Another relevant illustration is the ability of Roman Catholic biblical scholarship to remain conservatively faithful to its historic tradition, while its biblical theologians embrace the best of contemporary biblical scholarship. The late Raymond BROWN is an example of this.

One of the most intriguing statements is this: "it will be significant later when we consider why fundamentalists are so hostile to ecumenical movements and endeavors". But this idea is not elaborated upon later.

The critique of ecumenism by fundamentalists is reminiscent of a parallel development within Eastern Orthodoxy. The Bulgarian and Georgian Orthodox churches, for example, have withdrawn their membership from the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Other Orthodox communions, especially those related to the Moscow Patriarchate, have expressed such serious criticism of the WCC that a joint Orthodox–WCC commission was formed during the Harare Assembly in 1998, in order to attempt to resolve the areas of difference.

Does this theological critique of WCC's style of worship, for example, suggest that Eastern Orthodoxy be labeled fundamentalist? Does arranging a joint commission for resolving these kinds of tensions suggest that a similar arrangement could be made with fundamentalists? But, to paraphrase a familiar question: what if someone announced an ecumenical party, and no one came?

Suggested Reading

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Henrik Lindberg HANSEN

Faith to Faith Relations in a World of Plurality

1. Jesus Christ showed us God and Himself as the Son of God. He spoke through parables and symbols. Inspired by Greek philosophy in the Hellenistic setting in which Christianity spread, theologians attempted to define what Jesus Christ had shown. They were children of a time where definitions were thought possible and therefore necessary.

This is in itself not a problem; the problem arises when we move from one episteme or *paradigm*[1] to another, as for example now, when we are moving away from the rationalistic foundationalistic approach to life. Then defining becomes an illusion, and we have to reinvent the process of explanation.

Although some would contest the idea that a philosophy of religion can be built on Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, it is at least possible to examine faith through his insights.

His terminology and methodology give an effective picture to sustain us in a *plurality*[2] matrix of thought, where it is possible to approach the realm of the *other religious*[3] without trying to determine it.

This then becomes an attempt to adapt WITTGENSTEIN's reckoning with the foundationalism of the philosophy of logic and knowledge into the realm of the religious and give some clue as to how this sets us free to engage in open dialogue with the other religious.

Our examples primarily are from or seen from the context of the Danish Christian matrix of thought, so our self-criticism should not be seen as aggressive nor our positive examples as self-glorifying.

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1 As described by FOUCAULT. 1994.

2 The term *plurality* is preferred from both *pluralism* and *pluralist*, as the latter are negatively loaded terms that indicate the realisation of the plurality of reality as an ideology. An ideology (or an *ism*) indicates a choice, which is not present when realising reality as plural.

3 By the *other religious* is meant the *other person of another religious conviction*. The emphasis is primarily on the person, who is of another background also religiously.

2. The postmodern is the realization that we live in a plural and ever-changing world. On the backdrop of this realization, recent thinkers offer us some clues which enable us to live in a world, where we are part of its dynamics.

We must further an understanding that gives enough certainty to act and live without becoming static. Our understanding itself has to be as dynamic as the world we live in.

This entails letting go of beliefs that are rigid, but it does not entail letting go of faith as it is as certain and real as everything else we experience; maybe even more so, as faith for the religious is the *conditio sine qua non*[4] of life.

Postmodern thinkers are abandoning what some term *foundationalism*. It is the belief that human faculties can grasp the essential, objective or absolute, and think from this as a foundation.

The primary foundationalism in modern thought is a rationality grounded in a subject, which is seen as corresponding somehow with the essence of the world.[5] Rationality is then able to get exact knowledge about the essence of the world we live in, because it partakes in it.

Rationality became the *imago Dei*[6] of modern thought. Foundationalism is then the term that has been used in the postmodern as the primary signifier of modern thought, and the downfall of foundationalism is the insight that we cannot gain any absolute knowledge of the world we live in.

Eventually it became obvious to many that we do not hold any such absolute rationality, but that we learn about life by living it. Through living and experiencing life we more or less consciously build structures (matrices of thought, or life forms) to give our lives meaning within our communities: to make sense of it all.[7]

This goes for all areas of life, whether it is science, ethics or æsthetics.[8] Nor in religion do we have such foundation: the experience of God is an experience and not absolute knowledge. What we know about God is something that is built in the interplay between God and people.

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4 A term first used in legal matters, but is now used generally; it means roughly: *a condition without which nothing is*.

