, Nagel's organicism, van Helmond's homeopathic principles, Krause's and Bulgakow's panentheism, Leibniz» cosmic relationality, Nicolas of Cues» *coincidentia oppositorum* or John Scot Erigena's *apokatastasis*, are only some examples of the heterodox riches of the West.¹⁹²
- In the second place, Andean philosophy questions the universality of the logo-centric rationality of Western philosophy that is ruled by the principles of the binary and formal logics of non-contradiction, of identity and of the exclusion of the third. This excluding rationality contrasts with the inclusive rationality of the Andes (but also with oriental Asian and other non-Western philosophies) that interpret opposites in the sense of

Instead of arriving at a universal «supra-cultural» philosophy, this intercultural dialogue aims at a «multiversal» philosophy (instead of a *universal* one).

¹⁹⁰ It is certain that the concepts of «monologue», «dialogue» and «polylogue» still have a strong reference to the logo-centric paradigm of the West, it might be better to speak of multi-lateral «interchange».

¹⁹¹ It is not just casual that I use terms that come from the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas: the alterity and its recognition as such make it possible to «reveal» my own face, by the «glory» of the other, and not by the neurotic sameness of the self-definition of Western philosophy as «Philosophy» just like that.

¹⁹² What is lacking is writing the «heretic history» of Western philosophy. That what in the Middle Ages effectively was purified as «heretic» (remember the condemnations of 1277 by the bishop of Paris), in the Modern Age simply was left in oblivion and insignificance.

complementary polarities and not as mutually exclusive contradictory positions. The universalization of these principles of formal Western logics leads to a logicism and to a suppression of other forms of expression such as emotions, intuition, the symbol and the analogy (that – as said earlier - are expressions more feminine than the masculine «sword of reason»).

- In the third place, Andean philosophy questions the «classificatory mania» of the West, that is to say the urge to put all phenomena and realities in conceptual drawers. The very same «concept» is a powerful invention of (platonian) Socrates in order to obtain intellectual dominance of the chaotic diversity of what is presented to us. The «classificatory mania» necessarily reduces the riches of life to a number of concepts and leads to a forced domestication or even annihilation of what cannot be classified with preconceived parameters.¹⁹³ This is even the case in a lot of important themes of Andean philosophy that don't fit in the conceptual mould of the West, and therefore lack the self-defined philosophical quality.
- In the fourth place, Andean philosophy questions the Western dichotomies between the humane and the extra-humane world, between the life and the inert reality, between the sacred and the profane, and even between the divine and the mundane. Such a dichotomization of reality leads to a dualistic separation and to a system of the double truth and of an ethics of sectorial validity. It is certain that the demythologization (Bultmann's *Entmythologisierung*) of the world by Western philosophy and theology has contributed greatly to scientific and technological progress, but this at its turn has changed itself into its own elation and almost into a new god. Andean philosophy starts from the conviction that each dichotomy and separation of spaces, ambiances and spheres leads to a grave deterioration of cosmic integrality. The separation of nature (as material and mechanical *res extensa*) of the humane world (as spiritual and spontaneous *res cogitans*) implies – as we can observe nowadays – a suicidal plundering of nature. And the radical dichotomy between the divine and the mundane implies a divinization of the mundane in the sense of an idolization of particular aspects as for example progress, pleasure, or money.
- In the fifth place, Andean philosophy criticises the reductionist epistemology of the West that pretends to find the truth only through the human sources of reason and sensation. This reductionism leads to a scientific concept of the truth and excludes alternative sources of knowledge which are faith, intuition, sentiments, the ritual, celebration, and artistic representation. Andean philosophy, on the other hand, insists in an integral epistemology that transcends the human race as cognitive subject. Knowledge (*episteme*) is a quality of all entities, humane or not humane, animated, or «inert», and that one obtains in a lot of different ways such as the ritual, the celebration, trance, symbolic representation, and mystic union. These criteria question the one-dimensionality of Western wisdom, as is expressed for instance in techno-morph medicine, in the mono-

¹⁹³ The most eloquent and radical expression of this pan-logic attitude is the Hegel's conviction that «all real is intelligible and all the intelligible is real», a logo-centric totality that doesn't leave space for non-rational modes to approach reality, what reveals itself in the political and military field as violent and conquering.

causal explication of events, in the rationality and linguistic nature (according to linguistic parameters) of the sub-conscious or in the irreversible progressiveness of time.

- In the sixth place, Andean philosophy questions the institutionality and academicism of Western philosophy which has become an intellectual exercise of texts about texts (a «ruminative» philosophy), of intertextual hermeneutics that is no longer in touch with the ground of reality. The academic claim of the West, that one cannot express oneself about what happens and what is hidden without referring to the complete history of the ideas, that is to say: inflating the critical apparatus in such a way that it overwhelms the originality, this feature can absolutely not be universalized. Philosophical work is not ruled by criteria of intertextual textuality (written sources) and referentiality (reference to other authors), as examples of the very same Western tradition demonstrate as well (Socrates for instance). Andean philosophy is above all a living, existential philosophy at first hand, without recurring to texts and authors, in direct contact with the multi-facetted reality lived and thought by women and man of the Andes. This criticism casts doubt on the Western academic standards imposed on institutes of higher learning in the whole world.
- And in the seventh place, Andean philosophy reveals the intercultural and multi-ethnic character of the Western philosophical tradition. That what seems to be a monolithic and homogeneous block – «the» Western Philosophy with capitals – in reality is the result of a historical struggle between currents with culturally distinct features (Semitic, Arabic, Egyptian, Celtic, Germanic etc.), a history of forgetting (but not in a Heideggerian sense) and of suppression, a history of the victors with their victorious ideas. Because of its marginal and marginalized condition, Andean philosophy assumes the option of the niches of Reason, of the ideas considered «unthinkable» and of the inclusion of what doesn't seem to have academic «dignity».

5. As a way of conclusion

The «little fellows» of whom Ginés de Sepúlveda spoke and which, according to him, have «barbaric institutions and habits», will maybe find themselves in the same situation as the Germanics during the Roman Empire who later would convert themselves in the «philosophical people» by excellence. In which consists true «barbarism» today, when considering the actual wars that take place in Afghanistan or Iraq, in the name of Western civilization?

It is necessary that Western philosophy takes seriously the question of philosophical alterity and that it lets inspire itself by the other, in the sense of an inter-cultural deconstruction of its own historical and rational riches, which at the same time is a tremendous poverty with respect to the multi-cultural and symphonic riches of the wisdom of the peoples. This paradigmatic shift, this time incited from the outside, not only would change philosophical and theological work in a lot of parts of the world, but would change the very face of the earth that is in agony of death under the unique discourse of instrumental rationality of the West. Andean philosophy is a voice in this symphonic orchestra, nothing more and nothing less.

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8. Religion does not redeem: Theological reflections about the role of «Religion» today

The topic of «religion» has risen, in the last decades a growing interest on part of the social sciences, postmodern philosophy, cultural studies and even development sciences, but not on part of theology. The factual plurality of the religious identities («religions») has constituted much time- above all for representatives of the so called «monotheistic religions»- a thorny problem or even an obstacle of such magnitude that many theologians have avoided touching it and prefer to stay «silent scholars». And the few people who dare to confront the theme, run the risk of being reprimanded, notified, and silenced, above all in a religious institution with a strong vigilance of the «doctrine» (Catholic Church, Islam, new religious movements).

In a context dominated by a postmodern and mercantile spirit (Europe and North America), the loss of the institutionalized religiousness (ecclesiastical; doctrine; normative ethics and cultural) and the «orthodox» doctrine contrast with a proliferation of offers para and pseudo religions, a post secular civil religiosity, an exaltation of the worship to the body (wellness, cosmetic, body work), on one side, and the growth of «fundamentalist» movements in practically all of the congregations and religious identities, on the other. On the peripheral of the neoliberal capitalist empire, in the global south the always weak religious institutionality declines even more, not in the first place due to secularization and a shy «irreligiosity», but rather the spectacular expansion of the «neo Pentecostal» churches of the electronic style, and the visualisation of clandestine forms of religion of the original peoples.

1. The Silence of Theology

The relationship between «religion» and theology has been, despite an apparent marriage of convergence, always charged with mutual tension, suspicion and a certain hostility. Until the Constantine tour (315), faith in Jesus Christ was not discussed as a new «religion» or with much caution. It appears that the same concept «religion» has a roman origin and is not overcome in the Semitic tradition (Hebrew), nor in the Greek wisdom (Hellenic). For the first Christian theologians, «religion» was practically identical with the official worship of the Roman Empire, given that the new «Jewish Sect» was not only «irreligious», but also their followers were «atheist».

Many of the so called «founders of religion» (Jesus; Siddhartha Gautama; Mohammed) have been very critical and even hostile with the religion or religions of their time and they did not in any way constitute or «found» a new religion. However, what were movements of profound reform, within a few centuries had already converted in established institutions and recognized religions. In the case of Christianity, the preaching and practice of the reign of God very rapidly was converted into Church, and under the predominance of the Empire in an «official religion».

The theology is understood from a beginning as intellectual «defence» of the new faith and not as a reflection of the practices, beliefs, and «religious» manifestations. To present,

Catholic and Protestant theology is understood more as an explication of a «doctrine» and not as a reflection of a popular syncretic «practice». The popular religiosity has not been, except a few counted incidences, object of a theological reflection and was, as the etymology reveals, associated with paganism and magical practices not worthy of theological efforts. In Christianity- especially in Catholicism- the question of salvation and redemption is associated very early to the church as a community of believers, and afterwards to the church as an institution (*ex ecclesiam nulla salus*).

In dialectical theology, insuperable antagonism between faith and religion is planted, in such a way that «religion» is considered antipodal of the direct and personal relationship with the divine mystery («faith»), and, as such, idolatry and an ideological obstacle for faith in Jesus Christ. In association with early Christianity, this is not interpreted as «religion», but rather as a new way of relating with the divine. In Catholic theology, the «religion» is not seen as locus theologicus, not because it was not reality, rather because it was seen as a threat in the form of religious pluralism. The simple fact that other religions outside of Christianity (or precisely; Catholicism) existed constituted a danger for a theology that defines salvation and redemption in terms of «membership» and «belonging». It is not the «religion» as such that constitutes a problem, but rather the «religions» and their pretension of universal validity.

The silence of the theology in respect to the religious fact is only broken in the contemporary era due to the challenge of religious pluralism. From the II Vatican Council, emerges, in the Catholic environment, a «theology of the religions» or a «theology of theological pluralism» that is not the same as a «theology of religion» or a «theology of religious facts». The famous dispute between Paul and Peter in the Jerusalem Council (ca. 70 EC) has been one of the first (and perhaps last) debates about the role of «religion» (customs; cultural norms; ritual practices) for the redemption, that is to say: about the role of «religion» in the salvific history of the human being. Despite the Pauline «liberalization» or a critical deconstruction of the religious factor, new «religious» forms as prerequisites for what was considered redemption and salvation were quickly installed with greater coercive strength, between them «Hellenistic circumcision» and the «Roman legal stronghold».

2. Challenges for an Intercultural Theology of the Religious Fact

The «religion» concept that Christian theology embodies- as much Catholic as Evangelical- in a large part of the world, has a Western origin and is a reflection of the philosophy of basically Hegelian religion, on one side, and the Eurocentrism (or Western Centrism) of the Classical Sciences of Religion of the XIX and XX centuries, on the other side. In one way, an overly schematic and monocultural concept of «religion» inherited the illustrious debate about the autonomy of the human person and the alienating and ideological character of that which is religious. In another way, a very institutional and doctrinal (orthodox) concept of what is and should be a certain «religion» (above all in the sense of «church») is maintained.

An intercultural deconstruction of the «religion» propels, because the classic parameters of the Sciences of Religion and the mental schemes and prejudices still present in the «official» and academic theology, do not reflect the diversity and contemporary complexity of the religious field and of its manifestations.

- In first place, the dominant concept of «religion» has as a principal reference the existence or relevance of certain «universal religions» established and institutionalized. In the Sciences of Religion, the «high religions» (*Hochreligionen*) were discussed until recently, a judgement of unacceptable value that reflects a Eurocentric point of view. This posture is articulated often with the supposition that monotheism (Christian) was the evolutionary point more advanced of that which is religious, such as the so called «polytheist», «animist» and «natural» religions were relegated a second or third place.
- In second place, it normally referred to the religions as a total of doctrinal, ritual, and institutional elements, well identified and separable from the same elements of other religious traditions. In the last years, we are witnessing a new «syncretisation» in the religious field, together with a «fundamentalisation» of beliefs and religious practices. Both tendencies- although they appear contradictory- are the two faces of the same coin and reflect the advanced process of cultural and economic «globalization».
- In third place, the contemporary religious field is characterized by a diversification of the experiences and manifestations, in the sense of a «patched religion» in which very distinct elements of religious traditions are unified. This religious «eclecticism» carries with it a certain «religious light» that prescind a defined doctrine, established institutions, determined norms and visible representatives.
- In fourth place, there is a re surging of ancestral religions made invisible for much time, from a supposed «paganism» (or «neo paganism») inside and at the margin of classic religions, but also of religious Pentecostal and charismatic dissidence, on one side, and conservative and traditionalists, on the other. Innumerable forms of «double loyalty» or «birreligiosity» (sinoichism), of religious hybridity, of syncretism and eclecticism, of civil religiosity and esoterisms, of obscurantism and occultisms exist.

3. Religion, Religiosity, Spirituality, Cosmovision, etc.

Speaking bluntly about «religion», it is not anymore permitted to describe nor appreciate all of the religious panorama with that which the theological chores has to do. From the North (Europe and North America), there is a certain tendency that favours the term «spirituality» above «religion». Spirituality is in fashion and embodies well the postmodern spirit of the «New Age», precursor of a cosmic convergence of the distinct spiritualities, cosmovisions and life models, even more that the positions (slightly flexible) of the historic religions. This concept («spirituality») covers phenomena so diverse as forms of Hindu meditation, Psychotherapeutic practices, rebirthing, the worship of the body (wellness) and forms of Sufism or medieval mysticism.

On the other side, a tendency also exists to not talk about «religions» as such, rather «religiosities», that is to say: the cultural and collective ways of perceiving, representation and living the relationship with the sacred, if it does not imply the complete adhesion to an established religion. Given the fact that it tends to call ancestral religions «religiosities», one has to question this strategy as an intent (unconscious) of differentiating and separating once again (as in the classic period of Sciences of Religion) two classes of religious expression: «religions» and «religiosities».

The same occurs with the inflated use of the term «cosmovision» that is used for whatever union of beliefs, life model, rituals, and «universal» religions. Although it is appropriate for the indigenous original peoples, it reflects a Western predilection for the «view» and «theory» (*theorein*: «to see»). As a result, there are intents to reinterpret «cosmovision» to terms of «cosmo-spirituality», «cosmo-sentiments» or «cosmo-wisdom». However, it is still being used in comparison to what is considered «philosophy», «faith», «religion» and «science», with the effect of a new axiological hierarchy in disfavour of the first.

Finally, the influx of and abundant literature about the phenomenon of «civil religion» that opens apparently a panorama much wider for the religious field, including even the ideologies unique of «development» and «progress» as religious manifestations (as occurs with the word «developmentalism», the exaltation of progress, of economic growth, etc.). Capitalism and its hedonistic form of consumerism have been converted into very powerful and globalized «civil religions».

It is impossible to propose a definition more or less certain of the mentioned terms, and even less the central term of «religion». Recently in and through intercultural dialogue, it is possible to arrive to a few provisional working definitions. However, it means leaving behind monocultural and culture centric definitions (today the most are still in majority Euro-centric).

«Religion» implies just as much established religions on a planetary level as local religions; doctrinal and institutional religions like religions of low doctrinal intensity and have little to no institutionalization; spiritual and spatial practices, indigenous cosmovisions, old and new syncretism, Pentecostal and charismatic proposals, expressions of a civil religion of a people and society.

Finally, one has to take seriously the inherent ambiguity to religious systems, which can be inclined to promote more life, equality, and well-being, or justly contribute to more death, a lack of inequality and poverty. A true intercultural and inter religious dialogue is always critical and auto critical, and in the same way is the incipient dialogue between «religion» and «theology».

4. An Andean Perspective of the Religious Fact

In the case of the Andes, the people are eminently religious (in Bolivia, 98% declare themselves believers in a Home Survey in 2001). Although many people pertain to a church of a Christian tradition, a large percentage practices traditions and ancestral religious rituals, possibly in a parallel form integrated to the dominant religion. The perspectives and concept of «development», «progress», and «well-being» are loosely connected with ideas and religious forms and perceiving reality.

The Andean religiousness is inclusive and is founded on the principal of relationships as a primary parameter of acting, perceiving and producing. As such, each theological reflection about the religious field has to start from this fact, that is: it has to consider the religiosity as a transversal axis.

In the Andean case, the term «religion» is associated with the institutional religious system of the Catholic Church and the Evangelical churches, and not as much with the indigenous ancestral «religiosity» and its «spiritualities». In this context, attention is called to the «paradigm change», in the Bolivian case, between the Political Constitution of the State (CPE) valid (1967) and the proposal of the new CPE of 2008, as we have indicated earlier. The CPE of 1967 reflects a highly Western and colonial spirituality, referring to the paradigm of «religion» in an institutional and semi-state corporate («Holy Seat») sense. In contrast, the CPE of 2008 intends to be «decolonizing» and inclusive, «religion» is understood in terms of «spirituality» and «cosmovision».

«Religious» (or «spiritual») in the Andean context is not limited to a certain «field» or specific institutions or specialists, but rather it is present in all aspects of life, from birth until death, from the planting to the harvest, and of course in all that has to do with «development» and the bettering of life conditions. «Religious» or «spiritual» is for the Andean *jaqi/runa* what water for the fish is: a second skin, the air that is breathed, the collective subconscious treasure. «Religious» normally is not objectified nor is it thematized, but rather it is lived in a ritual and celebratory form.

For the West, «religion» is associated with a system (symbolic) of elements more or less consistent and coherent as they are objects of study and reflection and are visualized in an institutional and doctrinal form. As a conglomerate of all «sacred», it is contra posed to what is considered «profane» or «secular», beginning with the political life, passing through economic activity, and arriving to the judicial and legislative forum. The West has passed the criticism of the illustrious religion, the secularization and positivism, with the effect that the «religious» residues today is encountered only in the churches, while «spirituality» has won followers outside of the churches.

We can, then conclude a not casual synchronicity between the postmodern planting in the West and the ancestral concept (pre-modern) of the indigenous cultures, respect to the theme of «religion». The crisis of «religion» in modernity (or hypermodernity) is a crisis of institutionality and its dogmatic monocultural character. Postmodernity (Western) and indigenous «spirituality» aspire to liberate that which is «religious» of this stronghold that demands the established «religions» and their theologies. Only that the motives differ *toto coelo*, given that Andean «spirituality» is not the result of a disconnected individual rebellion, but rather the expression of a millennial collective wisdom.

5. Towards a Conclusion: Programmatic theses

- a) What is required today in a context such as Latin America, is not so much a «theology of the religions» or a «theology of religious pluralism», but rather a «theology of religion», a «theology of the religious fact» or a «theology of that which is religious». Even though a «theology of the religions» is a part of the fact of constituted and institutionalized «religions», a «theology of religion» reflects the role of «religiosity» (as anthropologic existential) in the salvific plan, it is to say respect to the construction of the reign of God, the integral liberation, the personal illumination, the eschatology, depending on the case.

- b) Religions are, above all, cultural and historical mediations of human ways toward perfection and redemption that are expressed in different utopic images, but do not form a constitutive and indispensable system for said perfection or redemption. Religions do not redeem themselves, and the pertinence to one or another religion does not carry one to what the distinct religious traditions call «nirvana», «classless society», «reign of God», «paradise», «*neti-neti*», etc.
- c) As such, the question of «exclusivity» of a certain religion, of the pretension of having the «absolute truth», of universal value, is, theologically speaking, a question of the mediations, and not the objective itself (the sacred, the divine, the undefined, the mystery). As such exist many cultural, historical, existential and ritual paths to come close to what is embraced and what is not at our disposition, also many «religious» paths exist, that is to say: cultural religious mediation that arrive to the same reality that has many names and that is reflected in different human attitudes.
- d) A liberationist theology of religion (or «theology of the liberation of the religious fact») part of the religious praxis of the peoples and those marginalized, oppressed, discriminated, that many times is a non-orthodox praxis inside the parameters of the religious canon of the dominant religious tradition (see the religious praxis of people who Jesus speaks to) and that is given in all religious traditions, often in syncretic form. The question behind all of this is not the «orthodoxy» of such a religious practice, but rather its «orthopraxis», that is to say: its liberating and inclusive potential that also it is possible to be given in all religious traditions (or «religions»).
- e) A liberationist theology of religion should be necessarily interreligious in its directionality, although it comes from a specific religious tradition. The criticality of said theology consists in the analysis of the dehumanizing and destructive aspects of the same religious tradition and the other traditions, but at the same time in the prophetic announcement of the humanizing and liberating aspects of all liberating traditions. The inherent ambiguity of each religion requires a critical theological reflection, in order to not fall into an idolisation and fetishization of the same «religion», as if it were the infinite source of life itself, and not one of many mediations that are always imperfect.
- f) In an intercultural perspective, a new theology of religion should «deconstruct» the concept of «religion» that the dominant tradition uses, that is, in the majority of the cases, culture centric and imperialistic in front of other forms of «religiosity». While «religion» is defined as a union of phenomena and structures that should have institutionality, sacred texts, holy specialists, an object of veneration and a doctrine, all types of «religiosity»: ancestral, non-theist, spiritual, animist or pantheist do not fit into the canon. As such, one should consider the existing asymmetries in the theological speeches between «religion», on one side, and «cosmovision», «spirituality», «beliefs», «superstition», «magic», etc., on the other side.
- g) The change that is produced in the last years in the religious field on a global and continental level, is not a process of growing «non religiosity», but rather a transformation of the same «religiosity». In this process, it is noted, between many other facets, basically two tendencies: the substitution of a religious «religiosity» (it appears redundant, but it means; «traditional»; «non-theistic»; «doctrinal») to a civil or post-

secular (consumerism, hedonistic, wellness, progress, well-being, etc.) «religiosity» on one side, and on another spiritual and ancestral «religiosity», on another. The «spiritualization» of religion- often under the common denominator of «spirituality»- is given in very diverse ways and even incompatible amongst them. The Gaia thought; ecofeminism; indigenous spiritualities; New Age; postmodern mysticism; syncretic spiritualities etc.

- h) Religions and religious expressions always have a cultural and historic charge that contradicts the values of human dignity, gender fairness, the respect for alterity and nature, and should, at least, submit to the intercultural «deconstruction» of the andro- and anthropocentrism put into force in them. On another side, it urges to empower the «liberating» aspects in the sense of inclusivity and holism, more so that any centrism in the cultural, ethnic, social, and generic sense. A theology of liberationist religion in an intercultural key should be very sensible to these aspects and lead to a critique of the religion that is oriented in the inherent utopic potential to all religions, and not in their dogmatic and institutional structure.

9. Proclaiming and struggling for life in plenitude: *Buen Vivir* (Good Living) as a new paradigm for «mission»?

In Latin America or *Abya Yala* (the indigenous name for the continent)¹⁹⁴, since the 1990s has been emerging a new (and old) concept that intends to offer an alternative to hegemonic Western dominated politics and market economy. According to the geographical and ethnical context, it has a different name, but internationally, it is commonly known as *Buen Vivir* (in the Spanish translation). As this concept is not just a new name for a new approach on global problems and the multiple crises of capitalism and Western civilization, but rather an overwhelming spiritual and even religious category, it has also been discovered (although hesitantly) by scholars of religious studies and theology. In the following essay, I'll try to show to which extent the concept of *Buen Vivir* could be also adopted by missiology and become part of a new paradigm of «mission».

1. *Buen Vivir* – a rich and controversial concept

Before trying to articulate the Andean concept of *Buen Vivir* with (Western) theology and even with missiology, it is necessary to clarify the origin, the context of using, the significance, the different variations of the concept and the problems with the translation into Indo-European languages, especially into English.

Western philosophy has its own conception of «Good Life» which has its roots in Aristotle and his political and ethical theory. The Aristotelian concept of *Eubiós* or *Euzén* («good life»)¹⁹⁵ is embedded in his ethics of middle terms; «good life» or *Euzén* means for the Greek philosopher a life between two extremes, in balance and with moderation, for instance between poverty and abundance, between avarice and spilling, between ascetics and luxury. It is, in principle, an ideal for the particular life of the self-conscious individual, but in Ancient times it has been restricted in fact to the adult male citizen (*polités*) and landowner. Women, children, old people, foreigners, and slaves were not included in Aristotle's ethical ideal of «Good Life». As his ethics always has had a political and social dimension, the concept of *Euzén* includes also a social dimension and could be used as a base for a theory of justice, as the most recent examples of recovering the ancient concept

¹⁹⁴ The expression *Abya Yala* which has its origin in the Kuna ethnic group of Panamá, means literally «earth in full maturity», and has been proposed in the early 1980s by the indigenous Bolivian Aymara leader Takir Mamani as an indigenous reference to the continent called by the conquerors «America». The word «America» is derived, as it is known, by the Italian navigator and cartographer Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512), whose *Lettera* were published in Latin in 1507 by the German Martin Waldseemüller, in which he calls the new continent, in honour of the navigator, «America». Before 1507, the regions just «discovered» were known as the *Indias Occidentales* (West Indies).

¹⁹⁵ There are two Greek notions for «life»: *biós* (βίος) and *zoé* (ζωή), which are almost synonymous terms. While *biós* stresses more the «biological» aspects of life and living beings, *zoé* is referred more to lifetime. As part of the ethical theory in Aristotle, the notion of *zoé* is mostly used (in combination with the prefix *eu* (εὖ): *euzôía* or *euzén*).

by scholars as Martha Nussbaum show.¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, the same concept, often in an Epicurean adaptation, has been introduced also by theoreticians of postmodern lifestyle, meaning a hedonistic life of pleasure and luxury, close to the famous *dolce vita* («sweet life») and the hegemonic market economy and consumerism, as it appears as a metonym in the brand LG («Life is good»).¹⁹⁷

As the translations of *Buen Vivir* and *Euzén* to Indo-European languages often confuse the totally different ideological and philosophical backgrounds, it is very important to establish the necessary distinctions and to show the opposition and even incompatibility between Western «Good Life» and indigenous «Living Well» or «Good Living». The Spanish expression *Buen Vivir* (Good Living) is the translation of *Sumak Kawsay* (Ecuador), *Sumaq Kawsay* (Peru) or *Allin Kawsay* (Bolivia), Quechuan (or Quichuan)¹⁹⁸ words used by large indigenous populations in the Andes, from Columbia to the north of Argentina. Meanwhile, in Aymara speaking contexts¹⁹⁹, mainly in Bolivia, the northern parts of Chile and the extreme southeast of Peru, the Spanish expression is *Vivir Bien* (Living Well), which is a translation of the Aymara words *Suma Qamaña* or *Suma Jakaña*. But the concept is also known outside the Andean context, as by the Guaraní people (*Ñañde Reko; Ivi Maräei; Teko Kavi*), eastern parts of Bolivia, Paraguay, southern parts of Brazil and northern parts of Argentina, in Mapuche people (*Küme Mogen*), southern parts of Chile and western parts of Argentina), and even among Maya people (*Lekil Koxlejal*) in southern Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras.²⁰⁰

The English translations of this indigenous concept as «Good Living» or «Living Well» take the Spanish versions of *Buen Vivir* or *Vivir Bien* as starting point, but we should go back to the original expressions in the different indigenous languages in order to understand what the concept really means. I'll limit myself to the Andean context and the two main Andean indigenous languages Quechua and Aymara. In both expressions (*sumak/q* or *allin kawsay; suma qamaña/jakaña*), the second word is a (substantiated) verb, so the correct translation is not *Vida* («life»), but *Vivir* («living»). In the Quechua version, the first word is understood as an adjective, in the Aymara version as an adverb; that's why one gets the two translations *Buen Vivir* (*buen* as an adjective) or Good Living, on the one hand, and *Vivir Bien* (*bien* as an adverb) or Living Well, on the other hand. In the international context, the Ecuadorian version of *Buen Vivir* («Good Living») has been imposed (probably because of its presence in the 2008 Constitution) as the standard translation, although the Bolivian version of *Vivir*

¹⁹⁶ Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen, *The Quality of life* (Oxford England/New York: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1993); Martha Nussbaum, *Gerechtigkeit oder das gute Leben* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1999).

¹⁹⁷ *Dolce vita* («sweet life») is the title of one of Fellini's movie (1960). The transnational US-American electronic company LG (Life is Good) uses the postmodern philosophy of «good life» as a brand that reflects a certain sentiment of life, opposite to the indigenous conception of «Good Living».

