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The Worldview Approach to Social Theory: Hazards and Benefits

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In this paper¹ I want to explore the ways in which the concept of worldview has been and is being used *in* social theory (Section I), as well as the various worldview approaches *to* social theory (Sections II and III). This will be done in preparation to understanding the hazards (Section IV) and benefits (Section V) of a Christian worldview approach in this area. The paper concludes with suggestions for further research (Section VI).

My focus is on *social theory*. I use this term in its broad sense as comprising cultural anthropology, sociology, and political science, as well as social philosophy as the philosophical reflection on these disciplines.²

Since my aim is to understand the hazards and benefits of a *Christian* worldview approach, it is important from the outset to have an idea what a Christian worldview approach is. But since little has been done by Christians in relation to social theory specifically, I can describe only very general approaches here.

For a broad definition of “worldview,” one can turn to James Sire, who defines it as “A set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world.”³ Albert Wolters describes a worldview as “the comprehensive framework of our basic beliefs about things.”⁴ Though these two

authors are Christians, the definitions of worldview they offer correspond to broadly held notions of worldview. To get beyond such broad definitions, we must ask what is conceived to be (1) the root of worldviews, and (2) their prime function.

Christian scholars see worldviews as rooted in faith. According to Olthuis, a worldview lays claim to ultimate truth. This claim points to the rootedness of worldviews in faith—in matters of ‘ultimate concern,’ to use Tillich’s phrase; worldviews are “born in faith” (see Olthuis’ paper in this volume). In Wolters’ words, a worldview is “a matter of one’s beliefs.”⁵ Belief is used here in the strong sense of “credo”, or “committed belief.” In a similar vein, Walsh and Middleton regard a worldview as a “religious phenomenon,” “founded on ultimate faith commitments.”⁶

The prime function of a worldview is conceived to be that of an integrating medium between faith on the one hand and scientific knowledge (including philosophy) on the other. A worldview is itself pre-scientific, but it contains the central concepts and categorical distinctions on which philosophy and the special disciplines draw for further articulation and elaboration.⁷ Hence, it functions as a bridge. The influence of faith on theoretical knowledge goes through the medium of a worldview.⁸ Of course, this influence can run both ways—theoretical developments may also influence religious commitments through the mediation of a worldview. However, the emphasis is usually on the impact from faith to worldview to theory.⁹

Having noted the descriptions of worldview offered by various Christian authors, it would be possible immediately to apply these insights to the field of social theory. I shall, however, take a different route. It is my conviction that before building one should begin by reconnoitering the lay of the land, to find out where and how the term “worldview” is actually being used in social theory (Section I). Do these approaches show an awareness of the religious rootedness of worldviews (Section II and III)? I contend that only by this answering this question can the hazards and benefits of a Christian worldview orientation be properly assessed.

The first section, although quite extensive, plays a merely preparatory role. It surveys the actual use of the term worldview. Some may doubt the value of such an exercise. After all, the fact that the *term* is being used does not in itself guarantee that the *concept* (or *idea*) of a worldview is present in any significant way. By the same token, the absence of the term does not necessarily imply the absence of the concept. To this objection I reply that I have not considered casual uses of

the worldview notion but have concentrated on the more significant cases. Moreover, on a number of occasions my survey has been broadened to encompass cases in which other terms function in essentially the same way as the term “worldview” (the prime example would be that of “belief systems” in anthropological theory). I hope that thereby this survey will serve as a suitable stepping stone for further explorations.

Worldview Conceptions in Social Theory

“There is no word one can understand if one goes to the depths,” Valéry once said (*Il n’y a pas une parole qu’on puisse si l’on va fond*). In the case of the word “worldview,” this problem is compounded by several factors. The word is used in a great many areas, ranging from the natural sciences to philosophy to theology. Authors who use it often do so without concern for a proper definition, and even when definitions are given they tend to be far from precise. More cautious authors often apologize for the vagueness of the term. Robert Redfield, one of the few cultural anthropologists to devote studies specifically to the “primitive” worldview, readily admits that “Concepts about world view are hardly developed.”¹⁰ Similarly, Clifford Geertz acknowledges in an essay entitled, “Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols,” that “The concepts used here, ethos and world view, are vague and imprecise; they are a kind of proto-theory, forerunners, it is to be hoped, of a more adequate analytical framework.”¹¹ Taking all this into account, the reader may feel inclined to say with respect to “worldview” those impatient words once used by W.K. Frankena with respect to the word “value”: “I for one am prepared to cry ‘Let us swear by all that we value never to use the word again.’”¹²

One reason for the vagueness of the concept is that the English language has only one standard term whereas the German (as well as the Dutch) differentiates between *Weltbild* and *Weltanschauung* (Dutch: *wereldbeeld* and *wereldbeschouwing*). There is in German, admittedly, a range in which both terms are used interchangeably. But there are also cases—some of them pertinent to our topic—where a particular one is preferable.

Weltbild—World Picture

Weltbild comes from two words in German, *Welt*, which means world, and *Bild*, which means picture. A *Weltbild* is a “picture” of the genesis and structure of the world. It involves representations, or

rudimentary concepts, of space and time, the origins of the world, the basic differences and similarities between things, plants, animals, humans. It involves basic concepts of the social order and its relation to the cosmic order—as well as the relation of this totality to the gods or to God. Normally, a *Weltbild* has the following characteristics: it is the common outlook of a people, society, or culture; it is apprehended and appropriated in an unconscious manner; it is relatively constant in time.

Quite often, the term *Weltbild* is also used to refer to the scientific articulation and elaboration of an outlook on the universe; hence such expressions as the Ptolemaic, the Newtonian, and the Einsteinian *Weltbild*, the *Weltbild* of modern physics, etc. Accordingly, Helmut Gipper, a German linguist, in a study on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, draws a distinction between a primal *Weltbild* (as expressed by a specific language), and a scientific *Weltbild*.¹³ His description of the former is largely congruent with the one given in the previous paragraph. The scientific worldview, on the other hand, differs from the primal one in that it is a product of conscious theoretical activity and is bound to change as a consequence of scientific development. Clearly, Theodor Geiger has the latter in mind when he posits that every *Weltbild* is hypothetical and preliminary only (*Jedes Weltbild ist also bloss hypothetisch und vorläufig*).¹⁴ Other authors reserve the term *Weltbild* for the primal *Weltbild*), preferring other terms—such as *cosmology*—for conceptually more refined accounts of the genesis and nature of the cosmos.¹⁵

Weltanschauung—World View

In contrast, a *Weltanschauung* is a total vision of life, implying certain key categorical distinctions about the world and giving its adherents a fundamental orientation to life. Characteristic examples (some of which overlap) would be conservatism, liberalism, socialism, Marxism, rationalism, and naturalism. Within the Christian world there are: traditional Roman Catholicism, anabaptism, and (neo-)Calvinism. (In the Addendum to this essay I am more specific as to the range of worldviews, and address the question whether “schools” in philosophy or social theory can be said to embody distinctive worldviews.)