5 FOUCAULT. 1994. 340–343.

6 A theological term that means: the *Image of God*. When God created humans, God did so in God's Own image. This gives humans a special position in Creation interpreted differently through history.

7 FOUCAULT. 1994. 208.

8 Read LYOTARD, *La Condition Postmoderne* for a description of the paradigm change. He distinguishes between different areas of life, but these are approached differently.

This should not be anything new for Christianity, as we have always known and built our faith on the belief that God is basically unknowable; but it does seem that many have forgotten this mystical core of Christianity: at least when relating to other religions.

We are not just living in a world which we conform to without interpretation or will. We assess the world; we make sense of life through living in it as social beings, and this develops a matrix of understanding through life.

This matrix expresses itself in our language. Looking at language can then give us clues about how we live in and understand the world. This has profound impact on how we engage in dialogue. We realize that God has indeed created the world with its plurality, because God loves diversity. In a creation, which is genuinely diverse, God must communicate Godself differently to different people to make sense in the lives of these different people.

This gives us the advantage that we are able to approach other religions with curiosity. We do not have to assume that they are wrong and we do not have to judge them from the way we live in the world, as both God and God's creation are greater than anything we will ever fathom.

But it also gives clues as to how we can engage in dialogue. It is not only the words of the language which are different but also the use of language and thought. We cannot compare our languages directly and then think to gain knowledge of the other.

We have to find out how language is used in the life of the other, and we do this by looking at our practices expressed in language and life. Some parts of these practices and the meaning they bring to life are similar, while others are completely different.

We still might not be able to actually see through the eyes of the other as the differences are genuine differences, but we might be able to get close enough to see the meaning of the practices of the other. We need to be shown the meaning of the other's life through her or his life.

3. We deal with the methodology of WITTGENSTEIN in an attempt to underline some of his main terms. The most central terms for this article are *family resemblance, language games* and *life forms*.

We also apply these terms to Christianity, recognizing the plurality of the world. Finally, we look at the suggestions found in the methodology of WITTGENSTEIN for dialogue. Here *intermediate cases* and starting from *frame questions of life* are in the fore.

I. Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN

4. Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN's concern is wider than his philosophy of language. Many of his aphorisms show him as a passionate person who laments the age he is born in, where the magic and passion of life seems ridiculed and driven out of the language games in use.

Wondering is seen as a primitive form of what now has become science, guaranteeing a concise picture of the world. What is really important seems to WITTGENSTEIN to be driven out of human life.

Everything is about production and precision: "People nowadays think that scientists exist to instruct them, poets, musicians, etc. to give them pleasure. The idea that *these have something to teach them*: that does not occur to them."[9]

With his language games he shows that there is a multitude of expressions (for example, rites) that have no goal besides just marvelling over the world we live in. He is supposed to have said: "I am not a religious man, but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view." This has been interpreted very differently by commentators, and certainly can be.

WITTGENSTEIN may lament living in an age where he is determined by a general life form that dictates a scientific approach to life and does not leave much space for awe and the mysterious, including religiosity. At the same time, it can be an expression of WITTGENSTEIN's general project: to nourish a life form where marvelling is allowed and passion is able to enter into life again.[10]

5. In *Philosophical Investigations* WITTGENSTEIN dismantles the foundationalistic rationalistic approach to the surrounding world. Our understanding stems from our engagement with the world rather than through contemplating it from an assumed rationalistic foundation.

To avoid using the foundationalistic rationalistic approach in dismantling it, he shows his point through our use of everyday language. Earlier we used an inadequate picture in imagining a perfect language reachable through philosophical investigation, and we tried to force language into this constructed matrix or picture.

Instead, philosophy needs to investigate language as it is situated and used in life: in all its diversity and 'inaccurateness'. Everyday language is functional and does not need philosophy to fix it; quite

9 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 36.

10 CLACK. 1999. 173.

the contrary, we can solve whatever philosophical difficulties we might have by learning from its use.[11]

The task of philosophy is to dissolve problems by looking carefully at the language we use. WITTGENSTEIN makes a distinction between surface and depth grammar.[12] While surface grammar looks at the form of words, depth grammar looks at the use made of the form of words.[13]

"A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not *command a clear view* of the use of our words. Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding, which consists in 'seeing connexions'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate cases*. The concept of perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things."

"A philosophical problem has the form: 'I do not know my way about.' (…) Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. (…) Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain."