¹⁹⁸ The pan-Andean Quechua-language, called by its speakers *Runa Simi* (Language of Human Beings), has some remarkable regional differences. In Ecuador, the language is called *Quichua* (*Kichwa*), in the other parts *Quechua* or *Runa Simi*. It is spoken by more than 7 million people in Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and the northern parts of Argentina and Chile. Most of them live in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

¹⁹⁹ Aymara (in the language spelt as *Aimara* and known as *Jaya Mara Aru*) is the second native language of the Andes region, spoken mainly in the triangle between Peru, Bolivia, and Chile by some 2.2 million inhabitants.

²⁰⁰ Without entering in linguistic details, most of the mentioned expressions would be not translated literally as «Good Living», but rather as «our way of living», «earth without evil» or «life in balance».

Bien («Living Well») is probably the most accurate translation of the deep indigenous insight of the dynamism of «living».

The adjective or adverb *sumaq/sumak/allin/suma* («good»; «well») has its origin in the culinarian context of eating and drinking, and means literally «tasty», «savoury», «flavoursome». In combination with «living», it could be translated as «tastily/sweetly living», an expression that reminds strongly of the powerful biblical metaphors of the eschatological banquet and the different parables of Jesus referring to eating together and sharing, but also on Plato's *Symposion*. It has not a direct connection to the semantic fields of (economic) richness, wealth, prosperity, and abundance. The correspondent verb *kawsay/qamaña/jakaña* («living») reflects indigenous Andean wisdom and thinking and is not to be understood in the Western tradition of *biós* or *zoé*, as the Greek thinkers and after them the whole Western civilization have conceived «life». *Kawsay* (Quechua) or *qamaña* (Aymara) are so called «transcendental concepts», which means that they are characteristics that belong to all entities and processes in the whole cosmos. Or in other words: all what exists, has life, respectively, is living.²⁰¹

As a synthesis of our linguistic analysis, we can affirm the following characteristics of the concept of *Buen Vivir*:

- It is a dynamic concept (verb) and not a static one (substantive); it has to do with an ongoing process rather than with an estate which would be realized fully one day.
- The concept of «life» includes in an Andean context all existing beings and reaches far beyond the strictly biological dimension. It is, to speak in Western terms, a transcendental concept (*transcedentale*).
- «Good Living» is based on the fundamental rationality of the categories of Andean wisdom and philosophy. The principle of relationality is crucial according to which all is interconnected with all.²⁰²
- Any change in the sense of an «improvement» or «deterioration» of a situation, a living being, a transaction, any action or quality of life, has consequences for the corresponding aspects (complementarity and correspondence) of other beings and «places» (*topoi*).
- «Good living» is neither anthropocentric nor androcentric but includes as a holistic concept all which traditionally has been excluded from human nature: the ancestors, the dead, the future generations, the spiritual world and the divine.
- «Good Living» in the Andes is based on the ideal of cosmic balance and universal harmony («cosmic justice»), expressed at every level and in each aspect of reality.
- «Good Living» in Andean sense does not imply a relation of comparative or superlative («better/best living»), because in that case, the principle of universal applicability

²⁰¹ For more linguistic details, see: Josef Estermann, «'Vivir bien' coma utopía política: La concepción andina del «vivir bien» (*suma qamaña/allin kawsay*) y su aplicación en el socialismo democrático en Bolivia», in MUSEF (ed.), *Vivir Bien: ¿Una nueva vía de desarrollo plurinacional?* (La Paz: MUSEF, 2011), Vol. II., pp. 517-533. For a systematic presentation of Andean philosophical thinking, see Josef Estermann, *Filosofía Andina: Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo* (La Paz: ISEAT, 2006).

²⁰² See: Estermann 2006, pp. 123-148. The principle of «relationality» means that all is interconnected with all, and that relationships are logically and ontologically prior to particular beings.

(«cosmic sustainability») would not be valid anymore. There is no «good living» for a few, if a majority (or even a minority) is living in misery.

- The Andean utopia²⁰³ of «Good Living» is not the result of the ideology of progress and unlimited economic growth, based on a lineal comprehension of time. «Real future» lies behind in the «past».
- Therefore, Andean «Good Living» implies cosmic, ecological (in the sense of a spiritual and inclusively metaphysical ecology), religious-spiritual, social, economic, and political dimensions.

2. *Buen Vivir* and «life in plenitude» (Jn. 10.10)

Since more than twenty years, the Andean concept of *Buen Vivir* has been discussed by indigenous leaders, scholars and politicians, before it was included in the political constitutions of the Republic of Ecuador (2008) and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2009).²⁰⁴ It plays also a growing role in the debates about post-development theories, postcolonial studies, post-capitalist theories, de-growth theories (*decrecimiento*), economies of solidarities and subsistence, as well as deep ecology, post-secular theories and shamanistic spiritualities.²⁰⁵ Although there is some intent to include the concept in theological reflection and religious (syncretistic) practice, there is not much done until today in this respect. In the context of the emergent *Teología India* (Christian indigenous theology) in *Abya Yala*, many communities and leaders refer to the concept of *Buen Vivir* as a point of orientation for an indigenous understanding of religiosity and spirituality.²⁰⁶

Although Semitic (Judeo-Christian) and Andean worldviews differ in many aspects, there is also surprising convergence or at least complementarity between both. Semitic thinking goes far beyond Western anthropological dualism (body and soul) and has a concept of «life» that is not restricted to the so called «living beings». It is a crucial concept for the

²⁰³ In Andean context, «utopia» is not just an ideal state of reality in a far future or at «no place» (*u-topos*) but can also lie behind in a not achieved past. Andean time concept is not lineal, but rather cyclical. The Quechua and Aymara expressions for future (*qhipa pacha*) mean «the world that lies behind», and those for the past (*naira/nawi pacha*) mean «the world that lies in front of our eyes».

²⁰⁴ As *Buen Vivir* or *Sumak Kawsay* it appears more than 20 times in the new Ecuadorian Constitution (2008), and as *Vivir Bien* or *Suma Qamaña* 9 times in the new Bolivian Constitution (2009). In the Bolivian version, only the Aymara expression (*Suma Qamaña*), but not the Quechua or Guaraní version is included.

²⁰⁵ As examples: Arturo Escobar, «Imagining a Post-Development Era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements», *Social Text* No. 31/32 (Third World and Post-Colonial Issues, Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), pp. 20-56; Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree (eds.), *The Post-Development Reader* (London: Zed Books, 1997); Serge Latouche, *In the Wake of the Affluent Society: An Exploration of Post-Development* (London: Zed Books, 1993); Wolfgang Sachs (ed.), *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (London: Zed Books, 1992); Serge Latouche, «Degrowth Economics: Why less should be so much more», *Le Monde Diplomatique*, (November 2004, English Edition, Paris: Le Monde Diplomatique).

²⁰⁶ Among the (very few) contributions on *Buen Vivir* and theology and religious or spiritual issues, we can mention: Josef Estermann, «Gott ist nicht europäisch, und die Theologie ist nicht abendländisch: Eine interkulturelle Dekonstruktion der abendländischen Theologie aufgrund der indigenen andinen Weisheit», *Interkulturelle Theologie* 2-3 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014), pp. 186-200; Leonardo Boff, *El cuidado necesario* (Madrid: Trotta, 2011), pp. 62-63; Víctor Hugo Colque, «Horizontes del Vivir Bien: Análisis crítico de los presupuestos teóricos del Vivir Bien», in Víctor Hugo Colque Condori et al. *Vivir Bien: Contextos e interpretaciones* (La Paz: ISEAT & PIEB, 2013), pp. 15-50.

divine, more prominent than «power», almightiness», «transcendence», «omniscience» or «impassibility», all of them very important in dominant Western philosophical tradition. To say that «God is life», means that the universe is full of life or is a living being itself, what comes very close to what Andean thinking is affirming (panzoism or hylozoism).²⁰⁷ Except for these cosmic (and eschatological) dimensions of «Good Living», both traditions stress the social and communitarian dimensions of «living». In opposition to modern Western individualism and enlightened egoism (in the form of capitalism, hedonism and consumerism), both the Semitic and Andean traditions stress the communitarian and social aspects of living, to such extent that scholars recently use rather the notion of *Buen Convivir* («Good Living Together») than just *Buen Vivir* («Good Living»).

In Christian tradition, the communitarian dimension is present in the very core of divinity, as the Trinitarian God is a community of «Good Living Together». From the very beginning and at the heart of Christian religiosity, the principle of relationality (all has to do with all; all is related to all) is prior to the principle of substantiality such as Western philosophical tradition makes believe. God is not in the first place «substance», but «relation». The same can be said of the divine economics (creation, incarnation, and redemption), the Christian community (*ekklesieia*) and the main topic of eschatological understanding (Kingdom of God). The prevalence of relationship above substantiality means in the fields of ethics and social life the prevalence of the communitarian above the individual. Christian utopia is not one of individual pleasures and isolated existences, but much more of social and communitarian life (therefore the metaphors of the banquet, the wedding, the communion with God). Andean *Buen Vivir* has nothing in common with the postmodern dream of the «happy few» of unlimited joy and pleasure («good life»), in some gated communities and on the cost of billions of people suffering every day and nature which is struggling in agony against its own extinction.

Moreover, Andean *Buen Vivir* includes and stresses the spiritual and religious dimensions of human beings and beyond of humanity. You could even define «Good Living» as «Spiritual Living», if you don't understand «spirituality» in a limited Western sense. Spiritual life in the Andes has not so much to do with the «spirit» or with a contemplative lifestyle, but more with a feeling, an ethical and ritual practice and deep consciousness of cosmic interconnectedness, of deep religiosity in the sense of feeling the power of the divine (which is female and male) and of the presence of the past (ancestors) and the future in a cyclical conception of time. In the Andes, it is quite normal to ask an animal for forgiveness before it is killed, or Mother Earth (*Pachamama*) before it is opened by the plough or the peasant's *chakitaklla*.²⁰⁸ At the indigenous rituals, the ancestors and dead are in the same way present as the astronomical phenomena, the mineral, vegetal and

²⁰⁷ Panzoism is a (philosophical) theory that states that anything has in some degree «life», from the sub-atomic to the cosmic level. The term «hylozoism» stresses the fact that all kind of material (*hyle*) is living and becomes a synonymous term for Panzoism. Famous Western representatives of the panzoist or hylozoist theory have been most pre-Socratic philosophers, probably Aristotle himself, and in modern times Giordano Bruno, Denis Diderot, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, Ralph Cudworth and Ken Wilber.

²⁰⁸ *Buen Vivir* has a lot to do with the religious and spiritual relationship with Mother Earth (*pachamama*), as a guarantee for life and its conservation. Cultivating the earth is a spiritual act, and the ritual communication with the «female face of God» has a deep religious dimension. The *chakitaqlla* is the main instrument or tool of the peasant to work the earth; it's like a one man's plough, where the person removes the earth by digging with the power of the foot (*chaki*).

animal world. Andean spirituality is a mode of living together with cosmic dimensions, not opposed to but rather including materiality and culinarian delights (as coca leaves, corn beer, beans, and potatoes).

The ideal of Andean *Buen Vivir* has to be sustainable in many ways, and not just in the ecological and social sense, as «Green Economy» or «Social Market Economy» has been introducing recently:

- A. It has to be sustainable cosmically, that means that human being has to understand him- or herself as part of the cosmic network of relations and energies, and not as an «island» or an isolated and superior species.
- B. It has to be sustainable spiritually, that means that any kind of economism or pure materialism has to be rejected; economics has a subordinate function in the preservation and conservation of life, but by no means the almost absolute function it has in nowadays neoliberal capitalist society.
- C. It has further to be sustainable inter-generationally, that means that any action or omission has to be compatible with future generations, not only of human beings, but of all beings which form the huge network of interconnected relationality.
- D. And it has to be sustainable religiously, insofar as any real living relationship is also some kind of religious bond (*relatio – religio*).

Andean *Buen Vivir* has nothing to do with abundance or luxury, but much more with «dignity». This concept, almost lost in Western societies, is very important in the indigenous communities of *Abya Yala*, and has a special relationship with the concept of «Good Living». Somebody cannot live «well», if he or she does not live in «dignity», which means to be respected, appreciated, recognized, and loved. So the criterion for «Good Living» is not the amount of things and properties one has or the wealth one can show, but the vital relations he or she can establish with other human beings, with nature, with the spiritual world and the divine. In this sense, Western «good life» and the ideal of individual self-sufficiency and autonomy is the very opposite for Andean *Buen Vivir*; the hedonistic ideal of consumerism and exuberant wealth in «splendid isolation» is, from Andean perspective, really «bad living». Living in dignity means to have enough (life sustenance) in order to be able to establish and practice vital relations, mainly to love and to be loved. But «love» in Andean perspective is not a romantic or altruistic concept, but rather the very heart of «Good Living», in the sense of an existence embedded in a variety of (social, cultural, natural, spiritual, religious) relations.

The biblical, or more precisely Jesuanic²⁰⁹ concept of «life in plenitude», as it is quoted in Jn. 10:10b («I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full»), has been used by many preachers and theologians as support for the idea that Christianity leads to physical prosperity and «good life» in a Western sense.²¹⁰ Most of the translations refer to the Greek

²⁰⁹ I think that this periscope reflects the authentic perspective of Jesus, as a point of coherence and consistence between his «lifestyle» and his preaching. So, it is not just «biblical», but genuinely Jesuanic.

²¹⁰ It is one of the periscopes which are supposed to support the so-called Prosperity Gospel (*Teología de la Prosperidad*), so popular and widespread among neo-Pentecostal churches and movements.

word περισσόν as «abundant» or «more than enough»,²¹¹ but the etymological root (περί) means «about», «concerning», «around», so that περισσόν could be translated as «all-around» or «complete». Without doing an exhaustive exegesis of the mentioned verse in the Gospel of John, we can understand that the divine gift for human being is not wealth or prosperity (as Prosperity Gospel or *Teología de la Prosperidad* might suggest), but a life in dignity and in full and continuous («all-around») relationship with the source of life, God. The contrast to the «thieves who steal» (Jn. 10:10a) means that the new «full» life is not defined by material things which can be stolen, but by the vital relations and human dignity.

«Life in plenitude» is a metaphor that fits very well with the Andean idea of *Buen Vivir*. The «fullness» of life has not to do with (economic or financial) abundance, wealth, and prosperity, but with the holistic and relational aspects of life, as the Andean concepts of *kawsay* (Quechua) and *qamaña* (Aymara) suggest. Life is «full» when it is interconnected in an all including network of vital relations reflecting «cosmic justice» which can be translated in biblical language as the «divine justice». That's the reason indigenous people say that «Good Living» is not «Better Living», for in a limited world, the prosperity («better») of one part of the world implies necessary the misery («worse») of the other part. Capitalist logics build «justice» on the comparative and superlative meaning of «good», implying a theory of anthropology upon competence and egoism. Biblical logics (e.g. Jn. 10:10b) does not speak of a «better life», but of a «full life», a «life in plenitude». And this has, of course, eschatological dimensions.

«Life in plenitude» cannot be fully understood, if we do not articulate it with the core notion of the Gospel, the «Kingdom of God». Although it is not just one human utopia (or «eutopia»)²¹² more, it has certainly to do with the way we establish a world of justice, inclusiveness and *Buen Vivir*. It has, first of all, to do with «life», and there are several places in the biblical Scriptures that extend the concept of «life», and therefore the «Kingdom of God» far beyond humankind and anthropocentric eschatology. Images as Isaiah's reconciliation of the child and the lion²¹³ or St. Paul's metaphorical talk about the «creation in pains of childbirth»²¹⁴ suggest that the biblical utopia of the «Kingdom of God» is not just a human-centred concept, but has cosmic dimensions, just as *Buen Vivir* does have as well. Secondly, the «Kingdom of God» has to do essentially with life in its fullness, life in dignity without concerning age, sex, race, social status, mother tongue or level of education. Welfare state and economic prosperity are not incarnations of the Kingdom of God, as long as other parts of humankind and non-human nature suffer the consequences of a not-globalisable

²¹¹ Jn. 10:10b: ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν («I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly»). The word used 17 times in the New Testament particularly for «fullness» or «plenitude» is πλήρωμα (*pléroma*) and refers to God's characteristic of completeness and absolute power.

²¹² While «utopia» just refers to the (axiologically neutral) «no-place» of something that is conceived to be ideal, «eutopia» adds the element of «good»: a «good place» to live (as proposed by Gen. as the Garden of Eden).

²¹³ Is. 11:6: «And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat. And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them.» (New American Standard Bible).

²¹⁴ Rom. 8:22: «For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.» (New American Standard Bible).

lifestyle of some «happy few». And this is also an essential intuition of the concept of *Buen Vivir*.

When it comes to the question of «power», the expression «Kingdom of God» might suggest that it is just some kind of counter-power to the political and economic power structures and empires of the human history. I think it's not a «counter-power», but much more like an alternative «power» based on life and relationship. Latin American Liberation Theology used, to translate Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ (*Basileia tou Theou*) not the expression *Reino de Dios* («Kingdom or Reign of God»), but rather *Reinado de Dios* («God's governing»)²¹⁵. That means that no longer the criteria and logics of worldly politics and economics count, but the criteria and logics of God's justice, opposite to Market and capitalist logics of competence and ecological exploitation. In Latin American Liberation Ethics, the issue of «life» has priority above discursive logics of «justice», because there are real asymmetries between one part of the world and the other.²¹⁶ The «Kingdom of God» (or «God's governing») has a universal dimension, and is in this sense a counter-image of the real world order with First, Second, Third and Fourth Worlds.

The preferential option for and with the poor, misunderstood by many, is first of all the option of God (as a subject) for the poor to be the «first» entering the Kingdom of God, not because they were ethically «better» than the rich or because of some revanchist logics, but because they are closer to the understanding of «life in plenitude» and *Buen Vivir*. The Kingdom of God is not compatible with class society, racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and ecocide. There is a strong practice of Jesus' criticism condemning the striving to be «better» than the others (prostitutes, foreigners, not-Jews, impure people), to have a «better life» than others (the disciples to occupy a preeminent place in heaven), to be wealthy and powerful (the temptation in the desert). A «life in plenitude» is of a totally different order, diametrically opposed to the dominant logics of competence and maximization of profit. So is *Buen Vivir*: it is not a concept of how to become rich and have a pleasant life (*dolce vita*), but rather how to live in harmony and balance with all human beings and nature, the spiritual and material world, past and future, the divine and human, the sacred and profane.

3. Can *Buen Vivir* be a new paradigm for «mission»?

It is quite significant that the periscope of «life in plenitude» (Jn. 10:10b) is situated in the parable of the Good Shepherd and the Sheep, as an image of human community and its relationship with the divine. Furthermore, Jesus considers his preaching of «life in plenitude» as a consequence of his being sent by his father («I have come that they may have life»), that is as part of the *Missio Dei*. The principal mission of God in Jesus is «that they may have life», that there will be life in plenitude for the whole creation, and that there is *Buen Vivir* available for all, humans, and non-humans. God's option for the poor leads to the mission to proclaim and fight for life in all its aspects. The indicative (God opts for the

²¹⁵ This is specially the case for Ellacuría: Ignacio Ellacuría «Recuperar el reino de Dios: Desmundanización e historicización de la Iglesia», in Ignacio Ellacuría, *Escritos Teológicos III* (San Salvador: UCLA, 2002), pp. 307-316; see also: Francisco Aquino Junior, «El carácter prático de la teología: Un enfoque epistemológico», *Teología y Vida*, Vol. 51/4 (Santiago de Chile, 2010), 477-499.

²¹⁶ See: Enrique Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation: In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

poor) implies an imperative (struggling for life), because poverty (as well as wealth) can be obstacles for human dignity and a life in harmony and balance (*Buen Vivir*).

Therefore, the main purpose of «mission» has to be life, life in plenitude, life in a global and cosmic balance. And as the concept of «life», such as it is implied by the indigenous notions of *kawsay* (Quechua) or *qamaña* (Aymara), is neither anthropocentric nor purely spiritual or material, the purpose of an authentic mission is proclaiming the utopia (or «eutopia») of «full life» for the whole creation and struggling for its realization. That has some far-reaching consequences.

- a. First of all, mission is not just «proclaiming» or «preaching». There is a very interesting and most revealing legend about the first «encounter» between the Spanish conquerors (Pizarro and his followers) and the indigenous peoples of the Andes (Inca Atawallpa and his followers), in the later colonial city of Cajamarca in actual Peru. Father Valverde, as a representative of the conquerors and of the Christian religion, holds the Bible showing it to Atawallpa, the political and spiritual leader of the Inca Empire. In the «best» tradition of classical «mission», Valverde points to the book proclaiming: «this is the Word of God; listen to it!» According to the spiritual tradition of his people, Atawallpa took the book, put it to his ears, listened carefully and said after a while: «it does not speak», and threw it into the sand. This was the starting point of the genocide committed against indigenous people in *Abya Yala*. For Atawallpa (and most of indigenous people today), the divine does not speak through a book (in an oral tradition, scripture has not the same significance as in a written tradition), but through the wind, the mountains, the ancestors, the *Pachamama* (Mother Earth), the stars and all kind of life. Proclaiming life is not enough and can even be offensive to life.
- b. «Mission» in this sense has to overcome an anthropocentric perspective. *Buen Vivir* has not just to do with human life, and less with just biological life. Christian missionary history has stressed for centuries the spiritual («soul») conversion of human beings, leaving apart the material conditions and the non-human nature. «Mission» has to do with «life in plenitude», what implies also the conservation and reestablishment of ecological balance and ecosophical spirituality.²¹⁷ Theological and missiological anthropocentrism have done a lot of harm to the fragile balance between human and non-human life, following often Western dualistic thinking much more than biblical holistic wisdom.
- c. «Mission» has to be engaged with the issue of «life» in all its aspects, and not just with some reductionist and individualist conception of it. In Andean philosophy, life is not a substance, but a relation, or more precisely, a knot of energetic relationality. Proclaiming life means proclaiming the pre-eminence of relationality over mere substantiality and individuality. Life is not a property a particular being «has» (it's not a property), but a texture of relations in which individuals are immersed. Life is a collective, communitarian and even cosmic network of relationship, in the sense that proclaiming life means proclaiming the living God as he/she is present in a living world. The «Kingdom of God», as well as the *Buen Vivir*, does not stress individual life as something separated from other

²¹⁷ The concept of «ecosophy» («wisdom of the house») means that the concern about the environment is not just to «conserve» it for human purpose with the help of instrumental rationality (*logos*), but a wise and holistic articulation to the fountains and springs of life, such as indigenous philosophy likes to tell us. So «ecosophy» is an alternative notion to the strongly abused notion of «ecology».

human beings and non-human nature, but communitarian life, that is, living relationships as the vital base for life. Without relationship, there is no life (even biology proves it)²¹⁸, and the Trinitarian God as a living and loving community in relationship is the guiding paradigm for this understanding of life. That does also mean that biological life is important, but it is by far not the only form of life. In spite of the «spiritualistic» reductionism of classical theology and mission, there has always been some particular «obsession» with biological life in the sense of a reductionist conception (biologism).²¹⁹

- d. Proclaiming life, «mission» has to struggle at the same time for a just and sufficient access to the basic conditions of life. It is by far not enough to fight for the «right for life» of the unborn if there are millions or even billions of people who do not have sufficient conditions to live in dignity. Among these conditions of life are the material and economic means for living (food, drinking, shelter, health care, protection), but also the recognition and respect of personal and collective integrity (cultural self-determination, gender-justice, access to knowledge etc.). This struggle is a clear option and can get into conflict with power structures which don't give priority to the life conditions of the whole planet, but rather to the maximization of profit and the accumulation of capital and wealth. And this can imply a clear and uncompromised denouncing of mining companies, transnational agro-industrial companies, financial institutes and the corresponding governments which intent to «privatize» (the word means literally: «to withdraw», «to rob») the vital conditions of human and non-human life.²²⁰
- e. «Mission» is an example of sharing life, of establishing and re-establishing relations where they are cut or damaged. What is called «missionary presence», could be the intent to put into practice the very ideal of *Buen Vivir*, not just for the addressees of proclamation, but first of all of the missionaries themselves. It would not only be incoherent to preach «life in plenitude» or *Buen Vivir*, and at the same time live a life in luxury and abundance, but it would put ad absurdum the very concept of *Buen Vivir* and the biblical utopia of the Kingdom of God. *Buen Vivir* on a global scale is only possible by means of a considerable restriction («de-growth») of the lifestyle established in the global North, because we do not have seven planets Earth as we would need to universalize (or globalize) our ecological footprint.²²¹ Lifestyle is not just a secondary quality of missionary existence, but the necessary condition for its credibility and consistency. Opting for the poor implies an option for a lifestyle which is compatible with the ideal of *Buen Vivir* and «life in plenitude».

²¹⁸ Because of the strong androcentric tendency and determination of modern Western thought, the main attitude towards nature have been an analytical and mechanist rather than a synthetic or organic approach. Androcentric worldview is fixed on decomposition (analysis) and lifeless mechanic machines, while gynocentric worldview stresses the relations, the organic and holistic interconnectedness. Indigenous philosophy is much more gynocentric than androcentric.

²¹⁹ This is notable e.g. in theological controversies on abortion, homosexuality, and in vitro fertilization.

²²⁰ On the global scale, «mission» is confronted increasingly with the aggressive and life-attacking practices of huge transnational companies involved in exploiting natural resources, land grabbing, patenting indigenous knowledge, polluting basic common goods (water, air, food etc.) and forcing people to adapt Western consumer patterns.

²²¹ It is impossible to „globalize» the American Way of Life because the energy requirements would need seven times the total amount of energy and goods available on earth. This is one of the intrinsic contradictions of the actual process of capitalist globalization, a kind of systemic and egoist blindness.

4. The urge for decolonizing mission

Dealing with an indigenous concept as the Andean idea of *Buen Vivir* and at the same time articulating mission and power, cannot avoid becoming aware of the colonial and neo-colonial implications of classical and even actual missionary activities on the global scale. Since the very beginning of colonization –as the example of Valverde and Atawallpa has shown–, mission has been in danger not to proclaim the Gospel of liberation and life, but the gospel of Western civilization, progress, and prosperity. Although there are luminous examples of missionaries who fought against colonization and imposition of Western standards in Latin America (Bartolomé de las Casas is an eminent example), «mission» has often been the faithful ally partner of political, economic, and military expansion and conquest. Indigenous concepts as *Buen Vivir* have been declared for centuries by Western missionaries as something «satanic» or «diabolic», and mission and its message have been used often as the real opium for the people, conserving the status quo of injustice and global asymmetries.

The principal schools and paradigms of «mission» were elaborated in the Western cultural context and often carry the main principles of the hegemonic modern philosophy of individualism, dualism, and anthropocentrism. Since the colonial enterprises by the main «missionary» countries, many missionaries proclaim also the gospel (which is in fact a *dysangelión*) of Western civilization, progress, free Market economy and consumerism, as if this paradigm would fit better with the biblical tradition than Jesus proclamation of «life in plenitude» or the Kingdom of God. Decolonizing mission means a sincere review of the values and images Western mission has been carrying to non-Western societies and civilization, but also a self-criticism of our own symbolic and real power-structures. The shift from one-way-mission to a respectful and open process of intercultural and interreligious dialogue opens the possibilities of a thorough-going and deep process of decolonization of Western theology and missiology, in order to open space for non-Western paradigms as that of *Buen Vivir*.

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10. Walking backwards to the future, facing the past: The conception of time in Andean Philosophy

Abstract

One of the reasons for chaos in the contact zone between different cultures is the often-incompatible conception of time and the practices resulting of the underlying worldviews. The present contribution pretends to carry on an exercise in «diatopic hermeneutics» between the dominant concept of time in Western modernity and the lived experience of time in Andean cultures and worldview. Modern Western conception of time is the result of an «impossible marriage» between Semitic conception of time stressing historicity, linearity, and contingency, on the one hand, and Hellenistic Greco-Roman conception of time focussed on determination, circularity and eternity, on the other hand. In contemporary globalized economic neoliberalism, both conceptions converge in the supposed unavailability of unlimited growth and the historicity and linearity of progress and utopian perspective. In contrast, Andean conception of time is based on the underlying principles of relationality and cyclicity, and stresses the aspects of quality, reversibility, and discontinuity. It can be resumed in the metaphor of «walking backwards to the future, facing the past». The resulting «chaos» in intercultural encounter can only be fruitful and creative, if there is respect for the otherness of worldviews and philosophies, and there exists a sincere will to understand the fundamentals of one's habits and beliefs.