It may appear that *Weltanschauungen* address the same questions as do *Weltbilder*. Yet, there are at least two major differences between the two.

(1) In the case of a *Weltanschauung*, the relation of the individual to the view is more prominent. Put in a popular way, whereas a *Weltbild* (in its primal sense) has a “taken-for-granted” character, a *Weltanschauung* is typically a matter of conviction. It is something people adhere or subscribe to. Gipper touches on this when he says that whereas in a *Weltbild* the emphasis is on the relation to the object (nature, the cosmos, etc.), in a *Weltanschauung* it is on the relation to the subject.¹⁶

(2) A second difference is that a *Weltbild* is a characteristic of the *common* outlook of a people at a certain stage of its history. *Weltanschauung*, however, is normally used in the *plural* with respect to a single “stage” or era to indicate that there is no commonly shared fundamental orientation but rather a plurality of worldviews within one and the same “space” competing for hegemony. This aspect is captured graphically in Dilthey’s phrase: the *Streit der Weltanschauungen*, the struggle (or warfare) between worldviews (although, as we will see, Dilthey never relinquished his hope for a new synthesis based on a broadened understanding of reason).

To show the relevance of this distinction between *Weltbild* and *Weltanschauung* for social philosophy, I will consider briefly a few examples (some of which will be discussed at greater length in later sections).

(1) In Marxism-Leninism, the word “worldview” means specifically *Weltanschauung*. The materialist worldview is heralded as “the great instrument,” the organizing principle upon which all “real” scientific progress depends. Because materialism is a *Weltanschauung*, its claim to truth supposedly can neither be proved nor disproved scientifically.

(2) A *Weltanschauung*’s alleged immunity to scientific probing makes the whole concept suspect to some. Theodor Geiger, for instance, working from a positivist perspective, simply equates *Weltanschauung* with “ideology.” *Weltbild*, on the other hand, he finds acceptable as a convenient and neutral concept.¹⁷

(3) In the German version of Aaron J. Gurjewitsch’s *Das Weltbild des mittelalterlichen Menschen* (originally published in Russian), both terms occur frequently. Yet, *Weltbild* is favored with respect to the primary goal of the book, i.e., to excavate the “fundamental mental

categories'' common to the Middle Ages (time-space relations, the relation of the macro to the micro cosmos, etc.). Gurjewitsch argues that the *Weltbild* of the Middle Ages was communally held, irrespective of status and rank, whereas the *Weltanschauungen* of the same era varied in accordance with rank and status, and hence were contaminated by the peculiar ''ideologies'' of different social groups.¹⁸

(4) The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, roughly stated, posits an interdependency between languages and worldviews. According to Helmut Gipper,¹⁹ this hypothesis can only be sustained if framed in terms of (primal) *Weltbilder*. To relate languages to *Weltanschauungen* would mean falling into the trap of romanticist, mysticist, idealist, or nationalist ideologies.²⁰

Historical Development of the Worldview Concept

The word *Weltanschauung* emerged in the last decade of the 18th century in Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* and soon caught on in the circles of German Romanticists and Idealists. Hegel, in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), employed it in a well-defined sense as a characterization of a specific stage in the March of Mind: *die moralische Weltanschauung*. But this specific denotation remained of little consequence to its further history.

The term ''worldview'' has often been used to describe Marx's doctrines,²¹ but it is not at all characteristic of his work. The great architect of the materialist worldview was not Marx but Engels. It is sufficient to turn to his *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen Deutschen Philosophie* (1886). Here, materialism is portrayed as a general worldview (*allgemeine Weltanschauung*). Although the historical forms of materialism vary, it has a constant core determined by the stance taken toward the relationship between matter and mind—what Engels took to be the basic philosophical issue (*die grosse Grundfrage*). For Engels, only Marxism grasped the full implications of the materialist worldview for all ''relevant'' fields of knowledge. The function of the materialist worldview Engels saw as a bridge between the materialist starting point—the affirmation of the primacy of matter over mind—and the world of the sciences.²² The new materialism, he claimed, is the sole heir and successor to classic philosophy (see his *Anti-Dühring*). Yet, it ''is not a philosophy at all any more, but a simple *Weltanschauung*, which has to establish and prove itself in the real sciences.'' ²³

Engels' views were a decisive influence on Pleckanov, Lenin, and,

indeed, on Marxism-Leninism as a whole. But why his views, and not Marx's? Irving Fetscher has come up with a plausible explanation. Marx never showed much concern for a worldview-guided transformation of the sciences. Engels, on the other hand, became aware in the 1870's of the rising interest among people of the working class in learning, especially in all-embracing "scientific" explanations of the "riddles of the world" (Haeckel). Engels set himself the task of developing a Marxist worldview capable of competing with the then-popular monist doctrines of Haeckel, Dühring, and others. His *Weltanschauung* was meant to serve as a unifying ideology for the "proletarian mass movement."²⁴

In the first decades of the 20th century, the popularity of the term "worldview" reached a peak. This was due largely to the work of Wilhelm Windelband and, especially, Wilhelm Dilthey. What follows is a brief outline of Dilthey's *Weltanschauungslehre*, which he developed only in the last period of his life, roughly after 1905.

- (1) To Dilthey, worldviews are interpretations of reality that attempt to express the meaning and the significance of the world.²⁵
- (2) Worldviews impart unity to experience and action, and thus exert power over their adherents.²⁶
- (3) Worldviews reach within the realm of ultimate values, the ultimate questions of life and culture.²⁷
- (4) A worldview's claim to truth can neither be proved nor disproved by philosophy or science. Instead, philosophy itself is dependent on worldview. Dilthey attributed the metaphysical search for ultimate unity to worldviews, which in turn underlie philosophies.²⁸
- (5) The modern age is riddled with a plurality of competing and clashing worldviews. This is Dilthey's famous theme of the *Streit der Weltanschauungen*.²⁹
- (6) When placed in historical perspective, all worldviews prove to be relative. Yet, when measured against the inexhaustible mysteries of the universe, all of them appear to be true as partial expressions of different aspects of the universe.³⁰

We complete our historical survey of the development of the worldview concept with a quick glance at Karl Mannheim. In Mannheim's works, "worldview" was increasingly replaced by other terms. In his well-known *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), it is replaced by

the two concepts making up its title.³¹

Worldview Concepts in Social Theory

This section will be devoted to a survey of the various ways in which the concept of worldview is used in social theory. The emphasis will be on contemporary theories, although some earlier examples will be taken into account. We shall look at sociology, cultural anthropology, and finally social philosophy.