"The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (…) We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view; one out of many possible orders; not *the* order."[14]

Wittgenstein used his *language games*[15] as a tool to dig into our language to find the depth grammar of the language. He did not use the language games to explain the essence of language itself; they are merely a tool to *make order* in language so that we are no longer confused by the surface grammar.[16]

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11 SCHRAG. 1992. 58.; and WITTGENSTEIN. 1989. §433.

12 CHOMSKY Noam distinguishes also in *Language and Mind* between surface and depth structures of language. He sees great importance in the neglected depth structures of language, where the creativity of language is to be found. The aim of CHOMSKY is different though, as he is discussing the use of linguistics in psychology on a positivistic foundation.

13 CLACK. 1999. 56.

14 WITTGENSTEIN. 2001. §122–132.; see also WITTGENSTEIN. 1979. 8–9.

15 The term *language game* should not in any way be understood as demeaning. Is does not mean that religious people in dialogue are playing games of no greater importance, but it is merely a term WITTGENSTEIN uses as it is illuminating when describing how understanding arises.

16 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. §433.

6. WITTGENSTEIN talks of language games as simple uses of language, which, when we examine them, can teach us about how language is used. Language games can be one word or a cluster of words encompassing some practice or use of language.

Each language game exists by rules, which we learn to adapt in our own lives through experience with the game.[17] The rules enable the language game to have a function. The rules are not determined by human intellect but learnt by practice.

The rules show the difference between the uses of different language games, and the set of rules applied is understood from the context. These rules can encompass the use of voice or gestures too.

In this way language games involve not only words but also actions and the situation and order in which the language is used. We may even imagine a language game completely without the use of words, but simply pointing to an object.

It becomes clear that language is intimately connected to life and how it is lived. A word does not point to the essence (*ontos*) of things, but it makes sense against the backdrop of experiences in which the word is used and experienced.

7. "Our language may be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses."[18]

Language is ever changing. Each language game develops and changes and new games are added: some spontaneous in everyday life, others at the desks of scientists, some crooked, others straight.

There are similarities between some language games and other similarities between other language games; there is no common denominator or single grammar between all language games.

They have a *family resemblance* but have no common essence that can constitute a general form of language. They are as different as tools in a toolbox, useable in different situations. As situations change, the language games develop and change in use, some disappear and others appear for the language to cover a particular worldview.[19]

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17 CHOMSKY criticises the idea that language is merely something learned by living, but rather that it follows a *dynamic* grammar. In this he maintains the level of dynamics that WITTGENSTEIN has (as the grammar of CHOMSKY can take infinite forms), but relates it not only to experience but also to the *structure of the mind*. The structure of the mind determines dynamically the language or a frame within which language can develop. CHOMSKY. 1974: 105–106.

18 WITTGENSTEIN. 2001. §18.

19 WITTGENSTEIN. 1989. §351.

8. All language games are part of or constitute life forms. A life form is a matrix of language games.[20] The mastery of a language or life form is through experience with the language games and their use in different situations. These life forms are not monolithic blocks, but matrices as dynamic as the language games themselves.[21]

9. The rationalistic foundationalistic approach to the world aims to define it, with the conviction that everything holds an essence that we have access to and are able to convey. This is also the approach WITTGENSTEIN has in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, where language is seen as a proposition or picture of reality all in all. The world consists of facts, and the sum of all facts is reality; language, if it is exact, can convey these facts. This means that the more exact the language, the more exactly we know reality.[22] In *Philosophical Investigations* we are not to make the language more exact, but to examine how language is used.

In WITTGENSTEIN's two publications the focus changes from defining reality to analysing things as they show themselves to us as we engage in life.[23] According to *Philosophical Investigations* we use pictures to 'make sense' of our lives; pictures are used to see things afresh. A picture is then a particular view of the world.

10. Language constitutes our understanding in each of our communities. We are taught to relate to the world through communication with others, through conventions or language games, and in this way our understanding of things is determined by how it is talked about.

Language is the medium of thought; without developing language there is no development of thought. This does not mean that nothing is *behind* the language; it just means that we cannot relate without linguistic access to it.

We cannot reach beyond what we can talk about, because *language is our act of reaching*. The question is then if we can speak of language games in religiosity and how these develop in a specific religious setting.

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20 LYOTARD writes about *stories*, which have some similarities to the life forms of WITTGENSTEIN in the sense that our understanding is built on narratives that constitute our picture of the world. LYOTARD. 2001. 43–49.