Quite a lot of intercultural misunderstanding and dis-encounter has to do with time and its different cultural and civilizational connotations. In the «contact zone» of people with different cultural background, we have to do frequently with problems due to different conceptions of time and attitudes which have to do with the underlying and mostly sub-conscious presuppositions concerning time. When somebody comes «too late» to a meeting in Northern Europe, we tip with our finger on our watch and make clear that the person in question has arrived «too late», conduct which is not accepted within this specific cultural framework. When I invite friends in Bolivia for a social gathering, and one of them comes exactly at the time accorded, he is «too early», and his or her conduct will be considered as «inappropriate» or even «asocial».

But it's not just individual behaviour which is causing problems in our intercultural encounters or dis-encounters, it's also underlying ideas about the importance of «progress», «future», «development» and «history» which can contribute to a symbolic and philosophical «clash of civilizations». Due to colonial practices and economic globalization, Western thought tends to «universalize» its cultural and philosophical presuppositions to such an extent that any alternative way of thinking and conceiving the world turns out to be inconceivable, impossible, or at least no desirable. And this is also the case concerning the conception of and the practice of time.

1. Dominant conception of time in Western civilization

Although Asia is the cradle of almost all great philosophical and religious traditions, even of Christianity and Western philosophy²²², most of scientific and technological progress, philosophical systems and theological reflection are attributed to Europe. Both Semitic spirituality and Abrahamic monotheism, on the one hand, and philosophical emancipation from mythological thinking, on the other hand, have their origins in Asia, more concrete in the extreme western part of the Asian continent, called in Eurocentric terminology «Near East».²²³ Because of the colonial and marginalized situation of Ionia (nowadays the Turkish west coast) and Palestine, both religious and philosophical innovations have been absorbed by the colonial powers Greece and Rome in a comparably short time in such a way that they lost almost entirely their Asian roots. The forced use of the colonial languages Greek and Latin (and not the native languages Phoenician or Aramean) is in this context quite eloquent: the newly established Christian religion is documented from the very beginning in the language of the dominant culture of the time (Greek), although Jesus didn't speak any Greek or Latin word.

This peculiar situation and process forms the ideological and civilizational background of what later would be called Western Civilization and European culture: a mixture of Semitic²²⁴ intuitions and parameters and Greco-Roman presuppositions, philosophical insights, and legal frameworks. Or in other words: Semitic religion and philosophical roots (in Asia and Africa) have been «baptized» by the two European colonial powers dominant at the time of beginning of our calendar to become the prototype of «European» culture and civilization. This specific mixture, called in cultural anthropology hybridization and syncretism, became, by means of colonial expansion, the Occidental mainstream. Although Enlightenment and positivism tried to eradicate the spiritual and religious heritage of this cultural identity, most of our dominant conceptions, stereotypes and presuppositions go back to that «impossible» marriage between the Semitic and Hellenistic²²⁵ spirits and cultural paradigms. I try to exemplify this very idea by means of the conception of time.

²²² All principal world religions have their origin in Asia, some of them (Hinduism and Buddhism) in the core of old and established civilizations, others (the monotheist religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam) at the margins of ancient reigns or even in European colonies on Asian soil (Palestine). The same can be said of Western philosophy which has its roots in the extreme occidental part of Asia, in the Greek colonies on what nowadays is Turkey. Apart from the Asian roots, there are also «African roots» of Western philosophy, mainly from Egypt and Ethiopia. See: James; Olela; Onyewuenyi.

²²³ One of the purposes of decolonial studies is to deconstruct Eurocentric geographical denominations, such as «Near East», «Middle East», «Far East», but also the very notion of the «West» which reflect the Eurocentric position of Western ideology. This also includes the intercultural deconstruction of most of the still used world maps, mainly in the Mercator projection. See: Estermann, *Más allá*.

²²⁴ The notion «Semitic» does not refer to Judaism, as it is often used («anti-Semitism»), but to a cultural identity shared by the peoples of the Arabic Peninsula, Mesopotamia, the extreme eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea («Near East») and even parts of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea). Semitic languages are (with a lot of sub-divisions) Aramaic, Hebrew, Arabic, Old South Arabian, and South Semitic languages.

²²⁵ Greco-Roman philosophy and culture reached its splendour in the era of Hellenism, reaching from Aristotle to Neoplatonism (about 300 BCE and 529 CE), being the ideological background of the constitution of Christianity and the dogmatization of its doctrine, but in general the cradle of what would be later «European culture».

Semitic culture and religion (both Judaism and Christianity)²²⁶ stress the importance of «history», «progress» and the eschatological perspective of an ideal to be realized in a far future or even beyond history. Time is conceived as a line which reaches from a beginning (in religion metaphorical language Creation) to an end (Final Judgment and Paradise), passing through a long and meandering historical path of improvement, development, and evolution. The linearity of time is associated with the irreversibility and progressivity: This means that time is like a stream that flows in one direction, increasing constantly in terms of perfection of humankind. What in religious terms has been the History of Salvation that reaches from the *Alpha* of god's Creation to the *Omega* of the Paradise or God's Kingdom, for science and technology has become the human history of progress and development, reaching from the *Big Bang* to an utopian ideal of a society without classes, a consumerist paradise, a never-ending pleasure or however it is conceived.²²⁷

«History» is associated closely with human freedom and metaphysical contingency. History opens the field of «trial and error», of human projects and planning. Time is conceived as a container which can be filled up, as an empty blackboard that can be written with ideas, as a pathway which can be taken and walked, as the unconscious condition of realization and auto-realization of the human being. History is, at the same time, the emancipation from determinism and the blind destiny predetermined by some cruel divinities or dynastic bloodlines. Semitic conception of time is mainly an emancipatory one, which has at its very core the concept of freedom and liberation. Secularization and revolutions, social contracts and utopia have not been established in spite of (Christian and Jewish) religion, but rather thanks to the Abrahamic religions and their emancipatory and liberating potential.²²⁸

But this is only one part of the story, i.e. one part of this «impossible marriage» which was still under heavy tension in the Middle Ages, but recovered from all crises to become much stronger than its godfathers (there were no godmothers) (Paul of Tarsus; Constantine; Augustine; Thomas Aquinas) could have imagined. The other part has to do with the Greco-Roman heritage of European civilization and culture. Talking about time concepts, this part has inherited to European and Occidental culture and science the paradigm of determinism and absolute changelessness. Greco-Roman conception of time is resumed in the metaphor of the circle, considered as the most perfect of all movements, mainly of the super-lunar

²²⁶ Islam didn't play an important role in the Hellenistic era, but contributed substantially to European Culture and Civilization through its influence on the Spanish Peninsula, in Western medieval philosophy and through the transfer of sciences as mathematics and medicine. Concerning the conception of time, classical Islamic philosophy represented more a theologically motivated determinism than stressing contingency and open history. In this respect, it is quite atypical for a Semitic religion and culture; but the same can be said of, for instance, Calvinism in Christian tradition.

²²⁷ For the secularization of the History of Salvation, see: Estermann, *Zivilisationskrise*; especially cap. 2.

²²⁸ Judeo-Christian tradition (to some extent also Islam) are world-oriented religions, in spite of the later tendencies of escapism and otherworldliness, due to the influence of (neo-) Platonism. The biblical tradition stresses the «secular» condition of all created beings, astronomical phenomena (stars, planets, sun, and moon) as well as political systems and powers. It is very critical to monarchic or dynastic systems and bloodlines and interprets the world as the field of improving human being by means of the praxis of justice and peace. Freedom of human being and the contingency of the created world are prerequisites for this religiously inspired worldview which has been secularized fully in European modernity, especially through Enlightenment.

world of the divine.²²⁹ In the circular conception of time, change and «progress» do not really happen, but turn out to be mere appearance and illusion. The famous paradoxes of Zenon to prove the theses of his master Parmenides, can serve as illustration of the basic intuitions of Greco-Roman time conception.²³⁰

Even Plato and Aristotle, known as the intellectual founders of metaphysical and physical movement and change, could not escape, in the long run, the determinist consequences of circular time conception: all happens with necessity, as if it would be the «eternal return of the same». Even time-indexed facts and events can be interpreted, within the framework of Greco-Roman time conception, as necessarily happening occurrences. While Parmenides (and Zenon) denied the very existence of time and change, Plato and Aristotle accepted the empirical reality of time and change but interpreted them within the framework of determinism and fatalism. In other words: Greco-Roman philosophy and culture denies contingency and, therefore, human freedom. The *fatum* of the Greek and Roman pantheon and its reflection in human tragedies (Homer's *Odyssey* as a paradigmatic example) became later absolutism and determinism in philosophy, religion, and sciences.²³¹

Modern European civilization and culture is, therefore, the fruit of this «impossible marriage» between necessity and contingency, fatalism and freedom, predetermination, and planning. Lovejoy talked about «glaring inconsistencies»²³² which make up the very foundations of Occidental civilization and culture. One of these inconsistencies is the conception of time: European (and *a fortiori* Occidental) time conception shares both the circular and the linear paradigms, i.e. historical and social determinism, and historical and social openness (indetermination). How to deal with this apparent contradiction? How to bring together Greco-Roman determinism and Semitic contingency?

2. Contemporary paradoxes

I could show, running the time line of the centuries, the concrete manifestations of this «fruitful inconsistency» and the paradoxes it produced in society, religion and sciences, but I will limit myself to the contemporary forms of contradictions inherent in our understanding

²²⁹ This paradigm had such an influence on science that even beyond the Middle Ages it was inconceivable that the planets would not have perfect circular orbits. One of the main arguments against the heliocentric thesis defended by Copernicus, rooted in the stableness and immutability of the Earth, an absolutely fix place determined eternally by God. In Greco-Roman worldview, the supra-lunar world was considered the realm of the gods, who govern in an absolutely immutable and fatalist manner; the infra-lunar world participates in this «eternal» world insofar the destiny of human persons were connected directly to the behaviour and decisions of the divinities. Greek tragedy is one of the most famous examples of this metaphysical fatalism.

²³⁰ As it is well known, Zeno of Elea wanted to prove that time and changeability were just human illusions, but didn't really exist; his master Parmenides defended the doctrine that all existing beings have been the same since eternity, that there exists in strict sense only one immutable being, and that diversity and change were just appearances.

²³¹ This determinist root of European culture is even present in contemporary economic theories which consider that «there is no alternative» to capitalist Free Market economy and where the «invisible hand of the market forces» are a metaphor quite similar to the destiny determined by the Greek gods. Another strong impact of the determinist paradigm can be observed in science, where the ideal of immutable eternal laws became the norm for scientific nature in general.

²³² Lovejoy 155.

and practice of time. My main thesis runs as follows: Greco-Roman time conception has become dominant in the fields of science, technology, and economy, while Semitic time conception has been very influential in the personal and individual fields of ethics, spirituality, and arts. There are fields of human life which are «in between»: politics, social life, religion, and psychology.

René Descartes is the modern founder of this «dichotomy» and the father of modern European conception of time (among other important concepts). While the *res extensa*, i.e. the natural and material world, is considered the «reign of necessity» which obeys absolute and unchangeable laws, the *res cogitans*, i.e. human spirit is characterized as the «reign of freedom» which makes and interprets the (political and ethical) laws. In the realm of natural sciences and technological «progress», Greco-Roman determinism and fatalism have the last word, in the realm of human life and artistic creativity, Semitic contingency and indeterminacy. But these two paradigmatic features are in fact intertwined in one and the same field of human interpretation of reality and history.

One of the most preeminent examples is history itself. On the one hand, it is interpreted as the result of human planning, creativity, great spirits and ideas, i.e. a history of human freedom and spontaneity, but on the other hand, philosophy of history, either materialistic or idealistic, tries to explain history as the «necessary» consequence of some determinative laws and power structures, in such a way that the historical process and the «end of history» are conceived as the fatale result of complex, but in fact comprehensible principles and axioms at work.²³³ The Greco-Roman *fatum* is replaced by the necessity of dialectical processes (Hegel, Marx, and Engels), the unavoidability of scientific advance and progress (Comte) and the neoliberal economic «end of history», and Semitic contingency and freedom is substituted by postmodern indifference, hedonism and artistic creativity.

In the contemporary Western world (from 1980 to actuality), the paradox mentioned is to be found mainly in the fields of economics and politics. After the fall of the Berlin wall (1989), neoliberal capitalism has conquered almost any part of the globe, to such an extent that almost all sectors of human life have been «economized», i.e. have become commodities with a market value. In spite of the underlying terminology, «free Market economy» has become the realm of the unavoidable, the necessary, and the fatal destiny of humankind.²³⁴ «There is no alternative» (TINA); this slogan attributed to Margaret Thatcher, condenses this new economic determinism which expresses itself in an almost metaphysical pressure to grow, the fatale obligation to consume and waste, the uniformity of preferences and lifestyle patterns. Economics has become a second order *fatum*, which is manmade, but which at the same time is religiously legitimated (the «invisible hand of the Market») and

²³³ In philosophy, we would talk about the reducibility of empirical propositions to analytical ones, an idea developed and analysed thoroughly by Leibniz. Hegel carried this enterprise in his philosophy of history to the extreme position of absolute evidentialism: «all what is real is rational, and all what is rational, is real». See: Vos, *Kennis*.

²³⁴ Perhaps this is the most prominent example of the «inner inconsistency» and paradigmatic tension of the two paradigms of time conception mentioned before: Free Market economy intends to liberate economic activities in the tradition of classical liberalism from all kind of restrictions and regulations; on the other hand, market mechanisms become a new kind of fatalism because they are some kind of fatal destiny not dependent anymore of human decisions. Our perception of the Stock Market and financial turbulences is one of fatalism and impotence; the «invisible hand» (Adam Smith) has become a supra-human anonymous force.

socially compelling. Politics, on the other hand, has changed from a power to design social life and construct just and inclusive societies, to a handmaid of economic «necessities» and fatalism (*Realpolitik*). In the Western world, almost all parties adopt some kind of neoliberal politics, hostages of economic determinism and unavoidability. At the same time, they undermine the very principles of democratic life which implies freedom, self-determination, and ethical values.

Our talking about «time» is very symptomatic on this respect. We say that «time is running out», that «there is no time left», that «time is money», that we have a «time-budget» or that we are «short of time». These expressions deal with time as if it were some kind of resource or capital which we can use, waste, or even accumulate (we can «gain time» or we have a «time credit balance»). This conception of time which is dominant in actual Western societies is an «economized» time conception which goes back, in the long run, to the Greek God *Chronos* and the determinist conception of time and change underlying Greek mythology. The chronometer and modern watches are the most eloquent symbols of time as a quantitative and determinist framework of human and non-human activities. Such as the big hand of the watch showing the seconds is advancing constantly and unavoidably, in the same sense technology, economic growth and progress are supposed to advance without any alternative: we are condemned to «progress and growth».

The Semitic time conception which has been relegated to a second place in contemporary Western societies stresses the dynamic and linear character of time, but at the same time underlines the «open» character of historic processes and the qualitative aspect of time. It is symbolized rather in another Greek symbol and divinity, namely *Kairos*.²³⁵ It refers to the non-determinist, rather qualitative and open character of time which finds manifestations in our talking about time in another sense than the «economized» one: we say «it is time», «we have a good time», or «time has come», but also the (Western) concept of «free time» (in most Indo-European languages, «leisure» is expressed by a combination of «time» and «freedom»: *Freizeit*; *tiempo libre*; *vrije tijd*; *tempo libero*; *tempo livre*). The division of our activities in «work» and «leisure» reflects quite accurately these two time conceptions intertwined in modern European societies: time as quantity and compelling process, mainly in economics, technology and sciences («work»), and time as quality and open process, mainly in ethics, spirituality and arts («leisure»). The most problematic effects of this division are the separation of economics both from politics and ethics, and the pressure «economized» time has on all of our activities. Even «leisure» (or «free time») becomes more and more a space of competence, pressure, and quantification.

3. Andean conception of time

We consider Western conception of time in our societies as a relatively homogenous and quite consistent bundle of intuitions and presuppositions, in spite of a very conflictive and

²³⁵ While *Chronos* (Χρόνος) has been in Greek mythology the god of time and had been present before all in the speculative poetry of Orphism, *Kairos* (Καῖρός) has been conceived as the appropriate moment of time and was personified in mythology as a god which didn't play a very prominent role. There has never been a considerable cult to *Chronos* in Antiquity, and most of the representations result from the 14th century; there existed a cult to *Kairos* in Olympia, and the poet Posidippos of Pella has eternized him in one of his hymns.

even contradictory history of two mutually exclusive paradigms. There are no visible conflicts within European mainstream culture, there is no intra-cultural conflict zone concerning time and our handling of temporality. This fact has to do with the predominance of the main features of Western time conception: linearity, irreversibility, progressivity, and quantification. Metaphorically speaking, we see our future «before us», i.e. in front of our eyes, we «walk» towards the future and let the past behind. There is no way back to the past, except in our memory and the huge bulk of archives and data-based history. In spite of our increasing knowledge of what occurred in the past, our perspective of time is getting narrower and every time shorter; we live as if the present *nunc stans* would fill up all the possibilities of human history.²³⁶ We are not anymore aware of the huge time segments necessary to shape the world as it is today. Fossil fuel needed millions of years to be generated but is consumed in less than a hundred years. Postmodern time feeling is the simultaneity of any kind of event, of any culture and historical era. And this is the very expression of an extreme determinism: all what happened, is happening and will happen is concentrated in one single point, the eternal present.²³⁷

Among the Aymaras of the Andean *Altiplano* (Highlands), there is a saying that confronts us with a totally different conception of time: *Qhip nayr uñtasis sarnaqapxañani* – «Watching the past in order to walk forth to the future». Or, as I put it as title of this contribution: «Walking backwards to the future, facing the past». The Aymaras are, together with the Quechuas, one of the indigenous peoples which form what is called Andean culture and civilization.²³⁸ Although both ethnic groups have been colonized and subjugated by the Spanish conquerors, they have conserved the main features of their «cosmovision», i.e. their philosophical, mythological, religious and cultural identity. And this is neither Semitic nor Hellenistic, but of another kind of rationality. People from abroad who spend part of their life in the context of Andean thinking, tourists passing through the Andean countries or business men and women, experts of international cooperation and scholars who want to

²³⁶ This phenomenon is called the «instantaneity» of our lifestyle which is resumed in the slogan «here, immediately and all». This «instantaneity» has been made possible thanks to the *cyberworld*, where all information, all events and all interpretation of these events occur at the same time, in the very present. This supposed simultaneity of moments, spaces and cultures which dominates postmodern feeling and living, makes us forget the big not-simultaneity existing between cultures, civilizations, and human histories. The postmodern «instantaneity» is a powerful illusion fostered by capitalist market economy.

²³⁷ If we project the circular movement of the (determinist) circular conception of time to an angle of 90 degrees, we get a line and a pendular movement going and returning from one point to the other; and if we project this line again to an angle of 90 degrees towards us, there remains on single point, and any movement has come to a full stop.

²³⁸ Both Aymaras and Quechuas belong to the same ethnic group, although in the past, they fought each against the other. The Quechuas form the majority (about 10 million Quechua speaking persons) and can be found nowadays from the south of Colombia to northern Chile and Argentina; the Inca Empire (*Tawantinsuyu*) with Cusco as its capital was almost coextensive with the Quechuas. The Aymaras (about 2.2 million Aymara speaking persons) seem to be older than the Quechuas and settled near Lake Titicaca; nowadays they are living in western Bolivia, the very southern part of Peru and the very northern part of Chile. They resisted for a long time Inca invasion and their purpose to eradicate their language, religion, and social organization, but didn't achieve. When the Spanish conquerors appeared in the Andean *Altiplano*, the Aymaras allied with them against the Incas hoping to conserve their independence. Quechua and Aymara language share about one third of their vocabulary and more than 80% of their grammatical structure and rules.

establish their projects and carry through their research, come sooner or later in contact with this «strange logics» and even more stranger habits and customs.

When you ask somebody on the countryside in the Andes when you will arrive at the village, people do not look at their watch (because they don't have one) nor give an indication in minutes or hours, but in proximity: «just here» (*acacito*)²³⁹ or «behind the next hills». The same can happen in town, and when tourists hear «just two blocks from here», they think that this is an exact quantitative answer to their request to give a description of how long the walk will last. But in fact, the village is not «just here», nor is the place in town to be reached within two blocks. The indication of distance and time reflects a «felt time», i.e. a time that is very short in the horizon of an abundance of time people live in. For the foreigner, time is something to calculate with, a «scarce commodity» which has to be handled with parsimony and planning. We plan to arrive at the village (e.g. a project manager of an irrigation project) at 11 a.m. in order to be back in town at 4 p.m.; as time is a «scarce good», we cannot spend more than the planned time to achieve our objectives. Andean people live in time, and do not «have» time as it were some kind of capital to spend or to save.²⁴⁰

Another notorious example of intercultural misunderstanding and conflict is the almost proverbial «unpunctuality» of Latin Americans in general and Andean people in particular. Again, time is not determined by the hands of our watches, by an artificial instrument we invented to calculate and mercantilise time, but by a complex network of relations. When someone comes «late» to a meeting – and «late» does not mean five or ten minutes, but half an hour, one hour or even more – there should have been something more important than this very meeting, i.e. some social or personal duty or commitment that had priority. If I meet on my way to a formal meeting in the streets a friend or a relative, it is important to talk to him or her, to «spend time» for our relationship, to ask concerning the situation of the (extensive) family, health, plans etc. and to listen carefully to the stories our interlocutor tells me. And in this case, it doesn't matter if this conversation lasts one hour or even more: to accomplish with our social and familiar obligations has priority over «punctuality» and formal obligations on the work floor or in business.

These are just a few examples to show the concrete manifestations of an underlying worldview and philosophy which is totally different from what we know of our Western cultural traditions. First of all, in the native Andean Quechua and Aymara languages, there is no word for «time». The Spaniards were so stunned and helpless when they discovered

²³⁹ The use of diminutives (*acacito*: «just here»; *ahorita*: «just now») does not only reflect the structure of the native languages Quechua and Aymara but reveal the subjective and relational character of time and space indications. To tell somebody that your objective or goal is «just here» or that the meeting will start «just now» – although it can last hours to get where we want to or up to an hour until the meeting will start – means that the speaker lives with the impatience and longing of the interlocutor telling him or her in fact: «everything has its specific rhythm and in the horizon of a human life, one hour is nothing».

²⁴⁰ Neoliberal capitalist economy is constructed upon the «scarcity» of resources, goods, energy, and capital; as anything is scarce, it has a price. For a long time, water and air didn't have a price, even land has been available for long time in abundance; but as these elements become «scarce» they get a price, become commodities and are introduced in the economic market mechanism. For economies of abundance (as it is the Andean one), nothing has a price, and everything can be used by anybody; this implies that the concept of private ownership does not exist.

that the indigenous people could not understand what they meant with their concept and notion of «time». So, they introduced the Spanish word *tiempo* which has been adapted to the phonetic peculiarities of the native languages as *timpu* and became as a loan word part of the native vocabulary. But it is still referring to a «foreign» state of experience and does not reflect the proper cultural feeling and self-comprehension of «time». The fact that there is no specific word for «time» in the native languages, does not mean that time does not exist, rather that it is a phenomenon which cannot be conceived and expressed by one single expression.

There is a word, either in Quechua as in Aymara (it is a *quechumara* word), that has to do with the basic intuition of time Andean people have: *pacha*. *Pacha* is a very important concept in Andean philosophy and has almost the same place and function as has «being» in Western philosophy.²⁴¹ *Pacha* means space and time at the same time (what a paradoxical expression!), in such a way that time is some kind of space, and space is some kind of time. The expressions for «past», «present» and «future», for instance, are related to space categories: *nayra pacha* (Aymara) or *ñawpapacha* (Quechua) are used to indicate «past time», but mean literally «the time-space of our eyes (*nayra/ñawi*)». *Aka pacha* (Aymara) or *kay pacha* (Quechua) are used to indicate «present time», but mean literally «this time-space» and are related to one of three pachasophical realms.²⁴² *Qhipa pacha* (Aymara) or *qhepa pacha* (Quechua) is used to refer to «future time», but means literally «the time-space in the back/behind». *Pacha* also means «universe», «world», «cosmos», i.e. the ordered reality in past, presence and future; so the temporal expressions are at the same time spatial or cosmic expressions: the «past world», the «present world» and the «future world», as we use to express it in Western culture, too.

But there is one important difference to Western time-space-continuum: in Andean philosophy, the «past world» is not in «the back» or «behind», but «in front» of us, «in front of our eyes», and «future time» is not «in front» of us, but rather in «the back» or «behind». Andean mothers carry their babies on their back, because they are their future, and not on their belly, as modern European mothers do. As we know what has happened and what people told us, we can better direct our attention («eyes») to the «past» than to an unknown future. But there is another aspect which makes the whole story of time even more complicated: «past» and «future» are not just «happened and closed», respectively «not yet happened and open» state of affairs, but are some variants of an interrelated reality called *pacha*. The principal feature of Andean philosophy is not substantiality or individual existence, but rather relationality²⁴³ and holistic co-existence.

²⁴¹ For further information and analysis, see: Estermann, *Diatopische*; especially: 33-38.

²⁴² I use the notion *pachasophy* or *pachasophical* as an expression to substitute Western philosophy by an indigenous notion, composed by a Quechua-Aymara (*pacha*) and a Greek word (*sophía*). See for this point: Estermann, *Filosofía Andina*; there is no English version available so far.

²⁴³ In my works on Andean philosophy, I coin this word (*relacionalidad*; *relationality*) as the abstract expression for the fact that relations and their various interconnections and networks form the basic fundament of indigenous Andean worldview. See: Estermann, *Filosofía Andina*.

4. Relationality and cyclicality

Our intercultural clashes in the conflict zone of overlapping or at least encountering cultural and civilizational paradigms can only be understood and interpreted properly by way of what I call a «diatopic hermeneutics». In our case, dominant Western time conception is one *topos*, and Andean time conception is another one. Intercultural hermeneutics oscillates between (*dia*) these two *topoi* in order to find some «homoeomorphic equivalents»²⁴⁴, i.e. concepts and notions which have the same or at least a similar function in two or more different cultural universes. Could the Western notion of «time» (*chronos/kairos*) be a homoeomorphic equivalent for Andean *pacha*? I doubt it, because the «semantic field» of European «time» implies a bundle of characteristics that are not involved in the Andean *pacha*, and the other way round. To find homoeomorphic equivalents could be helpful for translation purposes, but even so, «time» and *pacha* are not just inter-lingual synonyms as are, for instance, *time* and *Zeit*. There has to be a procedure as inter-paradigmatic translation which presupposes not only the efforts of diatopic hermeneutics, but also the deep understanding of the «philosophical» backgrounds of worldviews underlying cultures and civilizations. In the case of Andean time conception, this is Andean philosophy or, better and more accurate: Andean *pachasophy*.

For Andean philosophy (and general popular intuition), the guiding axiom is the principle of relationality. This means that not substance or individual beings are the ultimate fundamentals or «bricks» of reality, but «relations». In Western perspective, we could say, quite paradoxically: the relation (*relation*) comes first; the related beings (*relata*) come just in the second place. For Aristotle (and most part of Western tradition), «relation» is an «accident», i.e. something which is «added» to an ever since existing substance. To put it more concretely: before two persons can enter into contact and become friends or even lovers, they are necessarily two separate and autonomous individuals or «substances». That sounds very familiar to us but is not as universally valid as we might think. In Andean philosophy, it's just the other way round: in order to become really full-fledged individual personalities, two human beings have ever since been related one to the other. That means that the world or reality is not constituted by «substances» or «atoms», but by a very complex structure of «relations» or «energy». Relations or energy are not «things» or substances, but rather a *fluidum* of some specific constellations or states of affairs. In terms of the quantum mechanics about the nature of light, one could compare Western philosophy with the corpuscular theory (Gassendi, Hobbes, and Newton) and Andean philosophy with the wave theory (Huygens, Planck).²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Raimon Panikkar coined the concept of «diatopic hermeneutics» as a means of intercultural understanding: the process of interpretation of cultural peculiarities has to go forth and back between two cultural «places» (*topoi*), in the search of «homoeomorphic equivalents» (*equivalentes homeomórficos*). Panikkar: «I call it *diatopic* hermeneutics because the distance to be overcome is not merely temporal, within one broad tradition, but the gap existing between two human *topoi*, «places» of understanding and self-understanding, between two - or more - cultures that have not developed their patterns of intelligibility ... Diatopic hermeneutics stands for the thematic consideration of understanding the other *without assuming that the other has the same basic self-understanding*. The ultimate human horizon, and not only differing contexts, is at stake here.» (Panikkar 9). For the philosophical reflection of diatopic hermeneutics, see: Estermann, *Diatopische*.