Sociology of Knowledge and the Kuhnian Revolution

In sociology, we should pay particular attention to the sociology of knowledge tradition. This is because Dilthey, Weber, Scheler³², and, especially, Mannheim were its progenitors. Hence, if worldview conceptions can be found at all in sociology, this is the most likely place. However, even a quick perusal of the relevant literature shows that the term “worldview” has no monopoly here. Its main competitors are “ideology” (Marxism, Mannheim), “social frameworks” (G. Gurvitch’s *cadres sociaux de la connaissance*), “background assumptions” (A. Gouldner), and “paradigms” (Kuhn). Nevertheless, “worldview” is such a natural term in this milieu that, in a review article, J.O. Wisdom makes a point of its near absence in Berger and Luckmann’s well-known book, *The Construction of Social Reality*.

What is the specific interest in “worldview” of scholars in the sociology of knowledge? To Mannheim, as Hamilton puts it, sociology of knowledge is “the inquiry into the social conditions under which certain *Weltanschauungen* appear.”³³ According to Charles W. Smith, the guiding principle of sociology of knowledge is “that the way man sees the world is influenced, if not determined, by his social position; particularly, the sociologist of knowledge is out to understand ‘the inherent biases of particular worldviews in terms of the social conditions which gave rise to that particular worldview.’”³⁴

In the 1950’s, the support for sociology of knowledge appeared to be on the decline (see Gurvitch). But the success of Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) has done much to revive interest. Milic maintains that this book was welcomed by nearly all sociologists of knowledge.³⁵ This hardly comes as a surprise since, as is well known, Kuhn took his inspiration partly from that field.

Through Kuhn, “paradigms” and “Gestalt switches” were soon to become household words in academe. Less well-known is the fact

that he uses “worldview” in the same connection. He regards worldviews as essential ingredients in any paradigm constitutive of science. Father Stanley Jaki remarks that after acknowledging the importance of worldviews, Kuhn “pays no further attention to them.”³⁶ But Jaki’s charge is not quite fair, for Kuhn does devote a separate chapter to “Revolutions as Changes of World View.” But Jaki is right in noting that Kuhn does not develop the worldview concept in any depth.

Kuhn takes “worldview” literally, as a *view* of the world. In a scientific revolution “scientists *see* new and different things”; paradigm changes cause them “to *see* the world of their research-engagement differently.” In these situations the scientist’s “perception of his environment must be re-educated—in some familiar situations he must learn to *see* a new gestalt.” The emphasis on seeing helps to explain Kuhn’s interest in the psychology of perceptual transformations. He attacks the postulate of a neutral observational language, the idea that it is possible to give neutral and objective reports on “the given” as perceived—the pivot of traditional (i.e. positivistic) philosophy of science.³⁷

Kuhn insists that paradigms are constitutive not only of science *but also of nature*.³⁸ To say scientific revolutions lead to worldview changes means that out of such revolutions arise new conceptions of nature. A worldview, then, determines what is to count as “nature,” or “world”. This takes Kuhn to the brink of complete relativism, in which there are as many worlds as there are worldviews. Admittedly, he tries to mitigate the relativist consequences of his views by asserting that there is after all only one world. But his efforts are hardly convincing given his thesis that paradigms are constitutive of nature. Jaki comments: “He cared not to probe into the grounds and consequences of his assertion that the world remains the same even after it is seen in a totally different perspective following the paradigm shift. But how can the world remain the same if it is true, as Kuhn also claimed, that his incommensurable paradigms are constitutive not only of science but of nature as well?”³⁹

In a later section, I show that Kuhn has recently taken pains to dissociate himself from the relativistic interpretation of his work propagated by many of his followers. Two sociologists of knowledge taking their cue from Kuhn are Barnes and Bloor. Of them it has been said that they are prepared to attribute “to each culture and sub-culture its own equally valid and incommensurable world view.”⁴⁰ Barnes relates these subcultures to the division of labor, and especially to role specialization. The slightly absurd consequence of this view is that separate

worldviews, or even “worlds,” are ascribed to specialized occupations within any given society, so as to confer ontological status to popular phrases like “a gardener’s view of the world,” “an engineers’ view of the world,” or “an accountant’s view of the world.”⁴¹ Such has been the extreme relativism of some of Kuhn’s followers.

Cultural Anthropology

Nowhere in the social sciences is the notion of worldview more at home than in cultural anthropology. But even here, it is not a key concept. As a rule, “worldview”—in the sense of *Weltbild*—is used in a rather loose way as a convenient catch-all phrase for the general characteristics, the dominant traits, of a culture, society, or people. As such, it functions on a par with many other terms, some synonyms, some near-equivalents, such as “collective representation” (Durkheim, Levy-Bruhl), “value system,” and, especially, “belief system.”

My impression is that the popularity of “worldview” in the field of cultural anthropology is on the decline. Perhaps that is because the “linguistic turn” in social theory—i.e., the use of semiotics and other branches of linguistics as a source of models for explaining cultural phenomena—tends to favor expressions such as “symbolic order” and “cultural code.”

In only two areas has “worldview” become a standard term: in connection with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and within Robert Redfield’s circle.

(1) The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis posits a close relationship between the grammatical structure (or other characteristics) of a language and the worldview of the people speaking it. Its name derives from two students of anthropological linguistics, Sapir (1884-1939) and Whorf (1897-1941). It is also known as *the principle of linguistic relativity* or as *linguistic perspectivism* (Dutch: *taalperspectivisme*). In substance the theory is quite old. It reaches back to Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), who formulated it in terms of *Weltansichten*.⁴² Central elements can be traced back to J.G. Herder (1744-1803) and J.G. Hamann (1730-1788).

From the writings of von Humboldt until the Second World War, a number of studies appeared on this subject. The titles suggest overtones of German nationalism: *Der deutsche Sprachbau als Ausdruck deutscher Weltanschauung* (F.N. Fink, 1899), *Einfluss der Sprache auf*

Weltanschauung und Stimmung (J.J.N. Baudouin de Courtenay, 1929), *Muttersprache und Geistesbildung* (Leo Wiesgerber).⁴³ Von Humboldt's theory was also placed in a broad, non-nationalistic framework in Ernst Cassirer's *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (especially vol. 3, 1929). He accepted the formula, "language = spiritual expression,"⁴⁴ contending that "every particular language represents its own subjective worldview from which it cannot and will not detach itself" (III 341). He refused to consider language the ultimate vehicle of worldview, however, so that the principle of linguistic relativity is not at the apex of his system. Only in the meta-sensuous media of logic and philosophy can the human spirit arrive at self-transparent knowledge.⁴⁵

Other philosophers, notably Wittgenstein and Waismann, have likewise made a case for linguistic relativity.⁴⁶ But our primary concern here is not philosophy but cultural anthropology. The origin of linguistic relativity within this field is often traced to the work of Franz Boas (1858-1942). Redfield also traces it to F. Graebner's *Das Weltbild der Primitive* (1924), the fourth chapter of which is entitled, "Weltanschauungen und Sprachen." By far the greatest influence, however, has been exerted by Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941), a student of Sapir. While working as an insurance agent, Whorf conducted extensive studies on the language of the Hopi Indians. His research led to the formulation of what is now known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which Whorf summarized in these words: "The picture of the universe shifts from tongue to tongue."⁴⁷