21 FOUCAULT. 1994. xv–xviii.

22 FOUCAULT. 1994. 296–299.

23 MONK. 2005. 41.; 64–65.; and WITTGENSTEIN. 1989. §475.

II. The Christian Life Form

11. Language is not merely the activity of labelling items around us. Language is part and parcel of the life that develops it. In this way, saying *God* only makes sense religiously if it is connected to some experience of God in our lives.

But the meaning of the word *God* is equally established by the situation it is used in and the person it is used by, as are the other language games connected to faith. Our understanding is limited by our experience. Certainly, experiencing God influences every other experience and language game in life, but it is an experience that makes sense only between other experiences.[24]

Saying grace before eating only makes sense if one has experienced a situation oneself or through others where food is scarce and essential for survival. Thankfulness for the food comes from experience, while the need to express thankfulness comes from the experience of God. It is obvious that saying grace loses rationality if belief in God is lost; but if food is trivial, thankfulness becomes obsolete also, as does saying grace as a religious language game.

But then is saying grace explicitly connected to an experience of hunger? Can it hold no other meaning? If it is the time of the day when the family is gathered, could it not be an expression of gratitude for this? Could it not just be a general act of gratitude? A meditative act? It can, but then it is another language game of gratitude or meditation.

"One of the most important methods I use is to imagine a historical development for our ideas different from what actually occurred. If we do this, we see the problem from a completely new angle."[25]

WITTGENSTEIN does not dismiss historical explanation, but he does stress that it is helpful to seek alternate explanations. This helps broaden our horizons and makes the horizons of others accessible. It can help give sense to the religious expression of others also.

Religion, culture, social setting and personality are inseparable, as the meaning given by religion to life has to engage all other language games because they are in play together. The different life forms are intimately embedded in even more complex life forms, ultimately forming an overall life form. It is not possible to say *this is culture* and *this is religion* as the one does not make sense without the other. We are in this sense dictated by the lives we live.[26]

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24 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 31–32.; 35.; 82.; 85–86; and WITTGENSTEIN. 1970. 69.

25 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 37.; see also CLACK 1999. 141–142.; and WITTGENSTEIN. 1979. 8.

26 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 80.

12. "Unshakable faith (eg. in a promise). Is it any less certain than being convinced of a mathematical truth? But does that make the language games any more alike!"[27]

I have no doubt that God exists as I have no doubt that the chair I am sitting on exists. I have no doubt that my salvation is in Jesus Christ, as I have no doubt the desk in front of me sustains my notebook.

I am not confined to solipsism because of my trust in God, as DESCARTES was not confined to solipsism for the same reason. My reason for perception and understanding is not in my own reasoning, but in my trust in a loving God and the perception God has given me in life.

My perception of the chair and the desk and the fact that I trust in their existence enough to use them is of course not the same as my perception of God. Whereas the chair and the desk only have limited possibilities, which are potentially within the scope of my imagination, God's being and the possibilities of God are beyond my imagination.[28]

"It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it is *belief*, it is really a way of living, or a way of asserting life. It is passionately seizing hold of this interpretation."[29]

This description of faith is strikingly similar to WITTGENSTEIN's later general approach to life and perception. It seems he had this insight about religion before it became a general insight for him. He often speaks of courage as a centrepiece of any assertion in *Culture and Value*.

But there is a fundamental difference in religious assertions and

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27 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 73.

28 This example can be misunderstood, as it considers DESCARTES, who by many is seen as the father of modernism. DESCARTES' *I think; therefore I am* (the *cogito*) is based on scepticism stemming from foundationalistic rationality, on the idea that only the thought exists in any real sense. As the rational thought is the starting point and tool of this scepticism, the result of the scepticism becomes of course thought itself; it is a circular argument. (LYOTARD. 2001. 60.; 76.; and FOUCAULT. 1994. 73.). In a non-foundationalistic postmodern setting we would have to say: *I think, act, eat, walk, talk, feel, sleep, believe; therefore I am*. Or in short: *I exist; therefore I am*. The thinking, eating, acting, etc. then constitutes the person without the consciousness having any idealistic self-knowledge. WITTGENSTEIN puts it in this way: "It is humiliating to have to appear like an empty tube, which is inflated by a mind." (WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 11.) RICOEUR Paul stipulates that *I am* before *I think*. This does not exclude the possibility of scepticism and solipsism though, as we still feel depression or despair in every part of our being. As DESCARTES was left to something other than himself to be able to trust the world we live in, so are we: at least from the viewpoint of the believer. It should be obvious that the postmodern argument is as circular as the one of DESCARTES, but this is exactly what postmodernity has come to terms with in excluding the possibility of referring to some foundation. Any trail of thought is enclosed to a certain extent in its own system of thought. The insight of postmodernity is then that it does not artificially glorify one aspect of life, like rationality, to be decisive for everything else. (FOUCAULT. 1972. 186.)