²⁴⁵ Javier Medina, a Bolivian philosopher and intellectual, applies the quantum mechanics to three main civilizations: Western civilization represented by the fermionic paradigm, Oriental civilization (more or less

According to the principle of relationality, relation is the primordial «being» or reality (*in principio erat relatio*) ontologically and temporally. All has to do with all, everything is interconnected with everything, and there are no gaps between individual separate beings which are perceived as autonomous and physically separated one from the other, but which in fact are interrelated and connected by means of a complex network of relations. This intuition can be expressed also as the principle of holism or the pre-eminence of the whole (*holos*) before the particular individual being. This principle is universal in the sense that it is valid for cosmic as well as human features, for ethical as well as physical characteristics. One example for anthropology: in Aymara language, the expression translated in European languages as «to marry» is *jaqichasiña* and means literally: «to become mutually person or human being». The vital relationship of a (heterosexual) couple is the fundament for the two parts to become really human persons with all rights and duties.²⁴⁶

Applying the principle of relationality to our issue of «time», we can conclude that time in Andean perception is before all a relation and not a quantity. It has a qualitative aspect, as well as *kairos* has in Western tradition; time is not a «neutral» measure or some kind of container or receptacle. Time is always «spaced» and related to the ordered world (*pacha*) as a whole of relations and vital connections. As for most nature-based worldviews, Andean time conception is related intimately to the great astronomical, meteorological, and agrarian cycles which find their parallels in human life and the life cycles of history and individual biography. There are «dense» moments or periods of time, especially at the end of one and the beginning of a new cycle. These «passing zones»²⁴⁷ are precarious and need ritual and religious guiding and support. The so called «passing rites» (*rites de passage*) have to do with these «dense» moments of time at the transition from one to another cycle. Solstices or the change of moon phases, the change of rainy and dry seasons, of sowing and harvesting, birth and death are «dense» and precarious moments which need to be accompanied by

coextensive with the Semitic one), and indigenous Andean civilization as the balanced and harmonious combination and complementarity of both. The fermion particles of an atom, characterized by Fermi–Dirac statistics, obey the Pauli Exclusion Principle and include all quarks and leptons, as well as any composite particle made of an odd number of these, such as all baryons and many atoms and nuclei. Fermions differ from bosons, which obey Bose–Einstein statistics. Bosons make up one of the two classes of particles, the other being fermions. For Medina see: Medina.

²⁴⁶ This does not mean that a single or a homosexual would not be a full human being; it is rather the completeness of «person» involved in the Aymara concept *jaqi* and the Quechua one of *runa*. The complementary relationship between *chacha/ghari* (man) and *warmi* (woman) is the necessary presupposition for completeness (*con-plenus*) which has social and political consequences. In the Andes, only «married» people (not in the Western sense of the word, but as joined in the Andean sense) can get social and political responsibilities in their communities and even on national level. The fact that the actual president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, has been considered to be a single, was interpreted by indigenous people as impediment for the presidency; but as he has children, he is considered a full-fledged *jaqi*.

²⁴⁷ In anthropology, they are known as «transition zones», i.e. phenomena which have a precarious character because of their topological position. The best known and documented «transition zones» and their corresponding rituals (*rites de passage*) are those which are in between to pass from one life cycle to another, e.g. from youth to adult life, but also birth and death. But there are also not-anthropological «passage zones» in the fields of astronomy, meteorology, agriculture, and history.

different rituals. Most of Andean rituals have to do with this kind of *chakanas*, i.e. pachasophical «bridges» between one realm and another, one cycle and another.²⁴⁸

In contrast to dominant modern Western conception of time, Andean time conception stresses quality, cyclicity, reversibility, discontinuity, and not-progressivity. The metaphorical image is neither the (Greco-Roman) circle nor the (Semitic) line, but rather the spiral which has some familiarity with dialectical thinking of the Western tradition. Most of the Andean «utopias» have their «place» in the past and not in the future, as it is the case in Western thinking. This does not mean that we have to «return» to a glorious past in precolonial times, but that the past has the germens and the blueprint of an ideal way of life we can only achieve «walking backwards» to the future which is not necessarily better than the present or the past. «Facing the past» does not mean to be obsessed with what has been definitely lost, but rather to be inspired by the energy and the exemplary experience of former generations and cycles. For Andean people, the ancestors are not just an affair of remembering and retelling their stories but are really present as sources of energy and orientation. Most of Andean rituals «make present» (re-present) the ancestors, as well as all kind of spiritual beings and relations; they live among us, as the «souls» of our beloveds do.

«Reversibility» means that the «past» is not really past, but that it is still present and can be remodelled and «perfected». In contrast to deterministic time conceptions – as the Greco-Roman one – Andean time conception has a notion of progressivity and change, but not in the sense of modern dominant Western time conception. There is a genuine discontinuity in history and the establishment and reestablishment of «good living» (*Vivir Bien*)²⁴⁹ and cosmic balance; there are cosmic cataclysms (*pachakuti*) which form the necessary rupture and continuation between one and the other historical cycle. A *pachakuti* – the word means literally «returning of *pacha*» – establishes a dramatic endpoint of some «development» or «evolution», some kind of qualitative jump (in dialectical thinking), because of the deterioration of the holistic network of relations and the cosmic balance supporting *pacha*. A *pachakuti* occurs if and when reality has become disorder, imbalance and disharmony, i.e. when vital relations have been interrupted to such an extent that life is threatened and the damaged relations cannot be «healed» by the auto-healing processes of *pacha* and the ritual and ethical reciprocal activities of human beings. In such a case, there is no other way out than the dramatic rupture of the present cycle and the beginning of a new one. In Andean perspective, one of these *pachakuti* occurred with the Conquest of *Abya Yala*, and another one – the idea exists that one historical cycle lasts 500 years – is imminent, because of climate change, crisis of globalized capitalism and the irruption of indigenous peoples.

²⁴⁸ As *pacha*, *chakana* is another very important concept in Andean philosophy. The Quechua-Aymara word *chakana* means literally the connection of the thighs and is expressed in metaphorical sense as «bridge» (with two pillars). In Andean cosmology, the Southern Cross is called *Chakana* (with capital letters), and the Andean cross has also the same name. See: Estermann, *Chakana*; Estermann *Sur*; Estermann, *Jesucristo*.

²⁴⁹ One of the best-known concepts of Andean philosophy and wisdom in the last ten years is the concept of *Vivir Bien* or *Buen Vivir* (in Aymara: *suma qamaña*; in Quechua: *allin kawsay* of *sumaq kawsay*). In European languages, it is translated normally as «Good Living» or «Good Life», but it is quite the opposite of Aristotelian or postmodern «good life». See: Estermann, *Zivilisationskrise*.

5. «Walking backwards to the future, facing the past»

Is there «chaos in the contact zone» between Western and Andean understanding of time? One of the elements of this supposed chaos is incompatibility of two philosophies and the subsequent principles and intuitions. The anger and helplessness of Western tourists and co-workers in development projects at the moment of facing notorious «unpunctuality» or «inefficient» time management in meetings reveal this unconscious and even suppressed «chaos» as a fundamental incompatibility. It is worse for Westerners than for Andeans, because the former are trained by Aristotelian bivalent logics to consider such inconsistencies and incompatibilities as «impossible» and unbearable: *tertium non datur* (there is no third way). For Andean inclusive and polyvalent logics, Western and Andean perspectives of time can coexist, as for Max Planck the corpuscular and wave theories of light (or the fermionic and bosonic structure of atomic particles) coexist without inconsistency or incompatibility. But Westerners have the almost natural impulse to «resolve» the chaos by reducing the apparent incompatibility to their preferred and understandable worldview, namely the Western one: all participants of our meetings have to stick to the criteria of punctuality imposed by the watches.

Although probably it's not possible for us to fully understand what is meant by the Andean slogan «walking backwards to the future, facing the past», we can do two things. The first one which is a presupposition of intercultural understanding and dialogue is simply to have and demonstrate respect for the cultural and human alterity. The second one is to try to put oneself in the shoes of the other and to understand (at least partially) the philosophical and cultural framework of cultural behaviour. The experience of chaos can be very helpful and even creative («creative strangeness»), if we are able to see it as a moment of disturbing our own certainties about the world and ourselves.²⁵⁰ Because of the inclusive logics and the holistic worldview, Andean indigenous people have survived the many intents of Western world to eradicate their cultural, religious and philosophical alterity. An Andean native who works with an international organization will adapt him or herself for some time to the European requirement of «punctuality», «efficiency» and «analyticity», but will drop these principles as soon as he or she will move to a native context. This is, for instance, very striking with the phenomenon of *iskay uya*, translated as «double face» and often seen as some kind of hypocrisy or ambiguity. Andean people can tell you something and later, in another context and with other interlocutors, the very contrary.

The problem is on our side: we want unambiguity, clearness, one single truth, either-or. We do not bear ambiguous situations; we have a classificatory mania and try to label all phenomena with one single concept and notion. We have some inherent phobia against chaotic situations and try to resolve and overcome them as soon as possible, reducing the apparently inconsistent or incompatible phenomena to one single unambiguous one. Perhaps it has to do with the substantialist framework of Western thinking: one and the same «thing»

²⁵⁰ Even at this point, we can detect different cultural perceptions and sensibilities: while for most Westerners, «chaos» is something to avoid or at least to overcome rapidly, for non-Western cultures, «chaos» can be considered as relatively ordered (an «ordered chaos») or just the real condition of life. Western «chaos theory» has discovered the «proper rationality» of chaotic features of reality; «chaos» is not just «irrational», but rather hetero-rational.

(substance) cannot be another. For Andean relationality, there is no such problem; relations are always ambiguous, as life in general is.

To respect the otherness or alterity of another culture, behaviour, custom or belief, has to do with ourselves insofar as it presupposes a relativization of our own standpoint and perspective. When I respect the other and his or her worldview, it could be that I am wrong or at least that my own standpoint is not the only and universally valid one. This is the point where eurocentrism or ethnocentrism in general is at stake. Any cultural or ethnic centrism presupposes the (universal) validity of its own presuppositions and, confronted with cultural alterity and chaos, tries to reduce this alterity and chaos to the logical and rational framework one is accustomed with, i.e. the own one. This is the most frequent strategy of tourists and other persons confronted with incomprehensible and ambiguous phenomena. But it impedes to learn from the other and to get the blind points of the own worldview and cultural framework revealed.

Concerning our issue of time, it is not less mythical and magical to believe in unlimited growth and ongoing progress than to insist that the future is behind us. Both are metaphors of two different conceptions of time which is in fact a very ambiguous phenomenon. This mutual respect is the necessary presupposition for the second thing to do: trying to understand the other logics and rationality, without judging or reducing it to the own one. And this is the most exciting and fruitful adventure in the semantic jungle of the «contact zone».

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11. Poverty, Migration and Eurocentrism: Challenges for a genuine European Liberation Theology in the 21st century

1. Global South in the global North

Classical Liberation Theology has its origin and place (*locus theologicus*) in situations of poverty, injustice, violence and discrimination of all kind (economic, social, sexual, ethnic, and religious), focusing mainly on human precariat in the so called Global South (former «Third World»²⁵¹). Although the «objective» conditions for the need and urgency of a liberationist perspective of theological thinking have changed in the past fifty years, there is today not less poverty, marginalization and injustice on a global scale. In absolute numbers, there are perhaps less poor people (or less «very poor people») than in the 1980ies, but the inequalities have increased dramatically and the exclusion of huge human groups from the neoliberal and consumerist banquet is a new scandal, recognized even by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The classical «poor» in the sense of economically poor people have been diversified even within Liberation Theology (women, indigenous people, afro-descendants, sexual minorities, youth, Mother Earth, etc.), and the former antagonism between «First» and «Third World» has been broken up in much more complex structures of inequalities, injustice and asymmetries.

Some scholars suggest that today the main scandal for theological thinking is not anymore poverty, but wealth. Among the main factors for destabilization of the actual world order (or world disorder) there is in the first place the scandalously unequal distribution of wealth, resources, and information in a globalized world. One percent of the world population possesses 99% of all resources and finances²⁵², and 99% of the world population have to live with just one percent of the resources or have to buy the goods and services which are property of others. Even common goods as water and landscape, organisms and information are in a constant process of privatization. Or in other words: rich people are becoming even richer and poor people poorer. The Gini index of inequality²⁵³ has increased in the last two decades in almost all countries, even in those of the Global North or the former «First World». The boundaries between rich and poor are not any more the limits between the northern and southern hemisphere, not even if we consider that there are countries in the geographical south belonging to the Global North and vice versa. Today the boundaries cut countries, regions and cities into poor majorities and rich minorities, even in the Global North.

Europe has become a continent with huge contradictions and tensions. It's not possible any longer saying that «the» Europeans are rich, white, Christians, mass consumers, fully employed, talking some Indo-European language, etc. The phenomena of «new poverty», of

²⁵¹ Although EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of third World Theologians) still uses the notion „Third World», I prefer in the present context the binary expression „Global South/North». They are sociological notions and not geographical ones; in political and economic contexts, the notions of «developing» [sometimes even «underdeveloped»] and «developed» countries are still in use.

²⁵² This data are according to Oxfam, a British NGO (<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-30875633>). Oxfam also calculated that the richest 62 people in the world had as much wealth as the poorest half of the global population.

²⁵³ See footnote 260.

racial and ethnic discrimination, of dropouts of the labour market, of considerable amounts of non-European migrants, of religious radicalization and intolerance, are some of the landmarks of the actual map of Europe, beyond an ideological struggle for preserving Western inheritance and the legacy of Enlightenment. The «global village» with its shanty towns and ugly squares, criminal gangs, and racism, has reached Europe as well. Politicians and big business try to show the world still the image of a clean and well-ordered main square, high wages and social security for everybody, security for men and women, but just around the corner, there are poverty belts of the «Global South» in almost all European countries.

2. Discrepancy of academic theology and the socio-political context

Liberation Theology has been since its very genesis a movement from «below», from the grassroots» movements and small communities, neighbourhood organizations and groups of self-help and political analysis. Although in most contexts of the Global South, this kind of theological reflection has also entered into the academia, it is still a phenomenon of communities and pressure groups. In Europe, theology has been, at least in the last two centuries, an endeavour of academics, church leaders and ministers, and only as a minority a response of concerned communities to the challenges raised by the modern world, such as nuclear rearmament, student movements, Cold War, neoliberal economics and migration. Even Political Theology (Carl Schmitt, Johann Baptist Metz, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jürgen Moltmann), has its origin in the Academia and not in concrete political or social struggle, although it has been adapted and adopted by dissident groups such as Religious Socialists or Christians for Socialism, as well as movements inspired by Liberation Theology (students» protests; anti-nuclear campaigns; solidarity groups).

There are, of course, important exceptions such as Dieter Bonhoeffer, Dorothee Sölle or Leonardo Ragaz, the movement of worker priests or the ecumenical process of Justice, Peace and Conservation of Creation. And there are initiatives taken by concerned and engaged groups all over Europe to elaborate other approaches to the social, political, and economic challenges which are in consonance with the principles of Liberation Theology. A lot of these initiatives are mentioned in this publication, but most of them do not have their origins in academic theology of the universities or higher institutes.

Academic theology in Europe, in its majority, did and does not start with a socio-economic analysis of the actual situation which surrounds the faculties and seminaries, but follows a deductive way of «describing» and «explaining» the main theological topics proposed by divine revelation (mainly protestant theology) or the dogmatic tradition of the Church (mainly catholic theology). If Liberation Theology is a topic in European academia, it is one of the currents to be treated as historical phase of «contextual» theologies in the Global South. Most of the professors of theology in Europe consider Liberation Theology as «antiquated» or as some kind of contextual thinking which cannot pretend to have

universal value, supposing of course that their own theologizing not only has universal pretension but is universal itself.²⁵⁴

The «application» of theological reflection on social and political, economic, and ecological issues does not take place, in its majority, at the universities, institutes or seminaries, but by pastoral agents and basic communities, NGOs and militant organizations. But even so, Liberation Theology proceeds just the other way round: it starts with concrete socio-political reality as theological «place» and looks for criteria for its theological interpretation in religious tradition and revelation. Theology has not to be «adapted» to reality; to the contrary: reality is the main theological subject and the place where redemption and salvation – in the form of integral liberation – takes place. For most of academic theology at European universities, the discrepancy between a highly abstract theological discourse on grace, revelation, redemption and God, on the one hand, and the concrete situation of unemployed young people, discriminated migrants, tax injustice, white collar corruption and increasing suicide rates, on the other hand, is not really a problem, because academic theology is often self-referential in the Nietzschean sense of a «ruminant science».²⁵⁵ With exceptions, most of European academic theologians are not «organic intellectuals» (Gramsci), imbedded in grassroots» movements and basic Christian communities.

3. Descending from the «splendid isolation»

Fortunately, there are an increasing number of theologians and socially engaged Christians in Europe who try to cope with the challenges the complex global world presents to them. They can be engaged within the churches or stay outside, working in politics or civil society, in pressure groups or formal NGOs. Their conviction shared with Liberation Theology is the assumption that faith, spirituality, and religion have to do with this concrete world in all its ugliness and suffering, and that theology has to give concrete answers to the main challenges this very world is presenting. In other words: the main «object» of theology is not God or Holy Scripture, but the concrete experience of the believing people of suffering, injustice, poverty, but also of hope, joy, and satisfaction, in the light of a determinate religious tradition. There is no way to stay any longer in the «ivory tower» of theological purity and supposed universality, if we want to be faithful to the very core of the Gospel which is «incarnation». Decontextualized theology is some kind of blasphemy, and not the reverse, such as conservative theologians and church leaders often state: that theology has to abstain from mixing up with «worldly» issues. As God did mix up with «worldly» issues in Jesus Christ and solidarized himself with the oppressed, the poor, and the marginalized and humiliated, it would be a blasphemy for theology to remain in the «splendid isolation» of decontextual and ahistorical reflection.

Why does European academic theology not recognize the «signs of the time» and renounce to its supposed «universality» and arrogance? I think there are several reasons for

²⁵⁴ In the theological faculties where Liberation Theology has still a place, it is dealt with in the context of missiology, extra-European Christianity, or intercultural theology. Outside the universities, there are Institutes and NGOs, civil movements and activist groups which try to introduce and develop Liberation Theology and its method.

²⁵⁵ Nietzsche spoke about Western philosophy as «ruminant» thinking, that is, interpretation of texts and even interpretation of this very interpretation, without dealing with «reality» outside the libraries.

it. First of all, it has to do with eurocentrism still very strong in European academia. European academic theology still pretends to speak for theology in the «strict sense of the word», in spite of the process of «tertiarisation»²⁵⁶ of Christianity (today, the majority of Christians live in some of the countries supposed to belong to the «Third World»), decolonial thinking and church leaders coming from the Global South (as pope Francis). Second, European academic theology is still «elitist» in the sense that it has lost organic connection (or never have had) with grassroots» movements, concrete church or small Christian communities. And third, the philosophical background of European academic theology is still some kind of Hellenistic or idealist transcendental thinking which does not allow perceiving «worldly» problems as theological topics and interpreting redemption in terms of «liberation». Dualism and individualism do still prevail, and holistic non-dualistic theological thinking has not really become a mainstream: for most European theological currents, there are still a lot of contradictions or incompatibilities between world and God, the profane and sacred, redemption and liberation, faith and politics.

Liberation Theology, on the other hand, intends to think God and the world together, overcoming dualisms as those founded by the Hellenistic tradition (mainly of Neoplatonism) the former pope Benedict XVI insisted so much on.²⁵⁷ For Liberation Theology, the world is the place of God's redemption, and people's struggle for liberation and a «good living» (*Buen Vivir*)²⁵⁸ is an intrinsic moment of soteriology. Dualism and individualism are two important obstacles to an implementation of Liberation Theology in Europe. But there is also another point: Liberation Theology follows an inductive and more empiric method, while European academic theology still sticks to deductive and dogmatic procedures. It is still (classical occidental) philosophy, which is the conceptual and methodological framework of theologizing, and not social sciences or even economics.

For a (future) European Liberation Theology I'd like to point our three challenges. The first two have to do with the socio-economic and political context of the continent, the last one with the Eurocentric and «colonial» condition of academic European theology itself.

4. Poverty in Europe?

16.4 % of the population of the European Union, 80 million people, lives below the poverty threshold, if fixing the threshold at 60 % of national median income, on the basis of 2010 data. The Czech Republic (9 % of the population), the Netherlands (10 %), Austria and Hungary (12 %) are the countries where poverty is lowest. With a rate of 13.5 %, the poverty rate of France is also among the lowest in Europe, just after the Nordic countries (around 13 %). The highest rates, superior to 20 %, are observed in Eastern Europe, in Romania and

²⁵⁶ This notion (from *tertia terra*: «Third World») stresses the fact, that demographically, the Christian population has shifted in the last fifty years from the «First World» (Europe, USA, and dependent countries) to the «Third World». The notion is coined by Giancarlo Collet: Collet, Giancarlo (1993), „Bemerkungen zur Notwendigkeit einer interkulturellen Theologie», in: Fernet-Betancourt, Raúl (ed.), *Theologien in der Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte Lateinamerikas*, Bd. 1, Die Perspektive der Armen, Eichstätt, 30-37. 34.

²⁵⁷ See footnote 265.

²⁵⁸ See: Estermann, Josef (2013), „Zivilisationskrise und das Gute Leben: Eine philosophische Kritik des kapitalistischen Modelles aufgrund des andinen *Allin Kawsay / Suma Qamaña*», *Concordia. Revista Internacional de Filosofía* No. 63, 19-48.

Bulgaria. Spain and Greece have similar poverty levels of about 20 %: these two countries are seriously affected by the economic crisis and have seen their unemployment rate rise considerably, especially among the youngest.

Thus, the living standards of poor people in rich countries cannot be compared to the poor in poor countries. The United Kingdom for example counts 17 % of poverty, but the poverty threshold at 60 % is 853 Euro per month and person, against 176 Euro for Romania, which counts 21 % of poor people. There are not only huge differences between countries, but also among different groups of the population of one and the same country. So, across the European Union, the poverty rate of women is higher than of men: it is at 17.1 % against 15.7 % for men. For children less than 16 years, it is 20.2 %, for young people from 16 to 24 years, it is 21.6 %, and for immigrants born outside Europe, it ascends even to 26.9 %. If we compare these poverty thresholds with countries of the Global South, they are relatively high, but so are the costs for living. If we would like to have some good measure to compare poverty worldwide, it would be the purchase power, that is, the relative rate of income and living costs.²⁵⁹

In comparison to poverty in the Global South, poverty in Europe is almost invisible, stigmatized and associated to shame and culpability. Immigrants, single mothers with children and young people are the most vulnerable ones, before all in Southern and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the Gini index of inequalities within countries has also increased in Europe and not only in so called «developing» countries where it is traditionally very high.²⁶⁰ That means that not only «poverty» as such is a *locus theologicus* for a European Liberation Theology, but even more the scandal of «wealth»: rich people get always richer, poor people poorer. The gap between a small wealthy elite and a huge poor or extreme poor population has become a global phenomenon. In the midst of «wealthy» Europe, poor people have to cope with different kind of discrimination and exclusion. They are «officially» non-existent, and if they are recognized, they are often supposed to be «losers», «lazy» and «culpable». There is need for structural analysis, not only of the interdependent connections between

²⁵⁹ The World Bank raised in October 2015 the global poverty level from 1.25 \$ to 1.90 \$ using 2011 prices. This amount would ascend to some € 53 per month and person, much below of the rate of the poorest European country Romania (€ 176). According to this criterion, some 770 million live in 2015 under the level of extreme poverty. So, you have to take the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) that allows us to put each country's income and consumption data in globally comparable terms. The PPP is computed on the basis of price data from across the world. To compare European countries with a country as Bangladesh with a national median income (NMI) of € 100, you have to compare the ratios of the prices for a basic «basket of goods» (cost of living) and the IMN of one country with that of another. The local purchasing power in Bangladesh, for example, is 32.4 % lower than in Romania; together with the difference of the NMI, a Bengali is twice as poor as a Romanian, as an average value.

²⁶⁰ The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within a national economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality. On a world scale, South Africa is with an index of 63.38 on top; the first European country Macedonia comes in the ranking on place 40 (44.05) and Ukraine has the lowest Gini index of Europe (24.55). Azerbaijan holds the world record of the lowest index (16.64). These data are indifferently from 1999 to 2013 and should be much higher in 2017 for the European countries. (<http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators/SI.POV.GINI/rankings>)

global North and South, but also of the unjust distribution of goods, wealth, and resources within Europe.

Liberation Theology worldwide has to do with poverty as a structural sin, but excessive and unjust wealth would perhaps be an even more important «sin» to be dealt with. This is specially the case for the European context where excessive wealth is not only a scandal for poor people, but also a threat to global peace and the climate. Economic injustice and huge social inequalities are the main challenges in Europe for a liberationist theological approach, alongside with consumerism and the idolatry of the Market.

5. Migration as threat or chance

Another important context to be considered by liberationist theological thinking as a genuine *locus theologicus* is the increased and still increasing amount of discrimination and marginalization of minorities, mainly refugees and immigrants from non-European countries. Migration – especially in the form of refugees from Africa, the Middle East and Asia – has become a «hot» topic in politics and civil society in almost all European countries. The new phenomenon of «mass immigration» (as it is called mainly by rightist nationalist movements) has produced, on the one hand, a radicalization of national policies towards foreigners, and on the other hand, an increasing number of discrimination of non-European immigrants in the sense of racism and xenophobia.

The first tendency can be described as the re-emergence of strong nationalisms in almost all European countries, scepticism towards the European Union and the renaissance and visibility of neo-fascist or even neo-Nazi movements. The second (complementary) tendency has to do with more restrictive policies in the field of immigration and the acceptance of refugees, which have dramatic consequences for thousands of people who intent to reach Europe, but also of refugees already arrived. While some countries officially defend a «culture of welcome» towards the immigrant refugees (as it has been the case of Germany until the end of 2016), huge sectors of civil society in most European countries show a hostile attitude and practice policies of manifest discrimination, racism and xenophobia.²⁶¹

Asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers are among the most vulnerable groups in contemporary Europe. They not only suffer precarious economic and social situations (the threshold of poverty is the highest among these groups), but have to bear attitudes of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and even open aggression, as well. On their way to the European «paradise» across the Mediterranean Sea, every year 3000 to 4000 refugees lose their lives (2014: 3279; 2015: 3771; 2016/October: 3800). In several European countries, refugees and asylum seekers have been targets of attacks by extreme nationalist and racist organizations, some of them with lethal consequences. While nationalist movements claim the «Christian West» against a supposed «Islamisation» of Europe, the same groups reject *de facto* Christian values of mercy, solidarity, and love for the stranger, hospitality, and justice for all human beings. «Christianity» has become for many people in Europe (mainly

²⁶¹ This is mainly the case of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia, but as well of traditionally «liberal» countries as the Netherlands, France, and Austria.

secular ones) some kind of *Leitkultur*, which is: «leading» culture of the western worlds against the threats coming from the global South and the Islamic world.²⁶²

Liberation Theology should take up this context as a challenge in a twofold way: as a criticism of any kind of «cultural Christendom» which is exclusive, ethnically defined and which fosters apartheid within Europe and even the churches, on the one hand, and as a prophetic voice to fight for inclusion and solidarity with all human beings victims of racist, xenophobic and other kind of discrimination, on the other hand. In this context, social and economic issues have to be thought about together with religious and interreligious topics. Liberation Theology has to be aware of the ideological use and abuse of religion and to stress the conviction that it is not religion which redeems²⁶³, but the liberating potential of prophetic faith and the belief that God is a liberating fountain and force of life.

6. Dehellenisation of theology

One of the most notorious characteristics of European academic theology still is its very common eurocentrism, in the sense of an illegitimate universalization of the proper position, as if European theology would be «theology» in a supracultural or even absolute way.²⁶⁴ Although Christianity has its cultural origin in non-western contexts (Semitic world) and geographically not in Europe (Western Asia), European theologians consider the Hellenistic and Roman contextualization of the new religion as constituent or even «dogmatic» parts of Christian theological identity, such as pope Benedict XVI stated on different occasions.²⁶⁵ Taking into account that the focus of Christianity has moved the last century from the global North to the global South and that actually only 25.9 % of world Christianity live in Europe

²⁶² One of the most emblematic political group is PEGIDA (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*: Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West) in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, which claims the defence of Christian values against Islamic danger. In many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, there are movements fighting for the reestablishment of a «pure» Christian heritage, hand in hand with nationalist restoration of a glorious past (Hungary, Poland, and Croatia).