Whorf's influence among anthropologists has been considerable: the names of Redfield, Kluckhohn, and Rodney Needham come immediately to mind. It should be noted, however, that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has not escaped controversy. For, if followed to its logical consequences, the hypothesis leads to relativism and perspectivism, not unlike the pluralism that followed the Kuhnian revolution, as illustrated in this statement by Kluckhohn: "From the anthropological point of view there are as many different worlds upon the earth as there are languages."⁴⁸ The obvious question, of course, is how it is possible to translate from one language (or family of languages) into another. Rodney Needham is honest enough to admit it cannot really be done.⁴⁹ Tellingly, he concludes his book in a tone of skeptical resignation: "The solitary comprehensible fact about human experience is that it is incomprehensible."⁵⁰ It is no surprise that many linguists and not a few anthropologists take strong exception to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in its radical form.⁵¹

Why is the use of the term “worldview” so prominent in connection with language? In my mind, it is because of the double function it can fulfill. It can be (and has been) used to convey the idea that a given language expresses a *spirit* (often conceived as “spirit of a nation”). But it has also proved useful for expressing the idea that the way one views the world is shaped by one’s mother tongue. Since the “spirit” of a people is a somewhat hidden subject, the second function has prevailed.

(2) Robert Redfield

In the early 1950’s, anthropologist Redfield published a collection of essays on the “primitive worldview.” As he uses the term, “worldview” is a concept that expresses “what is most general and persistent about a people,” along with such terms as “culture,” “ethos,” and “national character.” More specifically, Redfield defines “culture” as the “total equipment of ideas and institutions and conventionalized activities.” He defines “ethos” as a people’s “organized conceptions of the Ought.” And finally, “worldview” is “the way a people characteristically look upon the universe.” Whereas “culture” captures the way a people look to the anthropologist, “worldview” suggests how the world looks to a people⁵²; it is the “insider’s total vision and conception of everything.”⁵³

Two things stand out in Redfield’s approach. First, Redfield, who was known for his keen interest in folk culture, carefully distinguishes between a commonly shared worldview and the systematization of that worldview into a cosmology by “the more thoughtful among a people.”⁵⁴ Second, he does not succumb to the relativism that often attends worldview conceptions. To him, “worldview” is a way to characterize “universal human nature,” for “all men look out upon the same universe.” His approach is to formulate a number of purportedly universal questions, of which the most important concern the relation of the self to others and the relation of man to the non-human world. He then classifies worldviews according to the answers they give to these universal questions. With regard to the second question, for instance, the emphasis may be on *maintaining* the world order, as it is with the Zuni, or it may be on *obedience*, as it is with the ancient Mesopotamians, or it may be on *action upon* the world (for instance, to carry out the plan of Providence), as it is in certain strands of Enlightenment thought.⁵⁵

Redfield’s claims were modest. He readily admitted that concepts

about worldview had hardly been developed, and that comparative studies had barely begun. It is doubtful whether much progress has been made since then. Worldview in Redfield's sense never gained wide currency. In 1968, in a survey article on Worldview in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, E.M. Mendelson concluded: "Outside Redfield's circle, little use has been made of the concept of world view."⁵⁶ It is not uncommon in general studies on worldview conceptions to find references to Clifford Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures* of 1973. However, the only essay in Geertz's book dealing specifically with worldview dates from 1957. On the theoretical level, it contains hardly anything not already said in Redfield's essays on the same topic. Even its main thesis about the characteristic fusion of ethos and worldview in traditional cultures⁵⁷ is strongly reminiscent of Redfield (although the latter work is not cited).⁵⁸

The Rationality Debate in Cultural Anthropology and Social Philosophy

A third locus of worldview discussion is the so-called rationality debate. Worldview is a common term here, used in the sense of *Weltbild*, although it is less common than other expressions, such as "system of beliefs." It is usually used in a loose sense. The only example of an elaborate worldview conception, as far as I know, is to be found in Habermas's recent work. With respect to the rationality debate, however, our main interest is not at the terminological level. Rather, it concerns the distinction introduced by Horton and Habermas between "closed" and "open" mentalities.

(1) E. Evans-Pritchard

At the centre of the rationality debate are the differences between primitive and scientific modes of thought. In itself, this is not a new issue, of course. But post-war developments in philosophy of science (M. Polanyi, Kuhn) and social philosophy (P. Winch) stimulated anthropologists and philosophers to reconsider earlier views on the division between primitives and moderns. It aroused a special interest in Evans-Pritchard's study, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* (1934), which was to become the common point of reference for all parties in the debate.

We begin our discussion with a brief account of Evans-Pritchard's views on the Azande's attitudes towards their poison oracles. In his

judgment, the Azande did not take the outcome of the oracles at face value. As Mary Douglas puts it, “(T)he Azande were highly intelligent, critical, and skeptical people The Azande were continually testing and trying to verify their oracles.”⁵⁹ They developed intricate explanations for the failures of the oracles to predict correctly in particular instances. However, and this is crucial, their probing never led them to reject, or even doubt, the underlying beliefs on which the institution of witchcraft depend. In Evans-Pritchard’s own words: “All their beliefs hang together.... In this web of belief every strand depends upon every other strand, and a Zande cannot get out of its meshes because it is the only world he knows.”⁶⁰ Elsewhere he puts it this way: “(T)hey reason excellently in the idiom of their beliefs, but they cannot reason outside, or against, their beliefs because they have no other idiom in which to express their thoughts.”⁶¹ At this juncture, Evans-Pritchard drew a contrast between primitive and scientific attitudes. Put simply, the scientist is not confined to one world. He can take critical distance to approaches hitherto followed, and hence is able to revise, doubt, or reject his own explanatory models and theories.