29 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 64.; see also 32–33; 35; 46; 53; 72; 85–86.

other more *factual* assertions: while it is obviously possible to doubt the existence of an object, doubt is different in relation to religious beliefs – even though these beliefs can colour the entire outlook of a person. What we *normally* call *evidence* is useless in religious belief.[30]

WITTGENSTEIN speaks also about the passion of faith connected to rituals: "Everything ritualistic (everything that, as it were, smacks of the high priest) must be strictly avoided, because it immediately turns rotten." [31]"Of course a kiss is a ritual too, and it is not rotten, but ritual is permissible only to the extent that it is as genuine as a kiss."

13. WITTGENSTEIN's use of the term *dogma* is connected to *dogmatism*, which is seen as a hindrance for the expression of authentic thought. People think what they think, and believe what they believe, but it has to be twisted to fit the schemata of current dogma. This is so in philosophy, but no less in religion.

"I am not thinking of these dogmas as determining one's opinions, but rather as completely controlling the expression of all opinions. People will live under an absolute, palpable tyranny, though without being able to say they are not free. (…) For dogma is expressed in the form of an assertion, and is unshakeable, but at the same time any practical opinion can be made to harmonize with it; (…) it is almost as though someone were to attach a weight to your foot to restrict your freedom of movement."[32]

Though WITTGENSTEIN can be said to have a rather bleak view on dogma, his thoughts can also be read to see a positive use of dogmas:

"The only way for us to guard our assertions against distortion, or avoid vacuity in our assertions, is to have a clear view in our reflections of what the ideal *is*, namely an object of comparison – a yardstick, as it were –, instead of making a prejudice of it to which everything *has to* conform. For this is what produces the dogmatism into which philosophy so easily degenerates. (…) The ideal does not lose any of its dignity if it is presented as the principle determining the form of one's reflection. A sound measure."[33]

Dogmas are not language games like other language games; they function rather as the standard metre in Paris[34]: as yard sticks. Each

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30 WITTGENSTEIN. 1970. 54–56.

31 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 8.

32 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 28.; 83.

33 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 27.

34 The *standard metre* is used to measure length, but for it to be effective we have to have some level of consensus of exactly how long a metre is. In 1795 a platinum rod was placed in Paris, and

community has standards that help members enter its other language games; these standards help participants understand the rules of the language games generally used within the particular life form.

The dogmas help point to God and Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, Who is active in the community. This is done for example during the service, where the creed is recited by the community experiencing God in their midst.

Dogmas are dynamic entities stating basics of a particular faith. They are not theories, but pictures of faith with which the community dynamically relates its religious experience as an inextricable reciprocal act. If dogmas are not to become rigid, they have to be rooted in the religious experience.

"*Predestination*: it is only permissible to write like this out of the most dreadful suffering; and then it means something quite different. But for the same reason it is not permissible for someone to assert it as a truth, unless one oneself says it in torment. It is not a theory. Or, to put it another way: if this is truth, it is not the truth that seems at first sight to be expressed by these words. It is less a theory than a sigh, or a cry."[35]

We will look at the dogma of the *Holy Trinity* as an example. The early Church was faced with the fact of the Jewish God, and yet they experienced that Jesus Christ is God in His ascension to Heaven and, in addition, they experienced God actively as a part of them in the Holy Spirit.

They could only show this experience as a Holy Trinity of God. In history the Trinity became dogma and is seen as knowledge, something we have to accept as Christians to be Christians. But in the beginning the Trinity was not knowledge, it was a picture showing what was experienced.

The problem with viewing the Trinity as a piece of philosophical theology is that we then have to define it with more theology, and we cannot do that. All we can do is point to the fact that God is God, Jesus Christ is God and the Holy Spirit is God, or we can show it with a picture that gives better access to it as a fact of Christian experience.