²⁶³ See: Estermann, Josef (2012), «Religion does not redeem: Theological reflections about the role of «religion» today». In: *Voices* Vol. XXXV, No. 2012/1, New Series. EATWOT (ed.). *Towards a post-religious paradigm? EATWOT's Latin American Consultation on Religion - ¿Hacia un paradigma posreligional?: Consulta teológica latinoamericana sobre religión – Para um paradigma pos-religional?: Consulta teológica latino-americana sobre religião*. 71-88.

²⁶⁴ The fact that European theology defines God as its main „object», the following fallacy is quite common: «God is absolute and supracultural [beyond all cultural determination and contextuality]. Theology has to do with God. Therefore, theology is absolute and supracultural, as well.» This syllogism has its ideological background in the principle of connaturality (or absolute evidentialism) of Platonism and Neoplatonism.

²⁶⁵ I refer to the statement of pope Benedict XVI that Christianity were connected inseparably to Hellenistic thought to such an extent that it could and should not been „dehellenised». In his lecture at the University of Regensburg on September, 12, 2006, he stressed once more the indispensable role of Greek *logos* for the theological reflection of Christian faith, as he had done before as Prefect of the Congregation of Faith: „Das Christentum ist ... die in Jesus Christus vermittelte Synthese zwischen dem Glauben Israels und dem griechischen Geist [Christianity is the synthesis of Israel's Faith and Greek spirit, mediated in Jesus Christ]» (Ratzinger, Joseph (1983), „Europa - verpflichtendes Erbe für die Christen», in: König, Franz and Rahner, Karl (ed.), *Europa: Horizonte der Hoffnung*, Graz, 61-74, 68).

(in 1910: 66.3 %), insisting still in the equation of European theology with universally relevant theology is a clear manifestation of Eurocentrism or Occidentcentrism.²⁶⁶

I'm aware of the fact that the accusation of theologians coming from a western context to be «Eurocentric» has been received with growing annoyance or rejected simply as not pertinent or in the worst case as an expression of some disapproval of European hegemony by the global South. Another strategy to tackle the issue is to insist on the «universality» and meta-culturalist of the own position. I think that it is of great importance to distinguish between «cultural centrality» (or monoculturality) – where eurocentrism and Occidentcentrism belong to – and «contextuality». European Liberation Theology (as any current of European theology) is contextual, but not Eurocentric, and intends to make explicit the (unconscious) claim of «universality» as illegitimate procedure.

European Liberation Theology has to «liberate» academic mainstream theology from its *hybris* to be the only strict theology, by means of a consequent «contextualization» of its own theologizing. In the case of Europe, «decolonial» theology as a liberationist current of theology means – among other aspects – a thorough process of dehellenisation and historical, political, and social re-contextualization. Postmodern philosophy and theology have not achieved to dehellenise European thinking, because the Hellenistic «software» of European mainstream thinking cannot be revealed from within, but only in a dialogue or polylogue with cultural and human alterity. And that leads us to the final statement that genuine European Liberation Theology has to be intercultural in a critical sense.

²⁶⁶ As this illegitimate universalization is not only a feature of mainstream European, but also of US-theology and other theologies depending on western philosophical thinking, I'd like to use the notion „Occidentcentrism» rather than „Eurocentrism». But as the context of this contribution is Europe, we can still use the later concept.

12. Polylogue with poor and marginalized people: Hermeneutical shifts in Intercultural Liberation Theologies

Abstract

Classical Latin American Liberation Theology has changes substantially in the last fifty years, not only in the sense of its internationalization, but also in the sense of a series of transformations and shifts due to new hermeneutical and methodological challenges. One of the first shifts in the 1980s had to do with «feminization» of poverty and marginalization, producing a genuine feminist Liberation Theology. In the same period, Latin American Liberation Theology became a global phenomenon, contextualizing itself in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The second important shift took place in the 1990s, due to the irruption of indigenous and Afro-American Peoples, producing what is called an indigenous theology (*teología india*). One of the examples can be studied in the Andes region: Andean theology. In recent times, the original concern of Liberation Theology for the poor and marginalized has been rehabilitated by a bundle of post-classical forms of Intercultural Liberation Theology as postcolonial, post-secular eco-theology, economic theology, and interreligious theology. The author urges for an intercultural and interreligious «polylogue» between different «places» (*topoi*) of theological concern, in order to give answers to the actual global problems.

Despite great efforts of the world community to reduce poverty and unequal access to the resources, the gap between an immense majority of poor people and the exclusive circle of the «happy few» has been increasing steadily the last decades. Additionally, climate change and financial and economic crises demonstrate clearly the suicidal and genocidal tendency of contemporary capitalist and hedonist globalisation. Among the counter movements, we are at the same time confronted with a series of fundamentalist and nationalist ideologies, either in the global South or the global North²⁶⁷.

The situation classical²⁶⁸ Liberation Theology was confronted with has not changed substantially. Poverty has actually other faces and marginalization has other names. Since the 1970s, the world has changed dramatically. In politics, bipolar division of the world

²⁶⁷ I use these concepts in a sociological and not geographical sense. The «global South» comprises all the segments of national and transnational societies which struggle for survival and have to live with less than two dollars a day per person. The «global North» would be then the conglomerate of societies and its population that can afford a good and healthy life. Formerly, the concepts of «Third World» and «First World», resp. of «Underdeveloped countries» and «Developed countries» (or «Countries on the way to development» and «Industrialized countries») have been generally used for the same issue. Although people and societies of the «global South» are concentrated mostly in the geographical South (and vice versa for the North), there are also segments within the geographical North belonging to the global South, and segments within the geographical South belonging to the global North.

²⁶⁸ In this article, I use „classical» as reference to the first period and generation of Liberation Theology, i.e. the period that runs from the end of the 1960s to the mid-1980s and which is determined by a strong «economist» approach of analysis and the support by the theory of dependence. This «classical» form of Liberation Theology has been developed mainly in Latin America but irradiated by means of EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians) to other continents as well.

powers (Soviet bloc versus USA and its allies) has been replaced by a unipolar or even multipolar world. In economics, conservative and extreme orthodox neoliberalism has imposed its principles and ideology, by means of an ongoing process of commercial and financial globalisation, to almost any kind of society of the planet. In ecology, the prognostics of The Club of Rome in the 1970s have been passed by reality and pushed humankind as such towards an irreversible process of self-destruction.²⁶⁹ In communication, the world has shrunk to a «global village» and the media have become not only an important vehicle of monocultural²⁷⁰ globalisation, but also the first political power as principal opinion makers.

In short: the world is at the present moment infinitely more complex and diverse as it was in the 1970s, when Latin American Liberation Theology tried to do its first steps. Notwithstanding, poverty has not diminished substantially, and discrimination and marginalization have been even increasing in the last decades. In spite of postmodern «indifference» and ubiquity, tolerance and respect for other cultures, ethnic groups, peoples, and religious and spiritual traditions have diminished. Most of contemporary conflicts have a religious connotation, although the main motive and reason won't be religious at all.

1. «Cultural turn» in Liberation Theology

The «cultural turn»²⁷¹ describes predominantly a movement starting in the early 1970s – at the same time as Liberation Theology emerged – among scholars in the humanities and social sciences to make culture the focus of contemporary debates. It is a movement which emphasizes the cultural constitution of knowledge and science and establishes itself as contrary to a positivist epistemology. As such, it is imbedded in the broad context of postmodern thinking, but also of recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity. The cultural turn is characterized by Lynette Spillman and Mark D. Jacobs as «one of the most influential trends in the humanities and social sciences in the last generation»²⁷². In social sciences,

²⁶⁹ The Club of Rome, an organization constituted by prominent personalities, fosters a stable and sustainable economic growth of humankind. Among its members, there are outstanding scientists (even Nobel Prize winners), economists, politicians, heads of states and international NGOs. The Club of Rome gathered for the first time in 1968, and in 1972 was published the alarming report „The Limits to Growth» (Meadows, Donella/Meadows, Dennis L./Randers, Jørgen, *The Limits of Growth*, New York 1972). The principal thesis of the publication states that on a finite planet, there could not be continuous economic growth and that these limits were of two kinds: due to the natural resources, on the one hand, and due to the capacity of the Earth to absorb pollution without deteriorating the environment. In 1992, i.e. twenty years later, appeared *Beyond the Limits of Growth* (Meadows, Donella/Meadows, Dennis L./Randers, Jørgen, *Beyond the Limits*, White River Junction 1992), in 2004 *Limits to Growth: the 30-Year-Update* (Meadows, Donella/Meadows, Dennis L./Randers, Jørgen, *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update*, White River Junction 2004), and in 2012 the 40-year prognostics (Randers, Jørgen, 2052: *A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years*, White River Junction 2012).

²⁷⁰ The notion of „monoculturality» refers to the ideological universalization or generalization of one (*mono*) specific culture or civilization, in that case the western one. Best interprets the «cultural turn» as a consequence of an overwhelming «postmodern turn».

²⁷¹ For a good overview of the concept: Best, Steven, *Cultural Turn*, in: Ritzer, George (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, Maryland 2007.

²⁷² Jacobs, Mark/Spillman, Lynette, *Cultural sociology at the crossroads of the discipline*, in: *Poetics* 33 (1) (2005) 1-14, here 7.

formerly peripheral impulses such as post-structuralism, cultural studies, literary criticism, and various forms of linguistic analysis became the main core of attention, meanwhile the classical fields of political sciences, sociology and economics passed to a second place. The «**cultural turn**» also describes a substantive shift in advanced societies, in which traditional forms of cultural authority and normativity vanish and are replaced by a so called «global culture» which is in fact the worldwide expression of capitalist market economy: «The very sphere of culture itself has expanded, becoming coterminous with market society in such a way that the cultural is no longer limited to its earlier, traditional or experimental forms, but it is consumed throughout daily life itself, in shopping, in professional activities, in the various often televisual forms of leisure, in production for the market and in the consumption of those market products, indeed in the most secret folds and corners of the quotidian. Social space is now completely saturated with the image of culture».²⁷³

Classical Liberation Theology referred, as we know, mainly to political sciences, economics and sociology as methodological tools to analyse the situation of poverty, «underdevelopment» and inequality, as it was the case at the time (1960s and 1970s) in Latin America and elsewhere in the global South. The so called «Dependency Theory» and its Marxist analytical framework have been the most fertile hermeneutical proceedings to construct a convincing theory on power relations and mechanisms of the «development of underdevelopment»²⁷⁴. Other important factors in developing Liberation Theology have been the emergence of military dictatorships in the region and the struggle of the USA to extend or at least not to lose their dominance in the context of Cold War (according to the theory of «domino effect»). Cultural analysis or even the «cultural turn» we just mentioned, did not yet form part of analytical reflection and systematic thought among liberation theologians in the 1970s and 1980s, disregarding a few exceptions.

Classical Liberation Theology focused on economic poverty and social (or «classist») discrimination and marginalization, and liberation had to be interpreted in a holistic sense, but first of all as the active struggle of poor people against the situation of dependence and misery. The «option for the poor», as it was proclaimed already in 1968 in Medellín²⁷⁵, focused on a culturally and sexually neutral and abstract subject, but stressed at the same time its collective and communitarian aspects, as it has been resumed in the theological and political concept of «people». The «cultural turn in Liberation Theology» was not so much

²⁷³ Jameson, Frederic, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*, Brooklyn 1998, here 64.

²⁷⁴ This expression refers to Andre Gunder Frank's famous article *El desarrollo del subdesarrollo* (The development of underdevelopment): Frank, Andre Gunder, *El desarrollo del subdesarrollo*, in: Monthly Review Press 4 (2005) [1966] 144-157. See also: Frank, Andre Gunder/Frank, M.F., *The Underdevelopment of Development*, in: Savoie, D.J./Brecher I. (ed.), *Equity and Efficiency in Economic Development*, Montreal 1992. Together with Raúl Prebisch and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (later Brazilian president), he has been the founder of the so called «dependency theory», a new economic framework originated in 1948, which was decisive for some core insight of Liberation Theology, and which is based upon the following principles: 1. Poor nations provide natural resources, cheap labour, a destination for obsolete technology, and markets for developed nations, without which the latter could not have the standard of living they enjoy. 2. Wealthy nations actively perpetuate within these nations a state of dependence by various means.

²⁷⁵ At the occasion of the Second General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM) in Medellín (Colombia), the church stated for the first time «the preferential option for the poor», ratified eleven years later in Puebla under an explicit title of the final document.

a consequence of the debates in the social sciences and postmodern circles of the academia, but much more the effect of two almost simultaneous processes: First, the intercontinentalisation of Liberation Theology, and second, the irruption of indigenous people in society and churches.

The genuinely Latin American Liberation Theology has been assumed very quickly by African and Asian theologians, as an approach which could give a better response to the challenges of the societies and churches than the liberal and conservative traditions of European origin. The foundation of EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians) in 1976 was a milestone in the spread of Latin American Liberation Theology beyond *Abya Yala*²⁷⁶ to Africa, Asia, and Oceania and its (re-)contextualization in these geographical contexts. Mainly African Theologians were confronted – apart from poverty and discrimination – with the challenge autochthonous cultures and religions meant for theological reflection, but the same can be said of Oceania and partly of Asia. Liberation Theology in Africa has been dominated, with the exception of South African «Black Theology», by cultural and ethnic questions rather than by the issue of social, economic, and political inequality and poverty. And in Asia, due to the multireligious situation, Liberation Theology had to give an answer to religiously motivated marginalization (Dalit- and Adivasi-Theology in India) and political liberation movements (*Minjung* Theology in South-Korea; Water Buffalo Theology in Japan, Theology of Struggle in the Philippines).²⁷⁷

Thanks to the symbolic year of 1992 and the commemoration of 500 years of conquest and genocide in Latin America, indigenous peoples all over the world started to raise their voices and to leave their condition of invisibilised cultures and religious traditions. In Latin America, this was the most important motive for a shift from a mainly political and economic to a more cultural and ethnic approach of Liberation Theology, together with the gender issue, the ecological question, the issues of sexual minorities and the Afro-American population on the continent. Almost the same – *mutatis mutandi* – can be observed in Africa, Asia, and Oceania, mainly in the last case.

2. New forms of poverty and marginalization

This shift from (Latin American) Liberation Theology focused on economic, social and political poverty and inequality to a (worldwide) Liberation Theology in ethnic, cultural, feminist, *queer* and ecologist perspective has not to be understood as a radical turn, but rather as a process of differentiation of subjects and methodologies. The fundamental principles of classical Liberation Theology continued to be valid, as there are the principal option for the weak and marginalized, the integrity of liberation, the threefold procedure of «see – judge – act», the concept of structural sin or the concrete and engaged reading and interpretation of biblical texts. Even the situation of poverty and marginalization has not changed

²⁷⁶ *Abya Yala* is the indigenous or endogenous notion for the continent, while «Latin America» is of colonial origin and represents a foreign adscription which has nothing to do with the different indigenous traditions and civilizations existing in the so called «discovered» land. The notion *Abya Yala* comes from the Kuna ethnic group in Panama and means «earth in full maturity».

²⁷⁷ For a fuller review of contextual theologies in the four continents of the global South, see: Estermann, Josef *Like a Rainbow or a Bunch of Flowers. Contextual theologies in a globalized world*, in: Pacific Journal of Theology, Series II/30 (2003), 4-33.

substantially, but rather new faces or subjects of liberation have been emerging which had been invisibilised by patriarchal, colonial and liberal theology and even by classical Liberation Theology: women, youth, indigenous peoples, black and coloured people, homosexual and bisexual people, Mother Earth, religious minorities and victims of *apartheid* and cast systems.

One of the first «shifts» of classical Liberation Theology was caused by the emergence of a genuine feminist theology in the global South, mainly in Latin America and Asia, and later also in Africa and among the Hispanic minorities in the USA (the so called *Latino Theology*). Partly, this movement has been inspired by European and US feminist theologians, but mainly by the very fact and awareness of what has been called the «feminization» of poverty and exclusion. Feminist Liberation Theology in Latin America and among the Hispanics in the USA (also called *Mujerista Theology*)²⁷⁸ emerged on the one hand as a criticism of androcentrism within classical Liberation Theology, but on the other hand as an effort to «deconstruct» a male dominated reading of sacred texts and a male biased interpretation of oppression and liberation (inclusive redemption). Oppression in gender perspective goes far beyond economic injustice and political dominance because it includes all kind of male dominated mechanisms of sexist and macho discrimination and stereotypes. And liberation has to get a «female face», that is an interpretation that takes into account the specific forms of female suffering as sexism, feminicide, abortion of female fetuses, traffic of women, forced prostitution and restricted access to power and decision making in society and churches.

In the 1990s, the formerly quite abstract and general subject of classical Liberation Theology («the poor») underwent again a process of differentiation, but now not in gender perspective, but in ethnical and cultural perspective. The emergence of indigenous peoples all over the world and the visualisation of their spiritualities, worldviews (cosmovisions)²⁷⁹ and cultural heritage, but also of their poverty and exclusion from social and political life, produced for the first time a strong «cultural shift» in Liberation Theology and has been at the same time a very important motive for Intercultural Theology to go beyond their intention to establish a dialogue between academic Western and grassroots» theology in the global South, as it has been the case since the beginning of EATWOT in the late 1980s.

The awareness of «indigenization» of poverty and marginalization focused on other characteristics – beyond economic, social and gender-based poverty – of discrimination and exclusion: racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, cast systems, *apartheid* and other forms of ethnically motivated discrimination and marginalization. But also, of double or triple stigmatization of indigenous women: as poor people, as indigenous persons and as women (often additionally as persons who speak a non-western language, who are illiterate people,

²⁷⁸ Although the notion has been restricted in the first time to the feminist theology made among the Hispanic population in the USA, it became later a general notion (*pars pro toto*) for Latin American feminist theology. See: Isasi-Díaz, Ada María, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the 21st Century*, Maryknoll N.Y. (1996).

²⁷⁹ „Visibilization» and „invisibilization» are two core notions in the analysis of indigenous religions, theology, and spirituality. The point is that they had not disappeared during colonial times, nor were they totally eradicated, but that they were either «made invisible» by the mainstream religions and cultural canons, or conserved in hermetic seclusion or clandestinity by the main subjects of indigenous worldviews and religions. As «cosmovision» (*cosmovisión*), ethnology and philosophy use to refer to indigenous worldviews which include spiritual, religious, and philosophical aspects.

who are exploited as labour forces or sexual slaves, etc.). A new theological subject emerged: coloured and black, indigenous and mestizo people. And in this process, a new form of Liberation Theology came up and revealed a radically different form from both liberal European and Latin American Liberation Theology.

The so called *Teología India*²⁸⁰ or indigenous theology was not only one of the first expressions of the «cultural turn» in theology but challenged established academic theology in many ways. First of all, the theological subjects which are no longer the professional theologians or representatives of a church, but the spiritual leaders and members of indigenous communities and the outlaws of cast-based societies. Second, the sciences of reference are now social and cultural anthropology, linguistics, and oral history, rather than economics, political sciences, and sociology. Third, methodologically, it is a narrative theology rather than a discursive and argumentative discourse. Fourth, it takes elements of indigenous wisdom and mythology, cosmology and philosophy as starting points of theological reflection. And fifth, it does not follow academic standards or a western scientific canon. But above all, it constitutes a very important «mirror» for the euro- and occident centric nature of the mainstream theology, even of classical Liberation Theology.²⁸¹

The same could be said of other «minorities» which had not been included in theological reflection by liberal European or classical Liberation Theology: the *queer* community of persons with a non-heterosexual orientation (LGBTI)²⁸², Afro-American populations in Latin America, Hispanic population in the USA (*Latinos/as*), religious minorities in Africa, Asia and Oceania, migrant populations all over the world, but mainly in Europe, and of course Mother Earth herself, that is: non-human nature and the planet Earth as a whole.²⁸³ Instead of one predominant «cultural shift», we'd better talk about different hermeneutical shifts of contemporary Intercultural Theology, and instead of one predominant intercultural or interreligious dialogue, we'd prefer talking about a colourful intercultural and interreligious polylogue²⁸⁴. Economic and cybernetic globalization and postmodern thinking are not only thematic and axiological, but also hermeneutical and methodological challenges to actual theology.

²⁸⁰ The expression *Teología India* (Indian Theology) uses the exogenous and historically erroneous adscription *Indio* as a visible sign of protest against colonial oppression and marginalization. See: López Hernández, Eleazar, *Indigenous Theology in its Latin American Setting*, in: *The Ecumenical Review* 6/4 (2010), 352–360.

²⁸¹ See: Estermann, Josef, *Apu Taytayku. Religion und Theologie im Andinen Kontext Lateinamerikas*, Ostfildern 2012. In Spanish: Estermann, Josef, *Cruz y Coca. Hacia la descolonización de religión y teología*, Quito 2014. Chapter IX deals explicitly with the «challenges to European-Western theologies» put by indigenous theologies.

²⁸² LGBTI: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transsexuals, Intersexuals.

²⁸³ As an example of ecologist Liberation Theology (or ecotheology) can be mentioned the later work of Leonardo Boff: Boff, Leonardo, *Ecología. Grito de la Tierra, grito de los pobres*, Buenos Aires 1996. Boff, Leonardo, *Essential care: An ethics of human nature*. Waco 2008.

²⁸⁴ In Intercultural Philosophy, the notion of a „polylogue» was coined by Franz Wimmer: Wimmer, Franz M., *Interkulturelle Philosophie. Eine Einführung*, Vienna 2004. Wimmer, Franz M., *Thesen, Bedingungen und Aufgaben interkulturell orientierter Philosophie*, in: *polylog. Zeitschrift für interkulturelles Philosophieren* 1 (1998), 5-12. See also: Chen, Hsueh-i, *The Concept of the «Polylogue» and the Question of Intercultural Identity*, in: *Intercultural Communication Studies* XIX (2010), 54-64.

3. New forms of criticisms

Before dealing with the hermeneutical and methodological implications of an intercultural polylogue in theology, I'd like to focus on the new lines of criticism which have emerged in the last two decades in different parts of the world and which form very important challenges for a truly intercultural and polytopic theology²⁸⁵. The emergence of non-western theologies in the course of the last fifty years did not only diversify theological thinking and reflection but shed new light on the monocultural and ethnocentric constitution of the so called «universal» theology of the European academia. Although classical Liberation Theology adopted in its conceptual and methodological framework occidental language and procedures, it broke in many aspects with dominant liberal theology in Europe and elsewhere in the global North. First of all, it has been, from the very beginning, an experience based theological reflection and not a deductive inference of universally established axioms (dogmas). Second, conceptual, and hermeneutical tools have not been provided, in the first place, by philosophy (as her handmaid), but by the social sciences. Third, Liberation Theology itself is just the second word, built upon the concrete faith experience of concrete people in situations of poverty and marginalization. And fourth, theological concepts are reinterpreted in terms of integrate and historically incarnated liberation.

But the main challenges to established «universal» European theology arose from indigenous theological reflection. While feminist theology criticizes classical academic theology to be androcentric or even sexist, indigenous theology questions very strongly its Eurocentric and monocultural perspective. Or more precisely: it questions the presumed «universality» of European and North American theology as ideological, i.e. as an illegitimate generalization of specific cultural and civilizational characteristics rooted in European or, generally, occidental civilization and culture. The tendency of European academic theology of interpreting itself as «supra-cultural», i.e. as some kind of meta-cultural or culturally independent rationality and content, has been possible due to real processes of super-cultural globalization²⁸⁶, long before economic and cyber globalization

²⁸⁵ Raimon Panikkar coined the concept of „diatopic hermeneutics» as a means of intercultural understanding: the process of interpretation of cultural peculiarities has to go forth and back between two cultural «places» (*topoi*), in the search of «homoeomorphic equivalents» (*equivalentes homeomórficos*). In the case of intercultural and interreligious polylogues, we should talk about many «places» (*topoi*), and many theological sources of truth (*loci*). Polytopic theology is the ideal of establishing various polylogues where no specific *topos* or cultural paradigm has definitory or conceptual dominance. Panikkar: «I call it *diatopic* hermeneutics because the distance to be overcome is not merely temporal, within one broad tradition, but the gap existing between two human *topoi*, «places» of understanding and self-understanding, between two - or more – cultures that have not developed their patterns of intelligibility ... Diatopic hermeneutics stands for the thematic consideration of understanding the other *without assuming that the other has the same basic self-understanding*. The ultimate human horizon, and not only differing contexts, is at stake here.» (Panikkar, Raimon, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*. New York 1979, here 9. For the philosophical reflection of diatopic hermeneutics, see: Estermann, Josef, *Diatopische Hermeneutik am Beispiel der Andinen Philosophie. Ansätze zur Methodologie interkulturellen Philosophierens*, in: *polylog. Zeitschrift für interkulturelles Philosophieren* 27 (2012), 21-40.

²⁸⁶ Just a short definition for the concepts involved here: „Monocultural» means that some concepts or contents are rooted and have their proper meaning in one specific culture, but are generalized as if they were of universal validity; «supra-cultural» or «meta-cultural» means that some truths are supposed to have validity beyond any cultural context, in the sense of the Platonic ideas; «super-cultural» means that some concepts and contents

started to conquer the world. By means of military and symbolic imperialism and colonization, European theology has been exported to the non-western cultures and civilizations, as it were the only valid theological reflection. Liberation Theology and more urgently indigenous theologies stress the contextual character of any theological enterprise including dominant academic theology.

In the case of indigenous theology, the main points of criticism have to do with the specific philosophical and ideological framework occidental theology is imbedded in. European theology – even more strongly the Catholic tradition²⁸⁷ – has a very strong conceptual framework rooted in Greek philosophy, or more precisely: in Hellenistic philosophy which has been the avant-garde in the era of dogmatization of Christian faith (from second to sixth century). This is not quite different in protestant tradition, although the references should be a little bit different. In the case of contemporary US-theology, we should add the factors of market ideology, postmodernity, and Prosperity Gospel. Indigenous theology does not criticize European theology as one of a series of contextual theologies, but insofar as it claims to be universal in a super- or supra-cultural way. If Hellenistic philosophy is constituent for Christian faith and theology – as the former pope Benedict XVI stressed²⁸⁸ –, no genuine indigenous or non-western theology could even claim to be Christian theology. Or if the postmodern American way of life were constituent for Christian identity, civilizations rooted in communitarism or collectivism rather than individualism could not be considered to be a valid framework for theological reflection.

Indigenous Theology's criticism of Eurocentric or Occidentcentric theology is, at the same time, a call for a deep and thorough contextualization of theology and the legitimacy of a fundamental *polytopia* of theological reflection. From the perspective of Intercultural Philosophy, this does not lead to some kind of «theological relativism» or even agnosticism, but calls for efforts to establish a bundle of intercultural and even interreligious dialogues, that is to say: theological polylogues.²⁸⁹ «Universality» is not an *a priori* of one specific culture (the occidental one) or one specific period of history (late Antiquity), but the (heuristic) convergence of dialogical and polylogical efforts. It simply means that no particular culture, civilization, people, or period has the privilege to possess the fullness of truth, as much «advanced» or «superior» they may be. Even in theology, «universality» is a

coming from some particular cultural context, are «inflated» and globalized in the sense that they form some kind of «super-culture» which dominates any other culture.

²⁸⁷ Indigenous theologies came up first in Catholic dominated contexts as Latin America and the Philippines, due to the paradigm of «inculturation» present very strongly in Catholic post-Vaticanum II theology. At the same time, indigenous theology, together with a pluralistic theology of religions, has caused serious problems to the Vatican and its Congregation for the Faith. There is a Spanish adagio that says: Actually, there are two theological currents observed by the Roman curia, the *Teología India* (Indigenous Theology) and the *Teología de la India* (Theology of India). Both have to do with a questioning of the philosophical and ideological fundaments of theological reflection.

²⁸⁸ I refer to the statement of Pope Benedict XVI that Christianity was connected indissolubly with Hellenistic thought and therefore it could not be „de-Hellenised». In his lecture at the University of Regensburg on September 12, 2006, he stressed once more the essential role of the Greek *logos* for the theological reflection of Christian faith, after he had done earlier the same already in his charge as Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith: „Christianity is ... the synthesis, mediated by Jesus Christ, between the faith of Israel and the Greek spirit» (Ratzinger, Joseph, *Europa - verpflichtendes Erbe für die Christen*, in: König, Franz/Rahner, Karl (ed.). *Europa: Horizonte der Hoffnung*, Graz 1983), 61-74, here 68). Translation mine.

²⁸⁹ See: Estermann, *Diatopische*.

question of intercultural «negotiation», although the ultimate subject (the divine) is supposed to be meta-cultural and transcendent to any cultural contextualization.²⁹⁰

Along with indigenous theologies, there are some other positions and theological currents which strongly question mainstream liberal theology. One of these is the so called «decolonizing» process which is quite different from formal decolonization of former colonies, because it has to do with the often unconscious and hidden stereotypes, prejudices, mechanisms and conceptual power relations of mental processes and their results in science, politics, society and religion. «Postcolonial» or decolonizing theology²⁹¹ tries to reveal these hidden «colonial» and «neo-colonial» structures in classical theological thinking. Representing Jesus as a white man with European face represents, for instance, a colonial or neo-colonial mental scheme. Religious symbolism is one of the strongest forms of the «colonization of the souls»²⁹², and theology which is not aware of its own «colonial introjects», cannot be called really intercultural and liberating.