(2) Winch and Horton

The upshot of the postwar development, both in philosophy of science and in social philosophy, has been a growing awareness of the importance of beliefs underlying the acceptance of theories, or families of theories. Seen from this angle, the attitude of the modern scientist does not seem to be far removed from that of the Zande vis-a-vis his oracles: both are shaped by beliefs. This, at least, is the stance taken by Peter Winch in his essay, “Understanding a Primitive Society” (in *Ethics and Action*, 1972), by Barry Barnes (in his contribution to Horton and Finnegan’s *Modes of Thought*), and by others. Winch is not denying that in other respects witchcraft (and magic, etc.) constitutes a genre all its own and ought not to be placed on a single continuum with modern science, as though it were a kind of proto-science. To Winch, witchcraft and science represent mutually irreducible practices.⁶²

Many others have joined the debate. For the moment we will restrict our attention to an essay by Robin Horton of 15 years ago. Like Winch, Barnes, and others, Horton turns to key passages of Evans-Pritchard’s work on the Azande to stress the differences between traditional and modern-scientific modes of thought. He is prepared to acknowledge, to some extent, the existence of beliefs underlying theoretic-

tic inquiry. In his judgment, however, these beliefs have a different status from those upon which traditional thought depends. At this point, he introduces a modified version of Karl Popper's distinction between "closed" and "open" attitudes towards beliefs. The *closed predicament*, characteristic of the traditional worldview, is described by Horton as the absence of a "developed awareness of alternatives to the established body of theoretical tenets." It is characterized by a sense of the "sacredness of beliefs, and [by] anxiety about threats to them." On the other hand, the *open predicament*, which characterizes "scientifically oriented cultures,"⁶³ shows a highly developed awareness of alternatives, together with "diminished sacredness of beliefs, and diminished anxiety about threats to them."⁶⁴

We should note one peculiarity in Horton's conception. Although the contrast he draws between magic, myth, etc., and science is sharp, yet, unlike Winch, he mitigates the qualitative difference between them by treating myths, magic, and religion as attempts to explain the world—as proto-theories, so to speak. In this sense, in Horton's conception, magic and myth are placed on a continuum with science, albeit at the opposite end of the scale.⁶⁵

(3) Habermas

Habermas, in his recently published *magnum opus*, *Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns*, takes Horton's side in the debate. But for him, the distinction between closed and open mentalities takes on a much wider meaning. It is integrated into his theory about the on-going rationalization of *Weltbilder*, a theory he develops in a protracted discussion with Max Weber. Following Weber and going beyond him, Habermas lays out a grand theory of the rationalization of worldviews, beginning with mythical worldviews, going on to the unifying and meaning-rendering religious-metaphysical *Weltbilder* of the modern, predominantly Protestant era, and finally to the "value-orientations" characteristic of contemporary science, arts, and law. The genius of the religio-metaphysical worldview of the modern era, as Habermas sees it, is its high potential for on-going rationalization. By virtue of its positive attitude towards the world of human action, it paved the way for the free development ("according to their own internal logic") of the sciences, the arts, and civil law into autonomous "spheres of values."⁶⁶

Again following Weber, Habermas contends that this process led necessarily to the *Entzauberung*, the disenchantment, of both the mythical and the religio-metaphysical worldviews.⁶⁷ The sense of the

holiness of life gives way to the anthropocentrism of modern times; acceptance of the sacredness of tradition gives way to the irreverence of the secular mind. Typical of modernity is the refusal to bow to any claim to truth on the basis of authority and the acceptance only of rationally founded arguments, i.e., ones open to critical testing.

What will replace the crumbling religiously founded worldview? Neither Weber nor Habermas expect a new worldview to develop that has the comprehensiveness of the traditional ones. For Weber, this gave rise to despair; he was haunted by the prospect of a world without meaning. Habermas, however, welcomes the rational, “open” mentality of modernity. Weber, he argues, was too preoccupied with the negative, destructive work of criticism to see its positive potential. According to Habermas, rational discourse points towards—and in a sense presupposes—a future community based on unrestrained communication between equals.⁶⁸

It would be wrong to formulate the distinction between the closed and open predicaments as one between different types of worldviews. Habermas does not speak of “open” worldviews per se. He connects “open” with “worldview” in a very peculiar way. With the emergence of the “open predicament,” traditional worldviews are for the first time understood for what they are, viz., products of tradition and hence temporary and limited. They do not rest on any unquestionable authority. For the first time, they are acknowledged *as* worldviews, which implies their inevitable decay. Unprotected by religion, they cannot maintain themselves.⁶⁹ In fact, Habermas’s entire approach to the sciences is predicated on the assumption that they progressively free themselves from all worldview components. A fully rational discourse does not leave room for all-encompassing interpretations of nature and history. In his words, “*Die Wissenschaften stossen nach und nach die Elemente von Weltbildern ab und leisten Verzicht auf eine Interpretation von Natur und Geschichte im ganzen.*”⁷⁰

Worldview Approaches to Social Theory

In this section, I will consider worldview approaches to social theory, especially those showing an awareness of what I called in the introduction, the *religious rootedness* of worldviews.

Worldview approaches

Social philosophers and social scientists may or may not use the concept of worldview in describing peoples and cultures. As shown in the previous sections, there is no consistent pattern. But it would be entirely wrong to suppose that those who do use the concept by that token also subscribe to a worldview approach to social theory itself. Such is by no means the case, as will become apparent when we briefly reconsider some of the positions sketched earlier.

Engels certainly has a worldview approach. He divides the philosophers into two camps: those adhering to materialist and those adhering to idealist worldviews. Theory is unavoidably partisan. The same divide holds for scientists, the *Streit der Weltanschauungen* casting its shadows far into the special disciplines. As noted earlier, his approach has become the hallmark of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. Hence the fierce denunciation of revisionists who, in neo-Kantian fashion, sever the ties between science and worldview.

Dilthey, of course, was the prime architect of the worldview approach to philosophy. However, two qualifying observations are in order. (1) Dilthey's thesis about the embeddedness of philosophies in deeper and broader pre-theoretic worldviews is restricted to the grand metaphysical systems with their characteristic concern for unity and comprehensiveness. The special sciences, as well as philosophies of an anti-metaphysical bent, are not included in his analysis.⁷¹ (2) Dilthey set his hopes on discovering a meta-philosophy, a "philosophy of philosophy," to counter to the relativistic consequences of the recognition of a plurality of worldviews, all equally justified in their claims to truth and all equally historically relative. His assumption was that such a meta-philosophy could be elevated above the *Streit der Weltanschauungen*.⁷²

Weber maintains that the vocation of the scientist is to steer clear of clashing worldviews, even at the cost of having to remain silent on the first and final questions of life. To understand his position, we need to bear in mind the neo-Kantian distinction between *Genesis* (historical origin) and *Gestung* (validity). As Weber saw it, historically, the modern sciences could only have developed on the basis of the rationalization of worldviews. But for their continuing validity they are independent of any religious or metaphysical foundation. As a result, Weber is compelled to accept scientific claims to objective truth and autonomy.