All we have about God is shown or given; it is not ours to define or control. As humans, theologians and philosophers play mind games to reach understanding of the essence (*ontos*) of God; God simply *is*.

Dogma was made for humans (and not humans for dogma) in order to express their religious experience; humans were *not* made to

venerate dogma. Could we say that dogma functions as a focus point for reaching insight to the Divine through meditative experience?

The Holy Trinity is then the line that Christians follow to make sense of their religious experience within their community. It is a picture inspired by the experience of God that helps form the experience within the Christian community. Dogmas need some level of mastery of language games within the community though, as "they only make sense within their religious framework".[36]

If dogmas cannot be followed, the community becomes diverse within itself. Of course, the Christian society did not become diversified only because of dogma. It was as part of a diverse society that needed differentiation politically and culturally. Again, religion must be seen as part of everything else, even in its dogmatic development.[37]

14. WITTGENSTEIN points out that private language is not possible; it has to be developed in community. In Christianity, this community is often the Church[38], and here the Christian life form is developed into a convention that makes it possible to speak about faith and the experience of God.

What is shown by God to the members of the Church is given language in the community of the Church.[39] But it is also the community in which the Christian life form is developed between its members; the society where its members learn mastery of their shared life form. This is where Christians grow as Christians together in dialogue with the Divine.

Some people have a non-elaborate notion of the Divine, and they are unable to communicate anything more specific. Through the general Christian culture these people still can act religiously in their lives on the basis of their religious experience. It does not make them qualitatively less religious; it just makes them less articulate of their religious experience.[40]

15. WITTGENSTEIN also points out that there is no private language. Our language is the instrument or vehicle of our thought. This means that it is not possible to have a notion of something, even in thought,

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it was agreed that this rod was exactly one metre at 0°C.

35 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 29–30.; see also 64.

36 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 32.

37 FOUCAULT. 1994. 75.

38 'Church' is seen very differently within Christianity, varying from a particular institution to the community of believers to anyone somehow enlightened by God. The documents of the Roman Catholic Second Vatican Council show a very inclusive approach. Here it should also be understood very inclusively. As the religious language games are in play in life in general, they are also developed outside the institutional Church, but the Church as an institution is focused on this. Some language games, like dogma, are often only useful within a more exclusive understanding of Church.

39 SCHRAG. 1997. 93.

40 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 32.

without being able to express it within our common language. And our common language is tied up in our society or community. This goes of course also for religion and this affects our understanding of how religion is expressed as well.

We often separate between religion and religiosity, where religion is some consensus of society and religiosity is some personal notion of the Divine, which is more or less private. These classifications can be enlightening, as when dividing between religion as institution and religion as the free expression of religiosity within any concrete setting. But it has also spawned the myth of some religious notion, which can be broadly seen as pre-religious or independent.

There might be some religious feeling which seemingly defies any words we try to describe it with, as the mystics claim. But this religious feeling will always be related to the religious corpus of thought to the same degree as it is sought to be described.

Religiosity as a myth is the idea that we build our religion on religious feelings, which can be separated from religion. This idea is often followed by the notion that religiosity is uncontaminated by religion (which is often religious institutions or official religiosity).

But there is no private notion of religiosity: everything we think, we think in a language formed by the society we live in. The religions and religious thoughts of our society shape our religious language and thus the religious experience; we cannot get around this language. It is as much a myth to speak about a private religiosity as it is to talk about a private language.

Of course, we have religion and religious language because we experience God, but we do not hold this experience in any raw, embryonic way. Rather, we experience it within a specific setting that is not passive.

Our setting shapes not only our language but also our thought and the experience itself. It is possible that God might tear down or reform this matrix of thought through our experience of God as it is not static, but basically we think and feel within a language.

But if each of us is living, acting, thinking and believing within these seemingly monolithic structures, how can we then engage in dialogue between these different communities of faith or life forms?

III. Speaking and Knowing the Faith of the Other

16. In describing Christianity using the methodology of Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, we try to lay out into the open what it means to be Christian. We relate the Christian life form to ourselves for it to give meaning in our lives; and we can only do this by living it out.

If we want to relate to other religions, this is important to understand. There is a chasm between us and other religious, as our language games are already formed within our own life form, and it can be difficult to cross this without the faith of the other religious being distorted by our own life form, our own lives.

It is much easier to discard the faith of the other religious, as it often seems contrary to what we believe – to that which gives meaning to us, than it is to cross the chasm and see things from the other side.