4. Andean theology as a concrete example of intercultural Liberation Theology

Although this conference has as its main objective to give an overview of the methodological and hermeneutical challenges Intercultural Theology is confronted with these days, I'd like to show with a concrete example how it works. Andean Theology²⁹³, i.e. indigenous theology emerged in the Andean context of South America or *Abya Yala*, has to struggle with a series of difficulties in methodological and hermeneutical perspective.

First, Andean religiosity and spirituality is a highly syncretized phenomenon of a hybrid culture, result of 500 years of colonization, evangelization, and neo-colonization. There is no way back to a «pure» religious universe, neither in the Andean sense («Andean

²⁹⁰ In theology and philosophy, there has always existed a tendency to identify the nature of their main epistemic object (God or the absolute) with the nature of knowing itself. This «principle of connaturality» has been the principal cause of theological and philosophical determinism, but turns out to be a fallacy. Even if the epistemic object of theological reflection and knowledge is supra-cultural or meta-cultural (God), the reflection itself is human and as such always contextual and «relative».

²⁹¹ There is already quite a lot of literature on Postcolonial or Decolonial Theology. See: Keller Catherine/ Nausner, Michael/Rivera, Mayra (ed.), *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, St. Louis 2004. In German, there exists a good selection of texts of the principal representatives of Postcolonial Theology: Nehring, Andreas/Tielesch, Simon (ed.), *Postkoloniale Theologie. Bibelhermeneutische und kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge*, Stuttgart 2013.

²⁹² This is the title of the famous book written by Fernando Mires: Mires, Fernando, *La colonización de las almas. Misión y conquista en Hispanoamérica*, San José de Costa Rica 1987.

²⁹³ Concerning Andean Theology, see for publications in Spanish: Estermann, Josef (coord.), *Teología Andina: El tejido diverso de la fe indígena*, 2 vols., La Paz 2006. Estermann, Cruz. In German: Estermann, *Apu Taytayku*. Concerning Andean Philosophy, see for publications in Spanish: Estermann, Josef, *Filosofía Andina. Estudio Intercultural de la Sabiduría Autóctona*, Quito 1998. Estermann, Josef, *Filosofía Andina: Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo*, La Paz 2006. In German: Estermann, Josef, *Andine Philosophie: Interkulturelle Studie zur autochthonen andinen Weisheit*. Frankfurt a.M. 1999. In English: Estermann, Josef, *Andean Philosophy as a Questioning Alterity. An Intercultural Criticism of Western Andro- and Ethnocentrism*, in: Note, Nicole/Fornet-Betancourt, Raúl/Estermann, Josef/Aerts, Diederik (ed.), *Worldviews and Cultures: Philosophical Reflections from an Intercultural Perspective*, Dordrecht 2008, 129-147.

Indigenism»), nor in the Christian sense (European Catholicism). Andean religiosity is a mixture of Christian and precolonial non-Christian elements and convictions.²⁹⁴

Second, there are no sacred texts of Andean religiosity which are not interpretations and comments by Christian authors. What we know about pre-colonial Andean spirituality and religion has been filtered by Christian chroniclers, anthropologists, missionaries, and other scholars. In contrast to the sacred book of Central American Maya religiosity and its sacred text *Popol Vuh*, Andean cultures have been oral ones, except for some calculator procedures (*qhipus*).

Third, the very concept of «theology» has to be deconstructed interculturally, because it refers to the notion of a more or less personal God (*theos*) and a discursive and bivalent rationality (*logos*). In the native languages of the Andes, there is no word for «God» as generic term, but there are proper names for divinities and there are a lot of metaphors for the divine. And Andean rationality is more circular than discursive, inclusive, or polyvalent than exclusive and bivalent.

Forth, there is no splitting between the sacred and the profane, so there cannot be made a strict separation between there formal field of theology on the one hand, and the fields of philosophy, social and natural sciences and the spheres of life in general, on the other hand. Theology has to do with all, as philosophy and ritual practice have as well.

Fifth, Christian *theologoumena* have to be reinterpreted in the Andean context within the hermeneutical key of relationality, i.e. of the cosmic network of relations as the fundamentals of life and grace. So, the divine is not «substance», but relation or the guarantee and manifestation of life-engendering relations. The divine has female and male connotations and can only be source of life insofar as it is conceived in this complementarity.

Sixth, the lineal time conception of the Semitic tradition does not have its parallel in Andean thought, which is characterized by cyclical notions and spiral movements. The *eschaton* is not to be found in front of us, in the future, but behind us, in the past.²⁹⁵

Seventh, Andean theology recurs to mythology, oral history, metaphors rooted in collective sub conscience and linguistic features of the native languages rather than Western sciences and academic standards. That means that neither philosophy in a Western sense, nor social sciences (as in the case of classical Liberation Theology) are the main references for theological thinking, but rather anthropology, linguistics, and ethnography.

And finally, Andean theology has to do directly with the struggle of indigenous people to decolonize there cultural, religious, and symbolic universe. Andean theology, therefore, is at the same time critical deconstruction of dominant religious and theological language, thought and praxis, and intercultural reconstruction of a proper decolonized language, thought and praxis.

That means that Andean theology is in attempt to liberate theology from its Hellenistic framework and academic western standards, but at the same time presents itself as a

²⁹⁴ There are attempts of a non-Christian «Andean Theology» (in the sense of *Teología India India*), but it constitutes a very small group of radical defenders of a pre-colonial golden past.

²⁹⁵ Andean time conception is resumed in the following metaphor: «Looking to the past, we walk backwards towards the future». The utopian ideal of the past is guiding us rather than an unknown future utopia.

challenge to dominant theological thinking, even in the form of classical Liberation Theology. Andean theology is Liberation Theology under new and changed conditions. And it is Intercultural Theology insofar as it constitutes itself in a process of diatopic hermeneutics²⁹⁶ and interreligious dialogue.

5. But there are still poor and marginalized people

In spite of the diverse hermeneutical shifts in Liberation Theology which have to do mainly with the inclusion of gender perspective, cultural settings, sexual orientation and ecological concerns, the basic fundamentals and inspiration of «classical» Liberation Theology have not changed substantially. In comparison with the 1960s and 1970s, the period of the emergence of this new contextual theological approach, actually there are not fewer poor people and there exists still the scandal of marginalization and exploitation of dependent human beings and nature. Although economy and sociology have been substituted by gender studies, cultural studies, ethnology and linguistics as the main epistemological frameworks of contemporary contextual theology in the global South, the capitalist market and economics have been converted worldwide to the principal determining factor of life, both of the rich and the poor. Capitalist market economy²⁹⁷ has become the «orthodox» and only existing model, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War and really existing socialism.

The context that gave origin to the Dependence Theory in the 1960s, has not really changed, but rather been transformed in different ways. First of all, economic, financial and lifestyle globalization have also globalized the patterns of poverty and marginalization. That means that the dichotomist antagonism between a wealthy global North (the so called «developed» countries) and a poor global South (the so called «underdeveloped» countries) is no longer valid without some further differentiation. There are huge «souths» in the heart of the global North, and there are bubbles of rich «norths» within the global South. There are other forms of dependence and there is also a real, although quite asymmetric «interdependence». Almost no national or regional economy can protect itself against the effects of financial and economic «crashes» anywhere in the world, as the Financial Crisis in 2008 demonstrated. In the third millennium, there exist new challenges to Liberation Theology which were not present after World War II. Among them, I can mention the high degree of idolatry money and consumerism represent. Capitalism has transformed itself to a full-fledged religion with strong bonds of cohesion and adherence.²⁹⁸ Theological forms of capitalist logics and religion can be found in the so called Prosperity Gospel or Prosperity

²⁹⁶ See footnote 285.

²⁹⁷ It has to be stressed at this occasion that market economy does not necessarily imply a capitalist framework. There are other non-capitalist types of market economy, as e.g. share economy, care economy, women's economy, and exchange economy.

²⁹⁸ One of the most creative thinkers in this sense is Franz Hinkelammert and the Ecumenical Department of Research (*Departamento Ecueménico de Investigaciones DEI*) in San José in Costa Rica. One of the convictions of Hinkelammert is to show actual capitalism as a new form of idolatry and religion, and its defenders as the new generation of conservative theologians. See: Hinkelammert, Franz, *The Ideological Weapons of Death. A Theological Critique of Capitalism*, Maryknoll N.Y. 1986. See also: Palaver, Wolfgang, *Kapitalismus als Religion*, in: *Quart* 3+4 (2001), 18–25. The author refers to the classical text „Kapitalismus als Religion» (Capitalism as religion), written in 1921 by Walter Benjamin.

Theology (*Teología de la Prosperidad*) of neo-Pentecostal churches, but also in the language and symbolisms of capitalist market economy itself: the «invisible hand» of the Market; the dollar-rain that comes down on everybody, as the manna in the desert (*trickle-down effect*); the consumer's paradise; the universal convertibility of values and goods into money and commodities; the secular double predestination to luxury or misery.²⁹⁹

There are efforts of contextual theologies all over the world to deal with these «old» new challenges in order to propose a Liberation Theology of the fourth generation (after the classical period and the feminist and indigenous shifts). This does not mean some kind of regression to or restoration of former positions, or even of abandoning the process of «interculturising» and «genderising» theology. I think that we actually present an effort to go beyond the «cultural shift» without neglecting the very important role of culture, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, and ecological concern as main fields of struggle. But theological reflection has to redirect itself to the main intuition of classical Liberation Theology: outside the poor and marginalized, there is no redemption (*extra pauperem non est salus*). In Latin America, since almost two decades, there is a strong current of thought and analysis that brings together economy and theology (Franz Hinkelammert, Jung Mo Sung³⁰⁰), together with a strong self-criticism of mainstream theology as «colonizing» symbolic power (postcolonial theology; postcolonial studies).

Liberation Theology has to go hand in hand with the liberation of theology (Juan Luis Segundo)³⁰¹, but in our times, this does mean much more than forty years ago: it has to do with a thorough and strong critique of new forms of oppressive religions and religious legitimation of the current world (dis)order, but it has to do as well with the role of (academic) theology in its tendency to withdraw from the real battlefields of humankind into an ivory tower of splendid isolation. As I tried to demonstrate earlier, this kind of «universal» and abstract theology turns out to be highly ideological and ethnocentric (mostly Occidentcentric or just Eurocentric). Intercultural Theology in its «culturalist» and postmodern version³⁰² has the tendency to deal just with the cultural and ethnic connotations of theological languages, without reacting on or even reflecting the huge asymmetries and hegemonic structures of cultures and civilizations around the globe. Therefore, it is

²⁹⁹ One of the principal texts analysing critically the phenomenon of Prosperity Theology is: Coleman, Simon, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity. Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity*. Cambridge MA. 2000. One of the fundamental texts supporting and legitimizing Prosperity Theology is: Bruce Wilkinson/Kopp, David, *The Prayer of Jabez. Breaking Through to the Blessed Life*, Colorado Springs 2000.

³⁰⁰ Mo Sung, Jung, *The Subject, Capitalism and Religion, Horizons of Hope in Complex Society*. New York 2011. Mo Sung, Jung, *Desire, Market, and Religion*, London 2007. Rieger Page/Jörg, Mo Sung, Jung/Miguez, Nestor, *Beyond the Spirit of Empire, Theology and Politics in a New Key*, London 2009.

³⁰¹ The classical work of Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberación de la teología*, has focused already in the 1970s on the dialectics of Theology of Liberation and the liberation of theology, as a *conditio sine qua non* for the liberating power of theological reflection. This program has not been put into practice until recently, motivated by postcolonial studies and the criticism of theology's Eurocentrism. See: Segundo, Juan Luis, *Liberation of Theology*, Dublin 1977. The Spanish original is from 1974 (Segundo, Juan Luis, *Liberación de la teología*. Mexico 1974).

³⁰² A „culturist» current of Intercultural Theology stresses, as in the case of its philosophical counterpart, the cultural contexts and predetermination of thinking, without analysing the power relations at work in the global «market» of cultures and civilizations. This is more or less the same position postmodern cultural theory adopts. A «critical» Intercultural Theology has to deal questions of power and asymmetries as vital questions of intercultural dialogue and polylogue. And this implies a great level of self-criticism.

necessary to make a difference – as it is made in Intercultural Philosophy – between a critical and deconstructive current, on the one hand, and a more «culturalist» and aesthetic or comparative current, on the other hand.³⁰³

The urgency of the actual world problems and the accumulation of crises is a call for Intercultural Theology to engage again in the contra-hegemonic movements as ATTAC (anti-globalization movement), *Occupy*, *Indignados*, World Social Forum, *Décroissance*, Post-Development Theories, Postcolonial Studies, Decolonization and Post-Capitalist economies. Liberation Theology has been transformed by various hermeneutical shifts, and one of the most recent shifts – which is still urgency – is the shift to a «post-classical» politically and economically engaged reflection and praxis. In a context of antagonistic tendencies of fundamentalisation versus globalization, or in other words: of regression to pre-modern absolutism versus postmodern differentiation and relativism, this shift would be able to regain the critical and deconstructive potential Liberation Theology has had in earlier times, without neglecting the huge transformation societies and churches worldwide have undergone meanwhile.³⁰⁴

6. Some hermeneutical and methodological remarks

Liberation Theology has been since its very emergence in the 1970s an experience-based theology, i.e. a second-hand reflection on a first-hand concrete praxis and experience. This experience has always had a twofold character: the religious and faith praxis of a concrete subject («people» and/or «poor»), on the one hand, and the social, political and economic experience of poor and marginalized people, on the other hand. The ongoing processes of economic and media globalization, together with a fragmentation of societies and collective identities, have contributed to «weakening» the subjects of liberation, both in the religious and political sense. There is no more such a subject, as «people» was in the beginnings of classical Liberation Theology, and even in the political sense, there is no more a uniform and solidary subject of protest and resistance. In the global North, the process of secularization has diminished dramatically the faith communities as concrete subjects of reflection and resistance, meanwhile new religious denominations as Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches embrace mostly a kind of theology which does not consider political and social struggle for justice and equality as a *locus theologicus*. It is too early to say something about a new «post-secular» subject which is supposed to be emerging.³⁰⁵ In the

³⁰³ As in philosophy, the „culturalist» or postmodern version of Intercultural Theology is more widespread in Europe and USA, while the «critical» version can be found more in the global South, mainly in Latin America.

³⁰⁴ There is still little convergence between academic theology and social movements. In this context, it is a hopeful sign that the present Pope Francis invited the representatives of more than 200 social movements from October 27 to 29, 2014 to a meeting in the Vatican. The text Francis pronounced, has been commented spontaneously as a «new Encyclical to poverty and environment» (in fact, this Encyclical has been published under the name *Laudato Si*» in May 2015).

For Latin America, see: Colque, Abraham/Estermann, Josef (coord.), *Movimientos Sociales y Teología en América Latina*, La Paz 2010.

³⁰⁵ Although the thesis of an imminent post-secular era and a concomitant theological reflection (Post-Secular Theology) is broadly accepted in the sciences of religion and postmodern theology in the global North, it cannot be globalized, and even for the northern hemisphere, it cannot be generalized. See: Blond, Philipp, *Post-Secular*

global South, there is still a huge potential of popular and social movements fighting for better life conditions, but even there, thirty years of aggressive neoliberal capitalism have achieved an alarming degree of lack of solidarity among the classical subject «people».

One of the main hermeneutical challenges of a critical and engaged Liberation Theology today is the constitution of an epistemological and praxiological subject of liberation. There are some indications that such a subject is not contextualized any more exclusively in the geographic South (and therefore it would be wrong still to talk about «Third World Theology»), but in social and political movements of the global civil society which run across the bipolar division of North and South. This new emerging «subject» has in common its protest and struggle against the current economic world order and the deepening of the gap between rich and poor, but also against the mercantilisation of life, the exploitation of women, the production of irreversible climate changes and the new forms of imperialism and neo-colonialism which include new forms of slavery and feudal structures. This political and social subject is mainly a «virtual» subject active in the Social Media and through a very heterogeneous bundle of initiatives, organizations, movements and platforms (from the Maidan activists in Ukraine to the Chilean students, from Edward Snowden to Yousafzai Malala, from the World Social Forum to the Zapatist movement). This «global» subject does not coincide with the religious subjects of what classical Liberation Theology called the «people of God», although there is some overlapping. But in general, the most progressive and resistant groups have left the churches, and poor and marginalized people in South and North are de-solidarized and individualized to a very high degree.

That means that theology and the churches have to make new alliances, not just with faith communities, but with counter-hegemonic social and popular movements, as Pope Francis recently tried to do.³⁰⁶ It implies necessarily the dimension of interreligiosity, as liberation is not just an issue of Christians, but of all «people of good will» who try to resist the world-system³⁰⁷ of injustice, poverty and disorder. The hermeneutical place (*locus*) of a new engaged and politically sensitive Liberation Theology is still poor and marginalized people, but not any more in an abstract and religiously homogenous sense. Poor and marginalized subjects (humans and non-humans) are actually e.g. female and male sex workers from the former eastern European countries, migrant workers and refugees mainly in the USA and Europe, but also in Arabic countries, Mother Nature, children without access to education, HIV-infected persons, people with a non-heterosexual orientation, elder and impoverished people, «excess» people and victims of the brutal competence of capitalist world economy, indigenous people and victims of racism, sexism and xenophobia, but also victims of religious extremism and fundamentalism, as well as members of religious and spiritual minorities.

Philosophy. Between Philosophy and Theology, London 1997. Moody, Katharine Sarah, *Post-Secular Theology and the Church. A New Kind of Christian is A New Kind of Atheist*, Eugene, Oregon 2014.

³⁰⁶ See footnote 304.

³⁰⁷ According to the concept of Wallerstein: Wallerstein, Immanuel, *The Modern World-System*, New York 1974. Wallerstein, Immanuel, *The Modern World System II. Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750*, New York 1980. Wallerstein, Immanuel, *The Modern World-System III*, San Diego 1989). The concept of «world-systems» distinguishes between core countries, semi-peripheral and peripheral countries.

A second challenge is constituted by the very concept of «liberation» and – as its counterpart – «oppression». The actual globalized world has created many new forms of oppression, even in the heart of the so-called industrialized countries in the global North, which cannot be identified easily by economic and social indicators. There are forms of ecocide and ethnocide which have not been present fifty years ago. But there is also a new form of slavery in the so called wage-dumping countries as Bangladesh or Indonesia, trade of women for sex work and children as drug-mules, and there is an increasing number of the world population that cannot even be exploited, because they are pushed outside the system to be «excesses» of capitalist mechanisms.³⁰⁸ Nature is oppressed in many ways, but also consumers and workers in the so called rich countries are oppressed by increasing pressure on the work floor and in the crazy carrousel of consumerism. The ideal of efficiency and dynamism focusses on healthy and young people and drop sick, disabled, old and very young people.

So, «liberation» has to be spelled out again, as has to be done also with the core notions of classical Liberation Theology as «structural sin», «poverty» and «exodus». As oppression has reached a systemic and global dimension, so has to do «liberation»: it has to be determined and spelled by a worldwide or global polylogue in intercultural, interreligious, and international dimensions. Former bilateral dialogue between biblical inspiration and economic and social poor is replaced by a broad and multilateral polylogue between diverse faith communities, social movements, political activists, spiritual traditions and indigenous peoples, but also feminist and LGBTI-movements, radical ecosophic³⁰⁹ resistance groups and other counter-hegemonic movements. «Liberation» is not only «integral» in an anthropological sense, but cosmocentric and biocentric, interreligious and intercultural. Under the present circumstances, «liberation» has to do with the attempt to overcome dominant capitalist world order and its political reflection. That means that Liberation Theology today has to deal with a post-capitalist perspective and not just a post-colonial and post-imperialist line of resistance and protest.

This leads to a third challenge, the question of an adequate and fruitful recurrence to the social and perhaps natural sciences. Economy comes again – after having been relegated by anthropology and linguistics to a second place – into a prominent place, but more as political economics and alternative to the «unique» alternative of capitalist market economy. The close alliance between critical theological and economic reflection as it has been developed e.g. by the *Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones* in Costa Rica³¹⁰, by the world

³⁰⁸ This is mainly the case for Africa. A huge amount of the African population is considered «excess» with regarding to capitalist world economy and does not count as producers nor as consumers; therefore, there is the brutal verdict of a «lost continent» and not just of a «lost generation», as it is the case in Latina America, part of Asia and the eastern and central part of Europe. But even in so called «developed» countries, there are everyday more «excess» people.

³⁰⁹ *Ecosophy* could be defined as a non-western indigenous approach to the ecological issue. It includes spiritual and religious aspects, along with cultural, social, and physical ones. See Estermann, Josef, *Ecosofía andina: Un paradigma alternativo de convivencia cósmica y de Vivir Bien*. In FAIA (Filosofía Afro-Indo-Americana | África-Abya Yala | Escuela del Pensamiento Radical). Filosofía Mestiza I. Interculturalidad, Ecosofía y Liberación. Buenos Aires: FAIA. 273-315.

³¹⁰ See footnote 298.

Council of Churches or even the pronouncements of the actual Pope³¹¹, could be a good instrument of what we need. But the actual challenges also require a philosophical reflection in a non-traditional way, namely a philosophical framework able to give support to non-occidental wisdom traditions, spiritual springs and the whole enterprise of decolonization and de-growth. I think that at the moment, a critical and engaged form of Intercultural Philosophy should work closely together with a new emerging Liberation Theology in the 21st century, and vice versa.

³¹¹ Specially the final document of the 10th Plenary Assembly of the World Council of Churches 2013 in Busan (South Korea): Mshana, Rogate/Peralta, Athena (ed.), *The Greed Line: Final Report and Supporting Studies*, Geneva 2014. And Pope Francis» Apostolic Exhortation «*Evangelii Gaudium*» 2013 (http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html). The principal texts concerning an economy in the service of life in a German translation can be found in: Duchrow, Ulrich/Gück, Martin (ed.), *Kairos Europa. Wirtschaft(en) im Dienst des Lebens*, Heidelberg 2014.

13. Poverty, Violence and Marginalization: Causes of Migration and Displacement in Latin America

For a long time, Latin America, just like North America and Australia, was considered an *immigration continent par excellence*. In the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century many people moved from the Old World to the various republics of the New World, which were still sparsely populated at the time.³¹² One classic example is Argentina, which provided a new home for many European immigrants, particularly from Italy, as well as from Central and Eastern Europe.³¹³ One of the descendants of this wave of migration is Pope Francis – Jorge Mario Bergoglio – who grew up in an Italian immigrant family in Argentina. Francis's father, Mario José [Giuseppe] Bergoglio (1908–1959), had emigrated to Argentina from Portacomaro near Asti in Piedmont in 1929, finding employment with an Argentinian railway company and, in 1935, marrying Regina María Sívorì (1911–1981) whose parents also came from Italy but who was born in Buenos Aires.

There was a radical change of direction in migration in the second half of the 20th century, however, when more and more Latin Americans emigrated to Europe, the United States and Canada, with a much lower number going to Australia and New Zealand. There are hard and fast reasons for this development, of course, and they have often changed over the past fifty years. Whereas in the 1970s and 1980s migration was clearly caused by the many *military dictatorships* ruling Latin American countries (in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Nicaragua and El Salvador) and also by civil wars (in Peru, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia and Guatemala), a new form of migration became noticeable from the 1990s onwards, coinciding with the Fall of the Berlin Wall³¹⁴. This new form of migration was caused by economic, political and cultural/ethnic factors, which I will now link with three associated phenomena: *poverty, violence and marginalization*.

1. From the continent of hope to the poorhouse of the world

For a long time, the New World was portrayed by seafarers, conquerors and also by Spanish and Portuguese missionaries as a continent of hope, where the «heresy» of the Reformation had no place and where the «Moors» definitely had no right to exist. The political philosophy of European modernism projected many of its utopias onto the canvas of what came to be known as America and entire communities headed for the New World in the hope of a better life. This North-South migration, however, coincided with two other phenomena which also

³¹² Thirteen million Europeans emigrated to Latin America between 1870 and 1930, including approximately 6 million to Argentina, 4.3 million to Brazil, 600,000 to Cuba and 440,000 to Uruguay.

³¹³ In 1914 the Argentinian provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Santa Fe had twice as many foreign-born residents as locally born inhabitants.

³¹⁴ This meant the end of the Cold War and hence also the end of the (frequently US-supported) dictatorships in Latin America. It was additionally a time of rapid social upheaval (neoliberalism, structural adjustment programs and free trade).

had irrevocable demographic consequences: the genocide³¹⁵ of the indigenous population of *Abya Yala*³¹⁶ and the slave trade from Africa across the Atlantic to the New World.³¹⁷

Since the supposed «discovery» of their continent by Europeans the Latin American population has experienced *extremely varied phases of development*. The first of these phases was a disastrous decline. When Christopher Columbus reached the Caribbean islands in 1492, the territory of modern-day Latin America probably had an 11 12 13 14 indigenous population of around 50 million. Most of them lived in the Mexican Highlands and in the Andes. Only half a century later 90 per cent of the local population had died. Their deaths were caused by imported diseases such as smallpox, the plague, measles, and typhoid as well as hunger, consumption, and systematic murder. By 1650, only four million indigenous people were still alive, so that the European rulers felt compelled to import large numbers of black slaves from Africa to Latin America in order to provide sufficient workers for their plantations. Throughout the colonial period some nine million Africans were taken to Latin America. During the 200 years that followed the decimation Latin America experienced a slow growth in its population. Even by 1850 the population – then 30 million – had still not reached its pre-colonial level.

Today's Latin America is the result of *three movements of migration and conquest*. The first population group, whose ancestors originally came from Europe, are known as mestizos: depending on the region, they mixed with the indigenous population to varying degrees, leading to a range of phenotypes. Secondly, there is the original indigenous population who were severely decimated and have been virtually excluded from public life for a long period of time. Thirdly, there is the Afro-American population, the descendants of African slaves, who continue to suffer discrimination and exclusion.³¹⁸

This shows that Latin America was only a *continent of good hope* for Europeans. Some of them sought their luck in America, as it was called, in the hope of profit or adventure – (from the 16th to the 19th centuries). Others were forced to emigrate in order just to survive (from

³¹⁵ While the debate continues about whether the term genocide can be correctly associated with the decimation of the indigenous American population (South and North America), the figures speak a clear language. It seems plausible to assume a figure of around 35 to 40 million victims for the territory which later became known as Hispanic America. The estimates for North America vary between 7 and 10 million indigenous people and those for Brazil between 500,000 and 2.5 million. In Hispanic America alone, the indigenous population was reduced by around 90% in the first 150 years after the Conquista.

³¹⁶ This is the indigenous name for «Latin America». The term *Abya Yala*, which comes from the Kuna tribe in Panama, literally means «land in full maturity» and was initially suggested in the 1980s by the Bolivian Aymara leader, Takir Mamani, as the indigenous name for the continent called America. The name America is known to have come from the Italian seafarer and cartographer, Amerigo Vespucci (1454–1512). Vespucci's *Lettera* were published in Latin in 1507 by the German cartographer, Martin Waldseemüller, who called the new continent «America» in honour of Amerigo. Before 1507 the newly «discovered» territories were known as the West Indies (*Indias Occidentales*).

³¹⁷ Scholars currently assume that between 1519 and 1867 around 11.06 million Africans were forcibly taken to America as part of the Atlantic slave trade, including 3.9 million to Brazil.

³¹⁸ There is also a fourth group comprising the descendants of East Asian immigrants mainly from Japan and Korea, known as *chinos/chinas*, who have largely kept themselves separate from the rest of the population right up to the present day. One prominent example is Alberto Fujimori, the President of Peru from 1990 to 2001, of whom it is said that he may not even have had Peruvian citizenship. Towards the end of the 19th century, Latin America had a population of around 800,000 East Asians, most of whom had settled as contract workers.

the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century). For the other two population groups, however, this continent – which quickly came to be described by its conquerors as Latin America – was a «valley of tears», a land which had been plundered and looted. Today's continuing large-scale poverty among the indigenous and Afro-American populations has its roots in the continent's indescribable history of colonialism and slave trade. It is neither new nor endogenous, having its structural roots in the 500 years since the *Conquista*. One new element in the 20th century's increasing destitution and poverty is that the mestizo population, too, – i.e. the ordinary people – have gradually fallen victim to exploitation, corruption, and nepotism, perpetrated by an elitist oligarchy.