Mannheim, like Dilthey, sought a meta-theory capable of transcending the clashing of worldviews. But his position differed in at least two points. (1) He related worldviews to the “social totality” rather than to the “universe,” as Dilthey did. (2) Mannheim attributed transcendence not only to philosophy but to theory in general, and especially to social theory. His hopes were set on the “socially unattached” or “free-floating” intelligentsia—the intellectual elite that, Mannheim believed, had gained an understanding of the whole of social life and was thus able to transcend class and worldview boundaries. He nursed the hope that education, especially in social theory, would help to “facilitate communication between different *Weltanschauungen* and to promote a greater understanding and awareness of the totality of society.”⁷³

Worldview approaches can readily be traced in the field of sociology of knowledge. Its relativistic leanings notwithstanding, this tradition is to be credited for its insight into the role worldviews play in the conflicts between various schools of sociology. Charles W. Smith’s “An Essay in Philosophical Sociology” may serve as an illustration. Characteristic of the sociology of knowledge approach, Smith argues that the unending debates about the divergence and convergence of the systems put forth by Durkheim and Weber have failed to pinpoint the fundamentally different sociological approaches that they follow. These differences, in turn, are accounted for by reference to (among other things) incompatible “sociological worldviews.”⁷⁴

In spite of these examples, it is doubtful whether sociologists in general really consider worldviews to be the ultimate factors in the construction of social theories. Like Mannheim and his doctrine of the free-floating intelligentsia, it is often assumed that sociology itself is relatively free from the divisiveness caused by worldviews and other pre-theoretical beliefs. Smith’s comments on the societal function of sociology are a case in point. In his judgment, from the outset sociology’s function has been to accommodate competing worldviews. Note the striking similarity between Smith’s description and Horton’s and Habermas’s views on the transition from the closed to the open predicament:

“Conflicting and competing world views, of course, existed before there was a discipline of sociology. Each of these worldviews existed primarily in isolation from other worldviews, however, so that people were relatively protected from exposure to conflicting ideologies. In such a situation, people tend to develop an immunity

towards doubt; their truth is the only truth. With increased exposure to other worldviews, this immunity to doubt is destroyed. New ways for coping with conflicting ideologies are required; sociology represented one such way.⁷⁵

Turning our attention now to cultural anthropology, on the whole, full-fledged worldview approaches are rare in this field. Advocates of the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* (in a broad sense) do not extend their thesis to the conceptual languages of philosophy and the sciences. They appear to share a common supposition that theory dwells on a meta-level and is therefore exempt from the general rule that languages express worldviews. In Cassirer, this assumption is overt; he clearly states that logic and philosophy transcend the level of the natural languages and their limitations. But with other thinkers the supposition remains hidden. For example, Redfield minimizes the influence of worldview at the theoretical level. His worldview approach is limited strictly to pre-theoretic phenomena. He conceives of the social sciences as furthering an open exchange of ideas through public examination and discussion, guided by a trust in reason. Reason itself, in turn, is supported by faith; the “central faith” operative in the conduct of social science is faith in the “deepening community of modern man.”⁷⁶ Horton and Habermas hold positions similar to Redfield’s.

Religious Foundations

In the previous section only two instances of worldview approaches were found, Engels and orthodox Marxism-Leninism and the sociology of knowledge movement. Our next question is whether or not these instances also exhibit a consciousness of the religious rootedness of worldviews.

(1) The worldview orientation of Marxism-Leninism is, in one respect, surprisingly similar to that of Calvinism. Just as Calvinism has always been more than a theology, and just as Calvinists true to its basic thrust have sought to work out its principles in all areas of life, so Marxism-Leninism has never been just another philosophy but has striven to influence life in a comprehensive way. Both are quintessentially worldview orientations. Albert Wolters has captured the similarity in these words: “Calvinism as a worldview is comparable to Marxism: it has the same claim to comprehensiveness and immediate applicability.”⁷⁷ There are, of course, differences. To Engels and his followers, worldviews reach deeper than religions, as the latter pertain

only to the societal superstructure. (One could turn the tables by retorting, as does Irving Fetscher, that in Marxism-Leninism, the materialist *Weltanschauung* functions as a quasi-religion.⁷⁸)

(2) Within the sociology of knowledge movement, we find adumbrations of the religious depth of worldview changes. On occasion, Thomas Kuhn describes the consequences of a paradigm switch as a “conversion.” Others have likened the debates between sociological schools to religious disputes. See, for example, Russell R. Dynes’s essay, “Sociology as a Religious Movement.”⁷⁹

Yet, in each of these cases we find only an *analogy* drawn to religious phenomena, rather than an acknowledgement of a genuine religious foundation. Kuhn specifies that he wants to stay within the orbit of rational discourse.⁸⁰ As for Dynes, his essay yields less than it promises. He starts out by defining “religious” in the sense of Tillich’s “ultimate concerns,” and suggests that sociology is rooted in that domain of ultimate concerns. He goes on to offer elaborate, and somewhat artificial, parallels between the development of sociology and certain stages of church history, such as the early church, the era of scholasticism, the Reformation, the religious wars, and so on.

Many sociologists of knowledge simply ignore questions of ultimate foundations. Their agnosticism occasionally leads to an amusing hide-and-seek game. Alvin Gouldner, for instance, after having raised penetrating questions about the “background assumptions” of sociological theories, leaves it politely to the philosophers to explain from whence these assumptions stem.⁸¹ Ironically, political philosopher David Miller, in his instructive *Social Justice*, hands the ball back to the sociologists. He alerts his readers to the presence of irreducible “views of society” that form the backdrop for the theories of social justice advanced by Hume, Spencer, and Kropotkin, but then refers to the sociology of knowledge for explanations of the diversity between those social perspectives.⁸²

Worldview Approaches to Social Theory—Evaluation

To round off the discussion begun in the previous sections, I will elaborate on the “closed-open” distinction. This distinction was introduced in the discussion of Horton and Habermas in Section I, and similar distinctions, though couched in different terms, were operative in the work of Mannheim, Evans-Pritchard, and Redfield as well. The distinction has some usefulness when the comparison is restricted to

mythical and scientific modes of thought, as in the work of Evans-Pritchard. But it is dangerous when used in a less restricted sense, especially by Horton and Habermas, and, in different terms, Mannheim.

As noted earlier, when the “open-closed” distinction is employed in a broad way, the line of demarcation is usually drawn between worldviews taken for granted as part of the inherited tradition of a people, movement, or group, and, on the other hand, the critical mind which yields only to rational argument (i.e., to public examination). In this conception, science holds a pivotal position, either as the agent of the transition from the closed to the open predicament (Horton and Habermas) or as a means of responding to that transition (Charles Smith). Science plays this crucial role through its alleged ability to transcend competing worldviews. This is the pivot upon which the broad distinction between “closed” and “open” turns: trust in the liberating power of scientific activity. Animating this conception is a utopian vision that the painful fragmentation of modern society by partisan *Weltanschauungen* will be replaced by universal and uninhibited communication. As a rule, this universal community is not viewed as the *ne plus ultra* but rather as the anticipation and preparation for the advent of the Brotherhood of Man. All this is reminiscent of the Enlightenment, with one central difference. Whereas the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment were commonly quite explicit about their utopian vision, contemporary scholars are more cautious. Wishing to avoid being dogmatic about anything, they couch their hopes in the language of non-partisan interpretations and hypotheses—in this case, concerning the transition from mythical and religious attitudes to the modern secular mind.