17. But we do not need other religions to find chasms in belief. In Orthodoxy, the expression of faith is often very physical: touching the pictures of saints transfers power to the believer, adding to her or his own person the power to act in the way of the saint.

Merely entering holy places gives strength to address life with all its difficulties. The priests carry this power in a special way and are able to transfer it to forgiveness and empowerment. This very physical approach is to show respect and relation, but it also transfers blessing. Crosses can avert evil happenings and secure life.

This religious life form carries less meaning for many average Protestants, as it is strange to them. They might believe in the same basic dogma, but it is lived out in such different ways, that an outsider might not think they are of the same faith.

Who is right? Is this a matter of mere cultural differences? If it is, and these do not influence belief or salvation, are all these religious rites mere curiosities or oddities with no real impact as they are so fundamentally different?

Is it possible that we both can be right in spite of these fundamental differences?[41] We need intermediate cases to bridge the distance

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41 The Protestant life form is inspired by programmes of demythologization, as by Rudolf BULTMANN or Paul RICOEUR, which is more or less the attempt to find the existentials in the religious texts to make the texts accessible. This language game of interpretation has momentum and rightly so within its life form. In approaching a physical expression of faith, some would also demythologize their life form to make it understandable in a Western life form. This might legitimize this physical expression of faith for a Western life form, but it will no longer be the same expression of faith as it is interpreted by Western language games. This religious expression is truthful as it is: without any Western interpretation. We are dealing with genuinely different ways of living and understanding life. If we start the dialogue from the understanding that one (which would usually be one self) is in

between different religious language games. We need to be shown the meaning in and through the life of the other.

18. If the chasm is there within one religion, it will definitely not be narrower when trying to relate to another. If we are to cross this chasm, we have to find access to the other side. As the chasm is dug by our own inability to see any meaning on the other side because we function by different language games, we do seem incapable on our own when making the attempt.

  People on both sides of the chasm need to reach out to cross it. We need to see the other side of the chasm through the other; they can be the bridge we need, and we can be theirs. Dialogue is successful when the chasm is crossed by multiple relations on all levels, because these are the aspects of which human lives consist.

If we are to succeed religiously to bridge the chasm, we need to engage with the other religious on an intimate level. We need to know the other so intimately that we can relate to their life form.[42] We have to find or invent intermediate cases together to bridge the chasms between cultures and religions.[43]

19. Although the word is the same, the use of it might be different. When we say *Holy Scripture* in Christianity and Islam, it is part of very different language games. *Al-Qur'an al-karim* in Islam is revelation transferred to the world by the prophet Muhammad (peace be on him); the Holy Bible in Christianity is the story about the revelation, which is Jesus Christ, transferred to Christians through the Holy Spirit in reading the Holy Bible.

  If we want to compare our language games, we have to compare the prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) with our Holy Bible and al-Qur'an al-karim with Jesus Christ through the mutual language game *revelation*.

  So here we have found the language game *revelation*[44] that as an *intermediate case* enables us as Christians to access better the

understanding of the use of the concept of *Holy Scripture* in Islam. Having an intermediate case, we can find the family resemblances in the use of this intermediate case. This is important as comparing *al-Qur'an al-karim* directly with the Holy Bible does not give the same sense. If we are in a situation where we are not able to find an intermediate case, we will have to invent one.[45]

20. We cannot access directly the value of the other religion, because we are not able to see it, but we can access the values of the other religious preliminarily by experiencing the value of the religion for the other religious. Then we have a platform to access the life form that is establishing her or his values, and the other religious becomes an intermediate case herself or himself.[46]

21. All people, no matter their religion, toil with different positive and negative issues set by life. A negative example is *death*, a positive is *love*. These are facts that usually make an impression on human beings by raising questions.

These questions determine a frame for the answers, which might be particular to the specific religion and its setting. These issues can be the stepping stones for dialogue.[47]

22. Dogma needs some acquaintance with the life form it is used in, as the meaning of the religious is built around it. This is also why dogma in dialogue often only results in quarrels or flat relativism and can leave people disillusioned about dialogue.

  One must push behind the dogma to see how it plays out in the lives of the other religious. There are other mutual issues in life that can show us how the dogma of the other is important in her or his life as a human being.

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a privileged situation to interpret the other, then we are sure to misunderstand the other. The other has to be approached on the premises of the other. (WITTGENSTEIN. 1989. §608–612.) Demythologization as a language game is useful in a dialogue between Christians, but only in the case where both are already applying it within their own life forms before entering the dialogue, as the use of the language game then is mutual. One life form is of course as complex as the other.