Latin American liberation theology has its sociological origins in the poverty that became a mass phenomenon during and after the Second World War. It was also the time when the flow of migration from Europe to Latin America stopped relatively abruptly, accompanied by a gradual opposing trend bolstered by the continent's military dictatorships. Within a short period of time Latin America changed from a region of immigration to a major source of emigration. Whereas the migration balance had been virtually constant for around four hundred years,³¹⁹ it suddenly became negative. Large-scale poverty first drove people from rural areas into towns and cities, leading to the rise of well-known *slums and then megacities* such as São Paulo and Mexico City. Later they increasingly went to other countries as well, partly within Latin America itself (about one quarter), but mostly away from the continent to Europe, the United States and Canada – in other words, the global north.

2. Poverty and internal migration

The structural causes of poverty and destitution which caused these migration movements have their origins in colonial history. They are now reflected in the continuing dependence of supposedly independent national states and in the newly created dependency of those countries – referred to as «neo-colonial» in the «dependency theory» that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. The rise in Latin America's internal and external migration was mainly caused by *structural adjustment measures*³²⁰ imposed on many Latin American countries by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the 1980s. Many resources that were important for the lives of ordinary people were privatized, e.g. mining and the extraction of oil and gas, forcing large numbers of families to migrate from rural to urban areas.

A classic example of such «*internal migration*»³²¹ is the Bolivian satellite town of El Alto. It was still part of the La Paz district until 1985 but over the intervening thirty years it has experienced such a major increase in population that it now has a larger population than its parent city, La Paz. Most of the today's population in El Alto consists of rural migrants.

³¹⁹ The «migration balance» is the quantitative difference between immigrants and emigrants. If this balance (i.e. $MB = I - E$) is negative, it means that emigration exceeds immigration, although this does not automatically lead to a demographic reduction in the population.

³²⁰ The purpose of such measures is largely to make a given country fit for the global market. However, for most of the population this means an erosion of social welfare and workers' rights, while for companies and transnational businesses it means deregulation, greater flexibility, and higher profits.

³²¹ Internal migration takes place inside a country either from villages to a city (a rural exodus) or from small urban centres to big cities. External migration, on the other hand, is transnational or international and is generally described as emigration or immigration, depending on the perspective.

They are mainly economic refugees, initially from the mining regions that were abandoned in the wake of neoliberal structural adjustments and later from farming communities whose plots of land had become smaller and smaller until they were no longer adequate to ensure survival. Finally, there are those who pursue the «dream of a better life» in the city. Such causes (the privatization of mining companies, redundancies, droughts, inadequate plots of land) are known as push factors³²². In addition, internal (as well as external) migration is caused by certain pull factors, i.e. the attractiveness of the city as a place that offers better education for children, employment for adults, social advancement, and greater prestige.

Poverty and destitution continue to be the most important push factors for internal and external migration in many Latin American countries right up to the present day. The stages of such migration can be traced relatively clearly and chronologically. The first stage is a rural exodus from areas that have virtually no infrastructure and where the population has almost no chance of survival due to climate change and the prices for agricultural products on the world market. Over the past one hundred years Latin America has experienced unparalleled urbanization. In many countries the rural/urban population ratio has literally been reversed within a century. Whereas in the early 20th century only 10% of Latin Americans lived in towns and cities, this figure subsequently increased to as much as 41% in 1950 and is now nearly 80% (compared with 72% in Europe). Moreover, the forecast for 2030 is 84.3%.

This development has led to the rise of all too familiar slums (e.g. *favelas*, *villas miseria*, *pueblos jóvenes* and *asentamientos humanos*)³²³ and gigantic urban hubs (with populations of up to 25 million) that do not exist in Europe. Until 1970 the migration flow only affected the biggest cities in Latin America, turning them into megacities. In 1950 Buenos Aires was the only city with a population of over five million. In 2010 Latin America had seven *megacities*, of which four have populations of over 10 million: Mexico City, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro.³²⁴ They frequently hit the headlines as sadly notorious hotbeds of extreme poverty, pollution, and crime. Within a very short period Latin America has replaced North America as the global region with the highest level of urbanization.

3. Transnational migration caused by poverty

The next stage is migration to different countries within Latin America. This started in the 1980s and was driven not only by poverty, but also by structural violence, the drug trade and increasing crime rates. There are countries with a positive *migration balance*, so-called «host countries» such as Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Venezuela, and those with a *negative migration balance*, such as Bolivia, Paraguay,

³²² When looking at the causes or reasons for migration, the relevant studies distinguish between those driving people to leave their region, country or continent (push factors) and those in which the target country exerts a considerable attraction (pull factors), prompting people to leave their own environment and set off on an often extremely arduous journey.

³²³ Different regions of Latin America use different terms, some of them euphemistic, to describe their slums. *Favela* is the Brazilian word, *villa miseria* («city of misery») is used in Argentina, *pueblo joven* («young village») in Peru, and *asentamiento humano* («human settlement») and *barriada* («city district») are used in most other areas.

³²⁴ The others are, in order of size: Lima, Bogotá and Santiago de Chile.

Colombia, Peru, El Salvador, Mexico and Haiti. At the moment, for example, Argentina has 1.5 million legal Latin American immigrants (above all from Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru), while the Dominican Republic has nearly half a million Haitians and Costa Rica has over 300,000 immigrants from other Latin American countries (nine per cent of the total population).

Finally, migration reaches *beyond Latin America* – a development which has led to a negative migration balance since the 1950s but only began to assume dramatic proportions in the 1980s. The most important receiving country for Latin American emigrants is the United States. In 2000, the year of its last census, the United States had 35 million so-called *Latinos/Latinas*³²⁵, making up 13% of the country's population, including around 13 million Mexicans or *Chicanos/Chicanas*. However, many Latin Americans have also fled from economic and political hardship (largely caused by military dictatorships) to European countries. Cultural affinity and language have prompted them to travel mainly to Spain and Italy. In 2001 Japan had about 200,000 Latin Americans of Japanese descent (*Nikkeis*)³²⁶.²³ They returned to their homeland for economic reasons, their ancestors having originally left Japan with the same motivation.

The United Nations Population Division currently still records an annual *net emigration* (i.e. negative migration balance) of 800,000 Latin Americans per year, i.e. a net migration rate of 1.5 per thousand inhabitants. Globally, in relation to its total population, Latin America is therefore the region most affected by outward migration. Net emigration in Africa, by contrast, is only 0.5 per thousand, while in Asia it is 0.3.

4. Fleeing violence in its many different forms

Apart from poverty and economic hardship, violence in its many forms remains one of the most frequent causes of (both internal and external) migration in Latin America even today. Although traditional military dictatorships are now a thing of the past, many Latin American countries have experienced bloodless coups or abuses of power leading to the establishment of authoritarian, near-dictatorial regimes (such as in Honduras, Guatemala, Venezuela, Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua and Bolivia) which do not tolerate any genuine opposition or freedom of expression. At the same time there are also remnants of guerrilla movements and thus civil-war-like situations (Colombia); violence caused by drug cartels (Mexico, Colombia and Central America); increasing numbers of youth gangs, so-called *maras* (El Salvador, Honduras); a dramatic rise in so-called femicides³²⁷; the trafficking of women; the organ trade; and the abduction of minors.

³²⁵ The name varies, depending on people's origins and destination. In the United States Latin Americans who were born or have grown up there are generally known as *Hispanics*. However, this term is not used by such Latin Americans themselves, who prefer the generic term *Latinos* (or, more comprehensively, *Latinos/Latinas*, for the sake of gender equality) or specific national terms such as *Chicanos/Chicanas* for migrants from Mexico.

³²⁶ *Nikkei* is the term for people of Japanese descent living outside Japan. Latin America's *Nikkei* population is approximately 2 million, of whom 1.4 or 1.5 million live in Brazil, and 120,000 in Peru. Over the last 20 years there has been a significant return of *Nikkeis* to Japan.

³²⁷ Killings of women on account of their gender, has been prompted by jealousy, drunkenness, or machismo. Fourteen of the world's 25 worst affected countries are in Latin America. On top of the list is El Salvador

One particular type of violence is perpetrated by large transnational corporations, with national governments acting as their helpmates, in the form of the extraction and exploitation of natural resources. Land is frequently grabbed for the purpose of growing monocultures of (genetically manipulated) crops such as soya, maize, oil palms and sugarcane in order to produce animal feed or biodiesel. This tendency has assumed dramatic proportions in parts of Latin America (especially in Colombia, Brazil, and Central America) and is now seen as one of the main reasons for the migration of the displaced farming population. Moreover, *mining projects* and *oil extraction* often lead to violence because they are frequently undertaken without the approval of the people affected, causing expulsions, environmental pollution and military and police brutality without any government intervention whatsoever.

Finally, there is the phenomenon of *domestic violence* which has reached intolerable levels in many regions as the result of widespread *machismo* and alcoholism. Victims of domestic violence are mostly women and children who try to escape from the vicious circle of violence at home, the outcome being (internal) migration and displacement. Another strategy that has become increasingly widespread recently is the conversion (of women) to neo-Pentecostal or fundamentalist churches that prohibit alcohol consumption. There are, of course, also women who try to flee to Spain or the United States for economic reasons, but whose trigger for doing so is an increase in the domestic violence they suffer. This example shows that migration is not a monocausal phenomenon. On the contrary, migration or displacement can stem from a variety of motivations comprising both push and pull factors.

5. Marginalized and discriminated

Mention must be made, finally, of a further cause of (internal and external) migration in Latin America which has gained in significance recently. Although many countries can point to positive trends in the integration and political participation of indigenous groups within the population (e.g. in Ecuador and Bolivia), there have also been opposing trends accompanied by a new level of *racism*, *homophobia*, and *neo-colonialism*³²⁸. The most discriminated segments of the population continue to be ethnic minorities, especially in countries with relatively small percentages of indigenous populations, such as Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela; Afro-Americans (in Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic), women (especially indigenous and Afro-American women) and members of the LGBTI community as well as religious minorities.³²⁹

with 14 femicides per 100,000 followed by Honduras with 11. Ninety-eight per cent of all femicides go unpunished.

³²⁸ The term neo-colonialism was coined by Kwame Nkrumah, the former president of Ghana. In his book *Neo-colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965) he drew attention to the continuing significance of colonial power structures in so-called post-colonial societies. The term is primarily associated with international finance and transnational companies in a stage that is also referred to as a second colonization. We are currently witness to a third colonization encompassing primarily the IT industry, the globalization of Western consumerism and the flow of money from the south to the north due to tax evasion, corruption, the looting of national treasuries and nepotism.

³²⁹ The latter includes, for instance, the Mennonites, Afro-American cults (such as *Candomblé* and *Santería*) and indigenous communities, which are under threat partly through the aggressive evangelistic strategies of evangelical groups or which are even in danger of losing their cultural identity (ethnocide).

Discrimination and marginalization as reasons for migration and displacement very often go hand in hand with poverty, violence, and insecurity. They are rarely the sole reasons for migration. A few countries (such as Bolivia and Ecuador) now also have the phenomenon of «*inverted racism*». Whites and people of mixed race (*mestizos*) are being pushed to the margins of society by an indigenous majority that holds political and economic power. As the members of this target group have sufficient resources to mitigate their situation, discrimination of this kind only leads to external migration in a very small number of cases. A few countries have such extremely restrictive policies and legislation on abortion, divorce, and homosexuality (Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador) that there are occasionally cases of people emigrating for these reasons.

Furthermore, the migration balance of Latin America is still clearly negative at the moment (i.e. there are more people leaving the continent than entering it), although the past 10 years have now also seen the *phenomenon of returnees*, as migrants are returning to Latin America from Europe and the United States. This is less a matter of improved living conditions in their countries of origin (although this also occurs) and has more to do with the deteriorating situation in the countries of immigration. The crisis in Europe and uncertainties concerning the forthcoming US administration may well be accelerating this tendency. It cannot therefore be categorically ruled out that, in the medium term (i.e. in 20 or 30 years), Latin America might revert from a continent of emigration to a continent of immigration, especially the re-immigration of its own nationals.

14. Indigenous theologies in *Abya Yala*: Its repercussions on progressive policies in Latin America

Abstract

Classical Latin American Liberation Theology gave a decisive impulse to social movements all over the continent but did not have an eye for the indigenous peoples as new theological and political subjects. The «hermeneutical turn» in the last 1980s to feminist, indigenous and Afro-American theologies can be seen as a creative continuation of Liberation Theology but has also fundamentals in a long history of indigenous movements of resistance and uprising. In this contribution, the author gives an outlook of these prefiguration in colonial and republic periods, as well as the progressive movements of indigenous pastoral coming up after the Second Vatican Council. As a way of examples, the «indigenous» political Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia are analysed on their «religious» and liberationist potentials.

Resumen

La Teología Clásica Latinoamericana de la Liberación dio un impulso decisivo a los movimientos sociales en todo el continente, pero no tuvo en cuenta a los pueblos indígenas como nuevos sujetos teológicos y políticos. El «giro hermenéutico» de los últimos años de 1980 hacia las teologías feministas, indígenas y afroamericanas puede verse como una continuación creativa de la Teología de la Liberación, pero también tiene fundamentos en una larga historia de movimientos indígenas de resistencia y levantamiento. En esta contribución, el autor ofrece un panorama de esta prefiguración en los períodos colonial y republicano, así como de los movimientos progresistas de pastoral indígena que se produjeron después del Concilio Vaticano II. A modo de ejemplo, se analizan las Constituciones políticas «indígenas» de Ecuador y Bolivia sobre sus potencialidades «religiosas» y liberadoras.

1. Introduction

As it is well known, the «classical»³³⁰ Latin American Liberation Theology of the 1970s and 1980s has not only spread throughout the world to Asia, Africa and Oceania, and even to Europe and North America, but it has also been diversified according to the emergence and visibility of new subjects (women, youth, Afro-descendants, indigenous people, LGBTI people, Mother Earth, etc.) and new problems arising from neoliberal globalization. One of these diversifications that marks at the same time a «hermeneutic turn»³³¹ is the emergence

³³⁰ Three stages of Liberation Theology (LT) are usually distinguished: 1. The „classic» LT of the 1970s and 1980s which posed the main challenges, socio-economic analysis and the constitution of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC); 2. TL diversified according to the emergence of new subjects (women, indigenous, youth, Afro descendants, etc.) in the 1990s and beginning of the millennium; 3. A LT that rethinks the issue of neoliberal globalization and decolonization in the last 10 years.

³³¹ See: Estermann 2014 and 2010c.

of indigenous theologies, called in Latin America or *Abya Yala* «Indian Theologies» (*Teologías Indias*). The Fifth Centenary in 1992, that is to say, the commemoration of five hundred years of conquest, genocide, evangelization, meeting of two worlds, according to the perspective, can be considered as a beginning and at the same time a catalyst of these movements. Although it is true that indigenous theologies already have antecedents long before that date, the emblematic year of 1992 has been important for the «indigenisation» of Liberation Theology.

A particularly important event was the fourth Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), October 12-28, 1992 in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. While the previous conferences of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979) have emphasized the situation of poverty, social exclusion and «underdevelopment» of the great majority of the population of the continent, the Santo Domingo Conference focused on the theme of culture, and therefore on the discrimination and marginalization of indigenous and afro-descendant peoples.³³² For «Indian Theology», this Conference has been a decisive impetus and source of inspiration, which later would affect political and social movements such as the Zapatista uprising in Mexico (1994), indigenous and left-wing governments in Ecuador, Bolivia and Uruguay, and the strengthening of indigenous movements in *Abya Yala*.³³³

2. The emergence of «Indian Theology»

The first critique of the supposed «economism» and the «classicist» conception of the «classical» Latin American Liberation Theology came from voices of other continents, especially from Africa. In 1976, the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT)³³⁴ was founded in Darussalam (Tanzania), allowing for the first time the meeting and exchange of theologians from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, without the mediation of the dominant European and North American theology. Very soon, African theologians questioned their Latin American colleagues for the absence of the «cultural

³³² The title of the Conference was: „New Evangelization. Human promotion. Christian Culture». Santo Domingo, located on the island of Hispaniola, was chosen because the first Eucharistic celebration of the American Continent took place there, possibly at the beginning of 1494, on the occasion of the second Columbian voyage. The Conference was held within the framework of the Fifth Centenary of the „evangelization of America», and the first day of the event coincided with the five hundred years of the first footfall of Christopher Columbus on an island near the Bahamas.

³³³ The notion *Abya Yala*, which has its origin in the Kuna ethnic group of Panama, literally means „land in full maturity», and was proposed in the early 1980s by the Bolivian Aymara leader Takir Mamani as an indigenous reference for the continent called „America» by the conquerors. The word „America» is derived, as it is known, from the Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512), whose *Lettera* was published in Latin in 1507 by the German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller, in which he calls the new continent „America», in honour of the navigator. Before 1507, the newly „discovered» regions were known as the „West Indies». *Abya Yala* is used today by large sections of the indigenous and academic world as an alternative and non-Eurocentric name for „America».

³³⁴ Significantly, the first two EATWOT world conferences were held in Africa (1976 in Tanzania and 1977 in Ghana), the third in Asia (1979 in Sri Lanka), and only the fourth in Latin America (1980 in São Paulo).

question» and ethnicity in their socio-economic analyses.³³⁵ Indeed, the «poor» of the «classical» Latin American Liberation Theology had no face, name, gender or age, but were an «ideological» abstraction. Awareness of the «cultural» factor led to a rethinking of Liberation Theology in the 1980s, along with the emergence of a feminist Theology of Liberation, a *Latino* Theology in the U.S., and a Queer Theology in some countries of the Latin American continent.³³⁶

The fact of the «femininity» and «ethnicity» of poverty, marginalization and exclusion was taken up as a theological challenge in such a way that not only new subjects (women, indigenous people, afro-descendant people) emerged, but also new theological «places» (*loci theologici*): daily life, land and territory, gender, indigenous cosmo-spiritualities³³⁷, extractive mining, religious pluralism, Mother Earth (*pachamama*) and Andean Good Living (*suma qamaña, allin/sumak kawsay*).³³⁸ In religious terms, it has been the Indigenous Pastoral that prepared the ground since the 1960s for the subsequent articulation of «Indian Theology». This ministry was inspired by the Second Vatican Council (1963-65) and the two CELAM Conferences in Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979), but also by the work of many committed lay pastoral agents, priests, and bishops, in part indigenous themselves.

Among these leading figures of Indigenous Pastoral, I would like to mention two «bishops of the Indians», Leonidas Proaño in Ecuador and Samuel Ruiz in Mexico. Leonidas Proaño Villalba (1910-1988) was for more than thirty years bishop of Riobamba, before he dedicated himself at the national level to the «Indigenous Pastoral». Proaño fully embraced Liberation Theology but interpreted the «preferential option for the poor» in the sense of an «option for the indigenous». He founded the *Escuelas Radiofónicas Populares* (Popular Radio Broadcasting Schools) and the *Centro de Estudio y Acción Social* (Centre of Social Study and Action) to promote indigenous communities. In 1973, he was accused of being part of the guerrilla, had to give an account in Rome, and in 1976 he was imprisoned by the military dictatorship, despite the Vatican's acquittal.

The Mexican Samuel Ruiz García (1924-2011) was from 1959 to 1999 bishop of the diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas in the southern state of Chiapas³³⁹, a region with a majoritarian indigenous population in a situation of extreme poverty and social exclusion. From 1994, Bishop Ruiz was engaged as a mediator between the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and the central Mexican government. Ruiz is considered one of the main

³³⁵ This happened especially after the fifth EATWOT conference in 1981 in New Delhi, which focused on the differences and commonalities between so-called Third World theologies and their relations with traditional Western theology.

³³⁶ Estermann 1994.

³³⁷ I prefer to speak of „cosmo-spirituality» or „cosmo-convivence» rather than the more common notion of „cosmovision», because the reference to a „vision» underlines the predominant role of sight and its metaphorical use in Western philosophy and culture. From Plato to Heidegger, Western philosophy is oriented by the sense of „sight» (*theoreia*) and interprets comprehension and understanding as a kind of „intellectual seeing». In contrast, the Andean indigenous cosmo-spirituality underlines the role of other senses such as touch, smell, and taste, as well as the ritual as a source of knowledge.

³³⁸ The English translation as «Good Living» or «Well Living» is not really accurate, neither is the Spanish *Buen Vivir* (Ecuador, Peru) or *Vivir Bien* (Bolivia), because it could be confused with Aristotelian and Western «Good Life (*eubiós*).

³³⁹ As one of the successors of the first „bishop of the Indians», the Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas (1484/5-1566).

defenders of the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, Mexico and *Abya Yala*; he worked tirelessly for an inculturated pastoral and liturgy, which brought him problems with Joseph Ratzinger, at the time Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in Rome.³⁴⁰

At the institutional level, Indigenous Pastoral Care was promoted in a special way by the *Centro Nacional de Ayuda a Misiones Indígenas* (CENAMI; National Centre of Relief to Indigenous Missions) of Mexico (founded in 1961), the *Instituto de Pastoral Andina* (IPA; Andean Pastoral Institute) in Cusco, Peru (1969), the National Indigenous Pastoral Coordination (CONAPI) of Paraguay (founded in 1969 under the name of «*Equipo Nacional de Misiones*»), the *Conselho Indigenista Missionário* (CIMI; Indigenous Missionary Council) in Brazil (1972), and the National Commission for Indigenous Pastoral Ministry of the Episcopal Conference (CONAPI) of Guatemala (1978). At the beginning of the 1980s, the Latin American Ecumenical Articulation of Indigenous Pastoral (AELAPI) was created at the initiative of EATWOT, which was to play a leading role in the organization and realization of continental meetings of Indian Theology and ecumenical consultations on Indigenous Pastoral Ministry.³⁴¹ The fourth CELAM Conference in Santo Domingo (1992), set up finally an Indigenous Pastoral Commission (CECABI: *Comisión Episcopal de Catequesis, Pastoral Bíblica and Pastoral Indígena*).³⁴² In 2002, CELAM began to concern itself with the «orthodoxy» of «Indian Theology» and organized various meetings between representatives of this theological line, Latin American bishops and representatives of the Roman Curia.³⁴³

Before the theological reflection in indigenous perspective and in the line of Liberation Theology was articulated at the continental level, through the aforementioned Continental Meetings of Indian Theology, there were already initiatives at the regional level. One of them, which is of special importance, is the Andean Theology meetings between Peru and Bolivia (recently enlarged by Argentina), which have taken place every year since 1990 (up to the present date with 28 partially documented meetings).³⁴⁴ The many initiatives of the

³⁴⁰ During his visit to Mexico in 1999, Pope John Paul II said literally: „Today there is much thought of replacing liberation theology with indigenous theology, which would be another version of Marxism. I think that the true solution lies in solidarity». He referred to the warnings against „indigenous theology» expressed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in the meeting of indigenous theologians with members of the Doctrine of the Faith commission of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America, held in Guadalajara from May 6 to 11, 1996. In the 1990s, Samuel Ruiz Garcia had ordained more than 300 married men (*virii probati*) as permanent deacons; at the celebration, their wives also had an active part. Ratzinger criticized that these acts went against the teachings of the Church and prepared the ordination of married priests and women to the priesthood.

³⁴¹ To this day, AELAPI, together with CLAI (Latin American Council of Churches), is the institution responsible for the organization of the „Indian Theology» meetings. The most recent and 7th Encounter took place from 26 to 30 September 2016, in Panajachel in Guatemala.

³⁴² It is noted that CELAM was very cautious in calling the commission simply „Indigenous Pastoral», but that it includes catechesis and biblical pastoral ministry.

³⁴³ In 2002, a first meeting took place in Riobamba, Ecuador, between representatives of the Commission for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Vatican, of the Episcopal Council of CELAM and of „Indian Theology», to clarify some „doubts» about its conformity with the teachings of the Church. Although these doubts could be cleared up, the pressure on the representatives of „Indian Theology» grew under Ratzinger as Prefect of the Commission for the Doctrine of the Faith; Eleazar López had to leave the CENAMI board, and the auxiliary bishop of Samuel Ruiz García, Raúl Vera López O.P. was appointed by John Paul II in 1999 bishop in Saltillo, an act considered by many people as a sort of „exile».

³⁴⁴ Instituto de Estudios Andinos 2009.

Indigenous Pastoral and the regional meetings of theological reflection on the indigenous aspect, as well as the work of these organizations, have been the breeding ground for the emergence of what was later called «Indian Theology».³⁴⁵ The term itself seems problematic in several senses: first, it is not a «theology» in the classical (European) sense of the word, and second, the term «Indian» which is no longer used in academic circles or in indigenous organizations, seems to be anachronistic and even pejorative. One of the most prominent representatives of Indian Theology, the Mexican priest and member of Zapotec people, Eleazar Lopez Hernandez, clarifies the use of the term «Indian» - despite criticism - in the following way: «The Indian category is certainly an imposition coming from the outside, which masked us by concealing our original identity. But, after 500 years, it has also brought us together in pain, in resistance and in theological elaboration [...]» (López 2006, 7). It is, then, similar to the use of «Third World» in the name of EATWOT, a term of resistance, of «dangerous memory»³⁴⁶ and it is subversive.

In 1990, the first Continental Meeting of Indian Theology was held in Mexico. Neither the place nor the date should surprise because Mexico was one of the countries where the Indigenous Pastoral had had the greatest impact (Samuel Ruiz) and his theological reflection had advanced considerably, thanks to the work of CENAMI and AELAPI. Among the most outstanding representatives I can mention, apart from the already mentioned Eleazar López Hernández, Clodomiro Siller Acuña. And the date represents the growing expectations concerning the Fifth Centenary of 1992, the gestation of indigenous movements throughout the continent and similar initiatives elsewhere (for example of the «Andean Theology» which had its first meeting the same year). The objective of the Meeting in Mexico was to specify the theological method followed by the indigenous peoples and to create conditions, within the Catholic Church, for this theology to emerge with all its strength and enter into dialogue with other theologies, for mutual enrichment. Several bishops from indigenous areas were present and wanted to accompany this process: «Indian theology, which has always been present but never sufficiently valued, is a vein of life which, by irrigating in better conditions not only the indigenous peoples but also the Churches, will be a new source of rejuvenation and vitality for all».³⁴⁷

In order to distinguish Christian-oriented indigenous theology from «indigenous non-Christian theology», the term «Indian theology» (*Teología India*) is often used for the former and «Indian Indian theology» (*Teología India India*) for the latter. Until now, eight continental Meetings have taken place.³⁴⁸ I would like to synthesize some common features of all the efforts of what is known under the common denominator of «Indian Theology»³⁴⁹:

- 1) It is a Christian theology, mostly in the Catholic tradition, but also with strong ecumenical articulations.

³⁴⁵ A good essay on the background, emergence, and brief history of Indian Theology, is given by Eleazar López Hernández: López 2006.

³⁴⁶ As coined by Johannes Baptist Metz.

³⁴⁷ José A. Llaguno, bishop of Tarahumara, during the presentation of the book *Indian Theology* 1991.

³⁴⁸ 1990 in Mexico; 1993 in Colón-Panamá; 1997 in Cochabamba; 2002 in Asunción; 2006 in Manaus; 2009 in San José de Berlín-El Salvador; 2013 in Pujilí-Ecuador; 2016 in Panajachel-Guatemala.

³⁴⁹ The best publication about the journey of „Indian Theology» and its main themes is the one edited by the Peruvian indigenous priest Nicanor Sarmiento Tupayupanqui: Sarmiento 2000. And the best anthology is elaborated by Eleazar López Hernández of the same year: López 2000.

- 2) It is not an academic theology, but a theology of the bases, from and by the indigenous populations.
- 3) It is a contextualization of Liberation Theology in the sense of the «option for the indigenous».
- 4) The sources of Indian Theology are, on the one hand, the Christian message and faith of the indigenous people and, on the other hand, the richness of ancestral indigenous rituals, myths, oral traditions, and symbols.
- 5) The auxiliary sciences are linguistics, cultural anthropology, and non-Western philosophies such as the Nahua or Andean Philosophy.³⁵⁰
- 6) It does not rely on theological texts, but on oral traditions and collective cultural goods.³⁵¹
- 7) The theological method broadly follows that of the «classical» Liberation Theology – to see; to judge; to act –, only that it adds as a fourth step «to celebrate».
- 8) Indian Theology is holistic and integral in content, form, and method.
- 9) Indian Theology in *Abya Yala* is not uniform but has already diversified itself and represents the diversity of the indigenous peoples of the continent.
- 10) And finally, it is not a theology initiated by the Church or appropriated by it, although there is a strong articulation with Christian churches of different denominations.