Given the inconspicuous manner in which the utopian vision is presented, it is not surprising that these matters have largely escaped critical examination. One notable exception is a little-known book by French-Canadian author Fernand Dumont, *L'anthropologie en l'absence de l'homme*.⁸³ His critique is aimed in the first place at modern theories of interpretation, especially in the field of philosophical and cultural anthropology. According to Dumont, the driving passion of scholars in this field is to construct a second-order reality, a realm of meanings and significations, above the first-order reality of everyday life. Interpretation is transformation; it consists of both destruction and reconstruction: “*les anthropologies sont à la fois destruction et construction de culture.*”⁸⁴ The anthropologist's project is to recreate a communal culture (*refaire une culture commune*⁸⁵) beyond the present finite and fragmented state of affairs, a culture finding its consumma-

tion in the “eternal present of understanding.”⁸⁶

Although meanings derive from the first world (the world of experience, of praxis and culture, of myths and worldviews), the transformation anthropologists seek implies a disqualification of these historical origins. Dumont specifically mentions the disqualification of worldviews: “*disqualification des visions du monde*”; “*les visions du monde d’aujourd’hui sont disqualifiées d’avance par une anticipation de l’avenir.*” As we replace primary reality with a second-order reality, confrontations between conflicting convictions give way to learned conversations among interpreters. But, Dumont wonders, what is left to talk about? The question is particularly pertinent to Habermas’s vision of a *herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation*, a communication free of domination: “*De quoi parlerait-on? ... une fois dissipée l’opacité de la praxis, que resterait-il à dire?*”⁸⁷

Dumont’s description of anthropology does not correspond exactly to the “closed-open” distinction, and even where it does correspond, it should not be applied without qualifications. In distinction from cultural relativists who place all modes of thought—mythical, magical, and scientific—on an equal footing, Habermas and the early Horton rightly stress the restrictiveness of the mythical and magical modes. But where Dumont’s critique of interpretative anthropology is fully applicable is in Habermas’s and others’ uncritical assumption that scientific and social developments in due course must lead to the demise of all religiously founded worldviews. This assumption, I suggest, is as partisan as any other. Or, to put it differently, the primacy given to the “open” attitude itself expresses a worldview, namely, the worldview of the Enlightenment tradition.⁸⁸

Hazards of a Christian Worldview Approach

In this section I examine some of the hazards to which a Christian worldview approach is exposed. Instead of breaking new ground I will draw as much as possible on what has already been discussed.

A Common Universe of Discourse?

The familiar sound and widespread use of the word “worldview” can easily lead one to believe that the Christian approach, no matter how distinct basically, nevertheless shares enough characteristics with other approaches to be counted as part of the larger family of worldview orientations. Certain Christian worldview books give the impression that their authors assume their use of the worldview concept

is part of a broader universe of discourse, and that it is enough for them merely to work out the details of a Christian (or, more specifically, Reformational) approach.

My own research, limited to social theory though it has been, casts doubt on the assumption of a common universe of discourse. To summarize what has been said so far: (1) The term “worldview” is indeed widely used in social theory but it is common only in certain fields (particularly some areas of cultural anthropology). Moreover, as we have seen, it rarely attains the status of a technical term but is instead usually used in a loose sense. As a result, careful analysis is required to establish its meaning and connotations—a point brought home by our discussion of the *Weltbild*—*Weltanschauung* distinction. (2) Worldview approaches to social theory appear to be rare. (3) There are few signs of any awareness of the religious rootedness of worldviews.

One implication of these findings is that great care must be taken in choosing support for one’s own case. This is not always sufficiently done. I take as an example Walsh and Middleton’s otherwise admirable book, *The Transforming Vision*. In introducing their understanding of the Christian worldview, they support their arguments with, *inter alia*, references to Whorf’s theory of language. I doubt, however, whether an appeal to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, or principle of linguistic relativity, should carry much weight in an introduction to a Reformational worldview. For the concept of worldview that Walsh and Middleton argue for is *Weltanschauung*, whereas the principle of linguistic relativity concerns the relation of languages to *Weltbilder*, not to *Weltanschauungen*.

A Christian paradigm?

Since Dilthey, it has been common to associate the concept of “worldview” with competition and strife between various claims to truth—what Dilthey called the *Streit der Weltanschauungen*. The importance of this for my discussion is the concomitant recognition of a plurality of mutually irreducible orientations to, *inter alia*, social theory. As we saw, the so-called Kuhnian revolution in the philosophy of science has had a similar effect. The result has been an undermining of the claim of a unified truth knowable by Reason, a claim shared by all the once-dominant schools of thought (classical Rationalism, Positivism, neo-Kantianism, etc.). Naturally, those committed to Christian studies have welcomed this development since an acceptance of pluralism seemed to create a climate in which a distinctively Chris-

tian approach to philosophy and the special disciplines would not be discarded out of hand by the representatives of the prevailing schools of thought. And indeed, the recognition of the *Streit der Weltanschauungen* should be welcomed to the extent that it is animated by, and leads to the acceptance of, the reality of an on-going battle of the spirits. Christians should seize the opportunities this affords them to enter the competition in the field of theory, in order to demonstrate the propriety and scientific fruitfulness of their basic convictions. However, there is also a hazard involved, and this is that Christians may overrate the openness brought about by these developments. Moreover, there is a temptation to posit a "Christian paradigm" alongside all the others, without sufficient prior examination of the limits of this universe of discourse.

Specifically, we should note two limitations.

(1) Christians may be inclined to interpret Dilthey's exposition of the *Streit der Weltanschauungen* as a form of Christian understanding of the battle of the spirits. This would be a mistake. Dilthey's notion of the *Streit* does not derive from an Augustinian philosophy of history centering around the struggle between the city of God and the city of Man. On the contrary, its context is the predicament of Reason. The *Streit* marks the crisis of the older unitarian ideas and ideals of Reason, a crisis brought about by the onslaught of historicism and its relativistic consequences. Moreover, Dilthey does not look for a solution beyond Reason. To him, the light shining at the end of the tunnel is a new concept of Reason sufficiently deep and broad to incorporate the historicist critique of traditional standards of truth.⁸⁹

Similarly, Kuhn makes it clear that his thesis of incommensurability was never meant to open the door to a justification of "irrational" factors—i.e., of anything beyond Reason. What he has wanted to achieve was a broadening of the standards of rational truth in order to allow for the crucial role played by beliefs which underlie the choice of theories.⁹⁰

It must be doubted, then, whether the reign of Reason has been challenged in any radical way in the line running from Dilthey to Kuhn. This may help to explain the remarkable development now underway in social theory. In the 1960's, and again in the early 1970's, a *Methodenstreit* (conflict over method) flared up. As a consequence, the existence of a plurality of irreconcilable methodological approaches became widely accepted. On the other hand, we have recently

witnessed an upsurge in synthesizing constructions, particularly in the works of Habermas, Bernstein, and Giddens. The magic words are no longer divergence and dissension but convergence and consensus.

What room does this leave for a distinctively Christian paradigm? The Christian worldview either has to submit itself to the newly reformed court of Reason and accept the limits of rational persuasion, or else be disqualified out of hand as irrational and an obstacle to truth.