42 CLACK. 1999. 99–103.

43 CLACK. 1999. 73–78.

44 The language game *revelation* differs itself between Christianity and Islam, but the sense *given by God* is very similar.

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45 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 74.; and WITTGENSTEIN. 1979. 8–10.; 13.

46 This example should not be misunderstood in the direction that religious truth can be likened to æsthetic truth in general. Æsthetics and religion are two different life forms, functioning in different ways. As in foundationalism, in plurality we can still distinguish between the culture-spheres of æsthetics, religion, science and ethics. The difference is that now even mathematics is recognized to be humans relating to some regularity we believe to find in the world; it is not humans partaking in the *logos* of the world. This does not lessen the necessity of mathematical thought, as we are still in need of the mathematic system to relate to the world we live in, but it does make it more obvious to address the viewpoint of other domains curiously, as they are equally important in living in the world. Science has no elevated position from which it can discern the other approaches to life. Another benefit is that in the postmodern any one culture-sphere can enlighten the others, as they are no longer all surveyed by rationality, but playing together in life. See also SCHRAG. 1992. 146.; LYOTARD. 2001. 41–57.; and WITTGENSTEIN. 1989. §341–344.

47 WITTGENSTEIN. 1979. 6.; see also CLACK. 1999. 156–166.

23. These language games of dialogue are only obvious to those who want to know the other from the perspective of the other. This attitude is not something we can take for granted. There are different modes of approaching another religion or the other religious.

One mode is of indifference or 'superficial curiosity', similar to indifference and occurring when there is not really any drive to dig further into the belief of the other. Issues are left untouched, and there is no real understanding. The interesting modes of approach are the ones that truly desire to relate to the other religion. But this can also be done differently; it can be done *curiously* or *through closed dialogue*.

24. Living in a plural society does not guarantee that one accepts the plurality of the society. A religious or cultural minority can shield itself from the surrounding world that it finds intimidating.

This will often lead to the formation of cultural or religious language games in opposition to the other intimidating culture or religion. Being the majority does not guarantee a curious approach: often minorities become scapegoats. This is especially the case if the minorities themselves feel or are apart from society. This may then start a vicious circle.

25. A person engaging with the other religious in a closed way tries to point out why she or he is not the other, rather than trying to understand why the other religious is another religiously.

The closed approach presupposes only that its own life form ultimately makes sense. The other religion will then only make sense if it corresponds directly with one's own religion. If the approach is closed, it is not likely that the other religion will ultimately make sense.

Some closed Christians suggest that Islam does not have any real concept of a loving God, that the love of God is foreign to Muslims. This statement is based on the Christian language game of love based on Christian dogma, which of course is different from the Muslim one. In this way, the closed Christian understands the other religious through the Christian language games and judges her or him by it.

But it does not really say anything about how adequate the Muslim language games are in their own life form, only that they are different. The closed approach demands other life forms to conform to one's own language games because it is closed within itself.

26. Engaging curiously with another religion is an attempt to understand why the other religious is another religiously; to dive into the beauty of the other religion and learn from it. The curious approach presupposes that the religion of the other does make sense.

The concept of love *is* different in Christianity and Islam, but the curious Christian will try to experience the similar language game of love in Islam, for example through the compassionate God, and then access the *family resemblances* between these two life forms in the different language games. In this way, the curious Christian can become intimate with the other religious and learn from the differences.[48]

The curious approach presupposes similarity, but not identity. It presupposes that the other religious has her or his needs covered as believers in their own religion in a way as adequate as they are covered in Christianity.[49]

Presupposing this already reduces the chasm between religions to a river, which, though challenging, can be crossed by using, for example, the stepping stones mentioned above.

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48 WITTGENSTEIN. 1980. 14.

49 We build meaning in our lives through our assessments. It is therefore obvious that the assessments of the other religious do hold meaning, otherwise they would not be functional; and if they were not functional, they would not be used. This does not tell whether one assessment is basically wrong or which assessment is more functional (meaningful) than the other, or if the different assessments are equally functional (meaningful). Presupposing meaning in the other religion is not a normative assessment. It is merely needed to *enter into* the religious life of the other. When we are there, normative assessments are as needed as anywhere else. Dialogue is about life and we cannot escape approaching life normatively: it is how we live it.

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