3. Genesis and evolution of indigenous movements in *Abya Yala*

During the Colony, there were always indigenous uprising movements against colonial power and the abuses by the colonizers. The best known in the Andes are the *Taki Onqoy* movement and the two uprisings of Tupaq Amaru (José Gabriel Condorcanqui) in present-day Peru and Tupaq Katari³⁵² (Julián Apaza Nina) in present-day Bolivia. The *Taki Onqoy* (in another diction *Taki Unquy*) was a resistance movement, shortly after the Spanish had finished occupying the territory of the *Tawantinsuyo* or Inca Empire. The Quechua term means «sick song» or «song sickness» and refers to the ecstatic movements and psychedelic songs of the indigenous people.³⁵³ The movement began in 1560 in Huamanga (Ayacucho-Peru), led by the indigenous Juan Chocne, a visionary who propagated, accompanied by two women called Saint Mary and Mary Magdala, the return of the Inca Empire in the form of a millenarian messianism.

³⁵⁰ Cf. León-Portilla 1956; Estermann 1998; 2006 and 2018.

³⁵¹ As an example of the tenor of „Indian Theology», cf. the introductory part of the final message of the last 2016 Encounter in Panajachel (Guatemala): „Our encounter dawns in one day, *Jun Tz'ikin*, when the Word is woven, and the birds announce the arrival of the brothers of the Southern Cone, the Amazon, the Andes, the Caribbean, Mesoamerica, the brothers of the Latin American Council of Churches and people of solidarity from Europe. With the smell of basil, pom, mate and cocoa; with the sound of tum, snail, kultrun, marimba and maracas; in the midst of the offerings of our peoples the altar is being formed. From 26 to 30 September of this year, we met at the place that our Mayan brothers call *Uk'u'x kaj-Uk'u'x ulew* (Heart of the Sky - Heart of the Earth). The rain, the sun and the cold enveloped us as well as the breeze of Lake Atitlán, which symbolizes the passage of suffering and pain of the Mayan people and their refoundation of all our peoples». (VII Encuentro 2016, second paragraph).

³⁵² The Spanish diction would be *Túpac Amaru*, respectively *Túpac Catari*, but I prefer henceforth the Quechua, respectively Aymara diction.

³⁵³ Millones 2007; Mumford 1998.

This movement later became the so-called «Rebellion of the *Huacas*», referring to the sacred indigenous places (*wak'as*). According to this belief, the *Huacas* got angry for the desacralization by Christianity, they would take possession of the natives to make them play music, sing and dance in ecstatic form, and to announce the return of the pre-colonial gods. Part of this rebellion was also the resistance of the last Inca Tupaq Amaru in the remote Cusco region of Vilcabamba that was defeated by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo in 1570, with the execution of Tupaq Amaru on the main square of Cusco in 1572. At the same time, the spiritual resistance (of the *Huacas*) was defeated by the ecclesiastic visitor, Cristóbal de Albornoz (among his assistants was the famous indigenous chronicler Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala), who forced the participants of the movement to publicly abjure, fining the *curacas* who collaborated and cloistering the women in convents. In 1572, the *Taki Onqoy* movement had been completely eradicated, although the collective subconscious memory has survived until now. From *Taki Onqoy* and the fate of Inca Tupaq Amaru emerged in the seventeenth century the messianic figure of *Inkarri*³⁵⁴, a sort of resurrected messiah who would bring together the four parts of *Tawantinsuyo* as the four parts of the body of Tupaq Amaru. Similarly, the insurrectionary movements of Tupaq Amaru II (José Gabriel Condorcanqui) and Tupaq Katari in the 18th century were inspired by the *Taki Onqoy* movement and the myth of *Inkarri*.

José Gabriel Condorcanqui led a rebellion movement against Spanish power two hundred years after the death of the last *Sapa Inka* (Inca King) Tupaq Amaru and named himself «Tupaq Amaru» (commonly known as «Tupaq Amaru II») after the last Inca. The rebellion began openly in 1780 and lasted until 1783, but Tupaq Amaru II was dismembered by the Spaniards as early as 1782 on Cusco's main square, just like his idol Tupaq Amaru I. This rebellion, which could only be defeated by means of treason, was to be the beacon for the fight for Peru's Independence from the colonial power that was to begin shortly after. At the same time, in Upper Peru (today Bolivia), the indigenous Aymara Julian Apaza Nina (1750-1781) began a rebellion against colonial power and named himself, in honour of two figures of the indigenous uprising (Tupaq Amaru II and Tomás Katari), «Tupaq Katari».³⁵⁵ He suffered the same fate as his co-fighter in Cusco, and was dismembered in La Paz in 1781, after fierce resistance against the Spanish army.

Both rebellions gave their name and inspiration to later indigenous struggles, already in the Republican era, and to armed indigenous movements, such as the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) in Peru (1982-1997) or the Túpac Katari Revolutionary Liberation Movement (MRTKL) in Bolivia (from 1985) which had its armed branch in the Túpac Katari Guerrilla Army (EGTK) (1986-1992) to which the former vice-president of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Álvaro García Linera, belonged. His predecessors were the Army Túpac Amarista Army, the Army of Túpac Katari, the Army of Willka Zárate, *Kollasuyo Indio Poder Único Socialista* (KIPUS; Socialist Indian Unique Power of the

³⁵⁴ Omer 2015.

³⁵⁵ Like *amaru* in Quechua, *katari* means „snake» in Aymara, so „*tupaq amaru*» (Quechua) and „*tupaq katari*» (Aymara) mean „noble snake». The snake had, in contrast to the Judeo-Christian tradition, a very positive image in the Andes and was considered an important *chakana* or cosmic bridge. Tomás Katari (or Catari) (1740-1781) was a Quechua warlord of Chayanta in the current department of Potosí (Bolivia) who, in claiming his rights, generated and led a popular insurrection against colonial power and the forced labour of the *mita*. He was assassinated in 1781, the same year as Tupaq Amaru in Cusco and Tupaq Katari in La Paz.

Kollasuyo), the Red Offensive, *Ayllus Rojos* (Red Communities) and the Katarist Indian Movement (MINKA) that refer, directly or indirectly, to the insurrections of the 18th century and the names of Tupaq Amaru and Tupaq Katari.³⁵⁶

Apart from the armed struggle, a strong indigenous movement was established in the 20th century along the continent of *Abya Yala*, called according to the context «Indianism», «Katarism», «Zapatism», «Pachamamism» or simply «Indigenism». In Peru, the left-wing military government of Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) promoted the «unionisation» of indigenous communities. In Bolivia, the military dictatorship at the same time constituted the *Pacto Militar Campesino* (1964-1978; Military-Peasants Pact) but maintained its own indigenous organization. In Ecuador, which also experienced many waves of indigenous uprising in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Ecuadorian Federation of Indians (FEI) was founded in 1944. But the impetus for an indigenous political movement emerged thanks to the work of the Catholic Church, especially the Indigenous Pastoral around the aforementioned bishop Leonidas Proaño, from whom ECUARUNARI³⁵⁷ emerged in 1972. In 1986, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) was constituted, which was to be the decisive organization in the subsequent evolution of the country and of the new Political Constitution of 2008. In Mexico, to take an example from Central America, there were also many waves of rebellion in colonial (Mixed War 1541, Great Mayan Rebellion 1546, Acaxee Rebellion 1601, Tepehuanes Revolution 1616) and republican times (Yaquis Sacred War 1875, National Revolution 1919). In 1988 the Independent Front of Indian Peoples (FIPI) emerged, which began to raise the need for a regime of regional autonomy for the indigenous peoples of Mexico. With FIPI, the indigenous movement began to cease to be an appendix to the peasant movement. On January 1, 1994, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) appeared publicly in the state of Chiapas, taking a decisive step in the struggle of Mexico's indigenous peoples for recognition and inclusion.³⁵⁸

4. The religious factor in left-wing governments

As manifested in the brief tour through the history of the indigenous movements and the respective uprisings, the religious factor always played a preponderant role. The *Taki Onqoy* movement and the rebellions of Tupaq Amaru and Tupaq Katari, had a strong messianic-millenarian impetus, supported by a kind of Andean-Christian syncretism. The original model for this type of «utopias» has not been the biblical «Apocalypse» or purely Andean utopias³⁵⁹, but the millenarian ideas of Joaquín de Fiore and its adaptation in *Abya Yala* by

³⁵⁶ Although all these movements and guerrilla groups have formally disappeared, „Katarism» is still present in many indigenous movements of the Bolivian and Peruvian *Altiplano* and in certain intellectual circles. See: Escárzaga 2012.

³⁵⁷ *Ecuador Runakunapak Rikcharimuy*: „For the people of Ecuador to wake up».

³⁵⁸ The emergence of the EZLN coincides exactly with the beginning of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, which has been renegotiated recently at the initiative of the Washington administration, but without Canada. With this symbolic act, the Zapatist movement wanted to draw attention to the discrepancy between the situation of discrimination and marginalization of indigenous peoples, and the desire to maximize the profits of neoliberalism and unbridled capitalism through free trade.

³⁵⁹ Cf. on the theme of „Andean Utopia»: Flores 1986; Burga 1988; Burga and Flores 1982; Urbano 1977.

indigenous protagonists. The New World has been for many people the projection screen of a «New Jerusalem»³⁶⁰, of a renewed and original Christianity, both by actors of Catholic origin and by Protestants who sought refuge from persecution by some European states after the Reformation. The Franciscan Joaquín de Fiore or *de Floris* (in Italian: Gioacchino da Fiore) (1135-1202) was an abbot born in Calabria, who was a fervent follower of millenarian and chiliastic ideas³⁶¹, proposing a division of the history of humanity founded on the divine Trinity:

1. The Age of the Father which spans the time from Creation to the birth of Christ; it is an age dominated by the fear of punishment.
2. The Age of the Son, which begins with the birth of Christ; it is dominated by the feeling of faith.
3. The Age of the Holy Spirit, which begins at the end of the first millennium; it is a time when there will be no wars nor enmities anymore.

Joaquín de Fiore's ideas fell on good soil when they were brought to the New World³⁶², because very similar ideas existed in pre-colonial cultures such as the Inca one. There are still reminiscences in the Andes of the five epochs or «classic cycles»:

1. Primordial time and creation (*pachakamaq*)
2. The time of the ancestors (*ñawpa machulakuna/nayra achachilanaka*)
3. The time of the Incas and the Conquest
4. The «modern» period
5. The future

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala «baptized» this division of history:

1. From Adam to Noah
2. From Noah to Abraham
3. From Abraham to David
4. From David to Jesus
5. From Jesus onward³⁶³

For the «messianic» indigenous movements, two ideas were mixed: the re-establishment of the Inca Empire (*Tawantinsuyo*) through the «resurrection» of the *Inkarri*, on the one hand, and the Judeo-Christian messianism associated with the *Christorri* (King Christ) and the Parousia (the second coming of Christ) according to millenarian ideas, on the other. This

³⁶⁰ The best-known example are the Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of the Saints of the Last Days) who locate the „New Jerusalem», according to the „Book of Mormon», in the Missouri State of the United States. („The New Jerusalem will be built in Missouri» (*The Doctrine* 1981, 84:1-5; 57:1-3)). Another example is the former president of Guatemala, Efraín Ríos Mont, who was convinced that his country was the New Jerusalem: „Guatemalans are the chosen people of the New Testament. We are the New Israelites of Central America».

³⁶¹ The millenarianism or chiliasm (of the Latin *millenium* [„thousand years»] or of the Greek *chilia* [„thousand»]) is the doctrine according to which Christ will return to reign over the Earth for a thousand years, before the last fight against evil takes place, producing the condemnation of the Devil to lose all his influence for eternity and to begin the Universal Judgment. Near the two turns of the millennium (1000 and 2000) there was a notable increase of millennial ideas and expectations.

³⁶² See: Arcelus 1987.

³⁶³ Guamán Poma 1980, chapter 3 „Las Edades del Mundo» (22-32), drawings 8-11.

conglomerate was associated with the third «age» of Joaquín de Fiore, the «Age of the Spirit» which was considered imminent and which contained many utopian elements («there will be no wars nor enmities»). Most of the chroniclers (Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Joan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti, Guamán Poma de Ayala)³⁶⁴ and «indigenous» rebels (Juan Chocne, Tupaq Amaru, Tupaq Katari) did not distance themselves from Christian ideas or the religion brought by the Spaniards, but interpreted them in their own way as a model for the «liberation» of indigenous peoples and the restoration of ancestral communities or even of the Inca Empire. They were convinced that the new religion advocated, in the end, a world of peaceful coexistence and a millenarian «utopia», beyond the abuses and their legitimization by the Catholic doctrine defended by the Spanish doctrinarians and *encomenderos*.³⁶⁵

This strong religious «burden» in the indigenous struggle for inclusion and «liberation» can still be seen today in many indigenous movements and respective political ideas. The «classical» Liberation Theology of the 1970s and 1980s did not yet pose the indigenous cause or take the indigenous people into account as subject of liberation; the common denominator was the «poor» and the «people», and the frame of reference was the classist theory of a Marxist analysis adapted to the American continent.³⁶⁶ But many indigenous leaders and shamans saw in liberationist ideas a re-edition of the «utopian» projections of their ancestors, mixed with the eschatology of the «new earth and new heaven» of Judeo-Christian messianism. Together with the Indigenous Pastoral that was beginning to have an impact among the indigenous populations in the Andes and Central America, these ideas took shape from the 1970s, along with a growing political awareness and an awareness of indigenous «identity». «Indian theology» emerged in this religious-political context, as a

³⁶⁴ Garcilaso de la Vega was the son of the Spanish conquistador and captain Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega, of the nobility of the Spanish province of Extremadura, and of the Inca or *ñusta* (princess) Isabel Chimpú Ocllo, niece of the Inca Tupaq Yupanqui and cousin of the Inca Wayna Qhapaq, governor of the „Empire of the four regions» or *Tawantinsuyo*. His main work is the *Real Comentario de los Incas* (Royal Commentaries of the Incas), published in 1609 and 1617, and subsequently banned by the representatives of the Spanish Crown in Latin America.

It is known from his own sources that Joan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti Yamqui Salcamaygua was originally from the town of Santiago of Hanan and Urin Waygua Canchi which was located on the border of the provinces Canas and Canchas in the former *Qullasuyu* and the current Cusco Department in Peru. He was an indigenous descendant of the autochthonous local authorities (*caciques*), established by the Spaniards, son of Diego Felipe Condorcanqui and María Wayrotari. He himself always stressed that all his ancestors by the paternal and maternal lines had been baptized into the Catholic faith. In 1613, his work *Relación de Antigüedades deste reino del Perú* was published.

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala was the son of a noble family from the southern central province of Lucanas, today part of the Peruvian Department of Ayacucho. He spoke fluently Quechua and different Uru dialects, and learned Spanish as a child and young man, although he would never fully master its grammar. His main work is *Nueva Crónica* [in the original: *Corónica*] y *Buen Gobierno* which was published in 1615 and is one of the main testimonies of the time of the Conquest and of the way of life of the indigenous people of the 17th century.

³⁶⁵ In his *The New Chronicle and Good Government*, Guamán Poma defended Christianity against its promoters, the Spanish crown and the doctrinarians in *Abya Yala*. He was convinced that the utopian and liberationist core of the new religion would not be erased by the abuses committed by the conquistadors, *encomenderos* and priests in his name.

³⁶⁶ „Marxism», the apple of discord for the Vatican Commission for the Doctrine of Faith, only referred to socio-economic analysis, but the most striking theory in the analysis has been the Dependency Theory from Latin America.

contextualized and inculturated response to indigenous claims, but also as an alternative to «utopian» guerrilla movements with Marxist-Leninist-Maoist roots, such as Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) in Peru.³⁶⁷

Many of the leaders of peasant, indigenous, and mining confederations attended «catechist schools» in the 1970s and 1980s and participated actively in Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) of the progressive wing of the Catholic Church. This promoted, in line with the Second Vatican Council, the Episcopal Conferences of CELAM of Medellin and Puebla, and the Social Doctrine of the Church, the «integral liberation» of peoples. The former presidents Evo Morales (2005-2019) of Bolivia, Rafael Correa (2007-2017) of Ecuador, José Mujica (2010-2015) of Uruguay, Fernando Lugo (2008-2012) of Paraguay and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2011) of Brazil, were religiously and politically formed in the environment of Liberation Theology and Basic Ecclesial Communities. While in Bolivia, the progressive church was more committed to the mining sector and its struggle for greater recognition and inclusion (Luis Espinal; Domitila de Chungara), in Ecuador it did the same with the indigenous movements (Proaño), in Peru with the peasant communities (*Instituto de Pastoral Andina*; Dammert; Vallejos), and in Central America with the indigenous struggle for land and territory (Ruiz; Vega; CENAMI).

At the same time, these left-wing governments were confronted in virtually every country by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and by evangelical (fundamentalist) sectors of the Protestant churches.³⁶⁸ Even in politics, the existence of two «churches» is still noticeable, one of the base and in the line of Liberation Theology, and the other of the hierarchical elite and followers of a neoliberal theology of prosperity (Prosperity Gospel).³⁶⁹ The aforementioned left-wing governments – together with figures such as Michelle Bachelet in Chile, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela – were allies of the liberationist line, while many right-wing governments (Peru, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, etc.) made and

³⁶⁷ Shining Path began as a „utopian» movement that articulated ideas of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist origin with indigenous Andean conceptions (*pachakuti*), but soon became a bloodthirsty and terrorist group, causing more than 70'000 deaths. Cf. Degregori 1988.

³⁶⁸ One consequence of the „success» of Liberation Theology (LT) was, as a reaction of conservative sectors, the invasion of the continent by „fundamentalist» movements of U.S. neo-Pentecostal churches, as well as the establishment of the ultra-conservative wing of the Catholic Church (Opus Dei; Legionaries of Christ; neo-catechumenal; charismatic movement; *Sodalitium de Vita Christiana*). It is common knowledge that the Administration in Washington became nervous because of the impetus of the LT and reacted, as shown in the „Document of Santa Fe II» (1980) on the new US policy towards Latin America, with the sending of „evangelical» pastors, to reverse the evolution of progressive theology in Latin America. Textually, the Document says: „It is in this context that Liberation Theology must be understood; it is a political doctrine disguised as a religious belief with an anti-liberal enterprise and antipapal meaning, in order to weaken society's independence from state control».

³⁶⁹ This current, anchored in the neo-Pentecostal movement, presupposes that well-being and prosperity were manifestations of the divine grace that each one receives thanks to his intense prayers and religious merits (tithes; missionary activity). Known representatives of *Prosperity Gospel* (Theology of Prosperity) in the U.S. are Essek William Kenyon, Oral Roberts, Thomas Dexter Jakes, Asa Alonso Allen, Robert Tilton, Tommy Lee Osborn, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland, Reverend Ike (Frederick J. Eikerenkoetter II) and Kenneth Hagin. Current President Donald Trump has many followers who embrace the main ideas of *Prosperity Gospel*.

The „classics» of *Prosperity Gospel* are Roberts and Montgomery 1966; Gordon 1960; Wilkinson and Kopp 2000.

continue to make pacts with conservative sectors of the Catholic Church or «fundamentalist» groups of evangelical churches. For the former, the themes of struggle were social justice, the access of populations to education, health and housing services, the inclusion of minorities, gender equity and ecology, that is, the defence of social values and of a social and ecological ethic. For those of the second group, it was the struggle against abortion, gay marriage, the secular state, sexual education, or access to contraceptives, that is, the defence of traditional values and an individualistic ethic, in harmony with neoliberal principles.³⁷⁰

5. Impact of «Indian Theology» on the political constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia

By way of example, I will analyse now the new Political Constitutions of Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009) that were approved by left-wing governments and those related to the indigenous sectors. Of course, «Indian Theology» and its themes are not explicitly present in the two documents. But despite the fact that they are Constitutions that advocate the secularity of the State, both *Magnae Chartae* are in their diction highly «religious», or better said: spiritual. A simple synopsis between the former Bolivian Political Constitution of 1967 (with modifications in 1994) and the new one of 2009³⁷¹ reveals both the «religious» tenor of the new one as well as significant differences regarding the religious language between the two Constitutions. The notions «religion» and «religious» appear in the 1967 Constitution six times, in the 2009 Constitution nine times; «church» and «religious education» once, while they do not appear at all in the 2009 Constitution. «Cult» appears in both texts three times. While the 1967 Constitution does not use the terms «cosmovision», «spirituality», «beliefs», «God» or «*pachamama*», the new 2009 Constitution abounds: «cosmovision» seven, «spirituality» four, «beliefs» two times, «God» and «*pachamama*» once.

In the new political Constitution of the Ecuadorian State³⁷², a very similar panorama can be appreciated, but with nuances. The notions «religion» and «religious» appear 9 times (as in the Bolivian Constitution), «church» no time (0)³⁷³, «worship» no time (3), «spirituality» once (4), «cosmovision» no time (7), «God» once (1), «*Pacha Mama*» twice (1: «*pachamama*») and «beliefs» three times (2). It can be said that the Ecuadorian Constitution still uses a more traditional and less spiritual-indigenous language. In the «Preamble», the name of God is invoked, and it recognizes «our diverse forms of religiosity and spirituality», and in Article 66.8, religious freedom is established in the following words: «The right to practice, preserve, change, profess in public or in private, his religion or his beliefs».

It can be said that the new political Constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador contain the idea of a non-institutional religion and the preference for the spiritual and cosmovisional, that is to say a rather «postmodern» conception. Article 4 of the Bolivian Constitution of

³⁷⁰ Today, in many Latin American countries, the conservative sectors of the Catholic Church form a „non-holy alliance» with new religious movements of a fundamentalist and neo-Pentecostal nature to combat the legalization of abortion, the implementation of „gay marriage» or the constitution of a secular state.

³⁷¹ 2009: https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/Constitucion_Bolivia.pdf
1967: <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/es/bo/bo025es.pdf>

³⁷² https://www.oas.org/juridico/pdfs/mesicic4_ecu_const.pdf

³⁷³ Numbers in parentheses refer to how many times they appear in the 2009 Bolivian Constitution.

2009 reads as follows: «The State respects and guarantees freedom of religion and spiritual beliefs, in accordance with its cosmovisions».³⁷⁴ In Article 21, within the framework of «Civil Rights», religious freedom is established in the following words: «Bolivians have the following rights: To freedom of thought, spirituality, religion and worship, expressed individually or collectively, in public or private, for lawful purposes». What is striking is the order: «thought, spirituality, religion and worship». In Article 30 II and III on the «Rights of Indigenous and Native Peasant Nations and Peoples», the following rights are mentioned, among others: «2. To their cultural identity, religious belief, spirituality, practices, and customs, and to their own world view. To the protection of their sacred places. To have their traditional knowledge, their traditional medicine, their languages, their rituals and their symbols and clothing, valued, respected and promoted». Evangelical leaders saw in these formulations the proof that the Plurinational State of Bolivia wanted to impose «autochthonous religions» in order to «leave Christianity in ruins».

But the incidence of Liberation Theology, and especially of «Indian Theology», is not be found mainly in «religious language», but in the weight given to social and collective rights, as well as to ecology and harmonious coexistence with the natural environment and the entire cosmos. In both Constitutions, reference is made to the Andean concept of *Vivir Bien* (Bolivia) or *Buen Vivir* (Ecuador) which is like a common thread of a new logic and political ethics. This same concept also plays a very important role in «Indian Theology», especially in the Andean context (Andean Theology).³⁷⁵

In the Political Constitution of Bolivia of 2009, the notion of «Good Living» appears six times, mostly in the form of «achievement» or «search» of good living or simply «collectively good living». Thus, in the Preamble, the guiding principles that point to «Good Living» are unfolded: «A State based on respect and equality among all, with principles of sovereignty, dignity, complementarity, solidarity, harmony and equity in the distribution and redistribution of the social product, where the search for Good Living predominates». (Preamble, line 3). But the most important mention is given in Article 8 where the expressions in native languages are also used: «The State assumes and promotes as ethical-moral principles of the plural society: *ama qhilla*, *ama llulla*, *ama suwa* (don't be lazy, don't be a liar, don't be a thief), *suma qamaña* (to live good), *ñandereko* (harmonious life), *teko kavi* (good life), *ivi maraei* (land without evil) and *qhapaj ñan* (noble path or life)». (8.I) It is noteworthy that three different Guaraní expressions are used (*ñandereko*, *teko kavi*, *ivi maraei*), but instead of the corresponding Quechua term (*allin kawsay*), as an alternative, the «noble path» (*qhapaj ñan*).³⁷⁶

In Ecuador's 2008 political Constitution, the notion of «Good Living» appears in an inflationary manner (22 times); five times the Quichua term *sumak kawsay* is used, four times in combination with the Spanish *Buen Vivir* (Good Living), and once in the formula of «the *sumak kawsay* principle». In the «Preamble», the term and principle are introduced

³⁷⁴ The emphasis is mine, as well as in the following quotes from the Bolivian Constitution.

³⁷⁵ Estermann 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012 and 2015.

³⁷⁶ In this regard, there is a significant difference with the Constitution of Ecuador, where only the Kichua notion (*sumak kawsay*) appears. In Bolivia, the concept of „Living Well» was introduced as a translation of the Aymara *suma qamaña* and not of the Quechua *allin kawsay*, which may explain the handling of terms in the constitutional text. In addition, the recognition of 36 „nationalities» (art. 5) implies that at least the notions of the three largest (Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní) are mentioned.

as follows: «We decided to build a new form of citizen coexistence, in diversity and harmony with nature, to achieve the good living, the *sumak kawsay*». It is striking that on two occasions, the «Good Living» is used as part of a title: Chapter 2 of title II is called «Rights of Good Living», and Title VII is called «Regime of Good Living». The «Rights of Good Living» (art. 12-34) encompass virtually all social rights such as the rights to water and food, a healthy environment, communication and information, culture and science, education, habitat and housing, health, work, and social security. And the «Regime of Good Living» covers the social issues of inclusion and equity (art. 340-394) and the ecological issues of biodiversity and natural resources (395-415).

Both Constitutions note the presence and importance of two central concerns of «Indian Theology»: social and collective rights, on the one hand, and ecology (or «ecosophy»), on the other. In contrast to the order in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, social and collective rights precede individual rights (such as property or free expression). This reflects indigenous cosmo-spirituality and the principles of Andean Philosophy³⁷⁷, in contrast to the «individualistic» principles of modern Western Philosophy. On the other hand, the inclusion of ecology, reflected in indigenous («*ecosofia*») and liberationist ecotheology³⁷⁸, rests on the central place occupied by *pachamama* or *Pacha Mama*, «mother earth», in Andean cosmo-spirituality. The «ecological turn» of Liberation Theology in the 1990s owes much to «Indian Theology» and the eco-spiritual principles of the indigenous peoples of *Abya Yala*, especially the Andean peoples. Bolivia, on the ground of its «socio-ecological» Constitution of 2009, came to promulgate in 2014 the «land rights» or the «rights of Mother Earth». The land is recognized as «a living being» (art. 1) and it is stated that «Mother Earth and all the beings that compose it have [...] inherent rights» (art. 2).

6. By way of conclusion

Although in recent years the political landscape in Latin America has shown a significant shift to the right, with the result that very few «left» governments remain today, the issues raised by «Indian Theology» have impregnated much of the continent's indigenous and mestizo populations. The struggle of indigenous sectors against mining extractivism and energy megaprojects, the growing ecological awareness, and the implementation of legal, economic, and educational pluralism in many countries with indigenous populations are living examples of this impact on the population. The same is true for the religious landscape. In spite of the strong «Pentecostalisation» of the historical Protestant churches and conservative sectors of the Catholic Church, Liberation Theology recovers new actuality and strength, perhaps thanks to Pope Francis, but above all due to the strong indigenous-Christian spiritualities and the new challenges posed by «late» capitalism for the whole region.

It is true that the political left is in crisis, partly due to the self-treason by its main promoters (Daniel Ortega, Nicolás Maduro, Evo Morales), partly due to the weight of cultural imperialism that faithfully accompanies neoliberal globalization. It is obvious that

³⁷⁷ Estermann 2018, especially 129-156.

³⁷⁸ Mention should be made of the works of Leonardo Boff, after his condemnation by the Vatican: Boff 2000, 2008 and 2011.

«Indian Theology» should not remain with an uncritical and identitarian «culturalism», but should rethink the great issues of the «classical» Liberation Theology, but in the form of a diversification of subjects, methodologies, and forms of struggle. Indian Theology» has strongly raised the issue of eurocentrism of certain presuppositions of Liberation Theology and the pending task of a profound decolonization of politics and the religious field. Several left-wing governments have taken up this challenge, but they stopped the fight against the hegemonic forces halfway. Now it is up to the social and indigenous movements, together with progressive sectors of the churches, to demand integral decolonization, in the sense of an authentic «liberation» in the nomenclature of the 21st century.

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