(2) Before Christians decide to enter the world of discourse we have been discussing, they should be aware of a second limitation. Whereas the line of thought discussed so far may be the dominant line in social theory today, it is by no means the only one. Outside this stream are many others in which the incommensurability thesis is pursued to its full extent, and the reign of Reason is challenged with unmitigated radicality.

This is not the place to dwell on the influences at work in such figures as Feyerabend, Kuhn, Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard. What is important to stress is the problem posed by unrestrained relativism. In the universe of Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method*, to mention an extreme case, there certainly would be place for a Christian paradigm, but only on a par with voodoo and acupuncture. Such a direction, I suggest, is entirely unfruitful. It undermines the very notion of a *Streit* for, if it is assumed that there are as many worlds as there are worldviews, any sense of competition and strife between worldviews is lost.

Many people welcome intellectual pluralism as liberation from traditional strictures and limitations. But once we understand its roots and effects, we will be inclined rather to see it in a more negative light, as the loss of a once (in many respects) common culture, a culture now threatened with fragmentation into a plurality of "worlds." Iris Murdoch, in her study on Sartre, describes its deadly consequences graphically: "... when action involves choosing between worlds, [instead of] moving in a world, loving and valuing, which were once the rhythm of our lives, become problems."⁹¹ To the extent that the modern culture has given up any communal horizon, any shared search for meaning, we have to conclude that the Age of Worldviews has passed.⁹²

Benefits of a Christian Worldview Approach

I cannot dwell on the benefits of these developments at great length, for that would take us too far into other areas of philosophy, especially systematic philosophy. So I will mention only a few points im-

mediately related to our topic.

Guiding vision

All theorizing is, to an important degree, regulated by visions stemming from the pre-theoretic realm. The concept of “worldview” gives good expression to this conviction. Communication would be enhanced if it were generally acknowledged that theoretical controversies are often rooted in differing pre-theoretic visions and hence cannot be decided in the same way as factual statements. As Albert Wolters has said, “A good deal of the confusion and lack of communication in philosophy may be due to a failure to recognize the role of worldview in philosophy.”⁹³

Integrality

We are religious beings. It is our nature to commit and surrender ourselves to perspectives, causes, ways of life. These perspectives or visions are not ideas impersonally appropriated for they presuppose the assent of one’s heart and mind. They have the strength of basic convictions or confessions. They ground life, as Olthuis says, “in the confessed ultimate certainty.” Put differently, these visions are not the vistas of free-floating intellectuals; they are rooted inevitably in a “Here I stand.”⁹⁴ A vision cannot be confined to one particular area but necessarily strives to give guidance in many areas. All this is captured well in the term, “worldview.” Indeed, from Engels and Dilthey onward, “worldview” has had the connotations of integrality and comprehensiveness.

Nevertheless, there are still good reasons to be suspicious of the term. Heidegger’s seminal essay, “The Age of the World Picture,” is one of several works that have convinced many that the notion of worldview has become too contaminated with the anthropocentrism, subjectivism, and pluralism of modern culture to be put to any good use. Also, the claim to comprehensiveness has often led to what Wolterstorff calls *totalism*, i.e., the idea that philosophy and the sciences are *nothing but* elaborations of underlying worldviews. (This problem is addressed in the Addendum.)

Yet, I believe that, as long as these hazards are carefully avoided, a worldview approach is a great stimulus in working out the implications of one’s guiding vision in a comprehensive way.

Diagnostic value

A worldview orientation leads quite naturally to a rejection of any attempt to sever philosophy and the sciences from their pre-theoretic roots. Such attempts are represented, for example, by the “is/ought” separation. They may take a more refined shape as found, for instance, in certain forms of liberation theology (viz., those who, often under the influence of the work of Louis Althusser, defend the use of Marxism as a “neutral” analytical instrument while rejecting its underlying atheist-materialist *Weltanschauung*⁹⁵). The assumptions of liberation theology have recently been criticized in a Vatican statement entitled, *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the “Theology of Liberation.”* The statement argues quite cogently in the following words: “(T)he thought of Marx is such a global vision of reality that all data received from observation and analysis are brought together in a philosophical and ideological structure, which predetermines the significance and importance to be attached to them.... If one tries to take only one part, say, the analysis, one ends up having to accept the entire ideology.”⁹⁶ The argument could equally well have been put in terms of the insoluble bond between worldview and theory. Intrinsic to worldviews, whether conceived of as *Weltanschauungen* or *Weltbilder*, is the implied inner connection between the factual and the evaluative.⁹⁷

Addendum On the Relation Between Worldview and Theory

The following are further comments on the relation between worldview and theory, especially social theory.

(1) Although worldview orientations are crucial for getting at the root issues of philosophy and the sciences, it would be wrong to assume that all of the varying positions within a particular debate, or all of the stages within a particular development, correspond to specific worldviews in a one-to-one fashion. Worldviews not only reach deeper but also extend further than theoretical conceptions. To put it differently, the differences between worldviews and corresponding theories are not only a matter of depth—the former being rooted in the realm of the pre-theoretical—but also of breadth. A single worldview may be the basis for a variety of theories, or even philosophies. An obvious example in philosophy is the phenomenon of “schools,” all varying outworkings of a single worldview. There exist more than one school of Hegelianism, of Marxism, of neo-Kantianism, of Phenomenology,

and so on. And each of these may in turn give rise to a variety of positions.⁹⁸

(2) Theories may become extracted from their original worldview roots. An individual may put forth some idea that derives from a particular worldview and then, at a later stage, the idea may be incorporated into a different scheme by others who are either oblivious to or uninterested in its original derivation. An example is Malthus's theory of population, which was animated by a pessimistic natural theology deeply at odds with the dominant progressivism in political economy. It nevertheless became absorbed into general political economy through the work of Steward, James Mill, and others.⁹⁹

(3) It is necessary to distinguish different levels of worldviews. Conceptions at odds with one another at one worldview level may at a deeper level share fundamental assumptions peculiar to a broad stream of thought, a climate of opinion, or a cultural epoch. This is true, for instance, of the Old and Young Hegelians. Both schools, no matter how opposed in other respects, subscribed to Hegel's theory of the March of Mind through human history. The same is true of many of the conflicting schools within nineteenth-century economic and political thought. As Collini, Winch, and Burrow show, such figures as Dugals Steward, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, William Cunningham, and Alfred Marshall represent a wide variety of schools, and yet all subscribed to an ideal of progress and, in one way or another, interpreted history in light of the March of Mind. We should not be satisfied, then, with detecting worldview differences at one level only but should also be sensitive to the possibility of underlying continuities, as well as to the very complex dialectical interplay between forces at work at these various levels.

(4) What prompts dissatisfaction with a school of philosophy or a body of theories is not only worldview shifts but also the perception of inner tensions and inconsistencies. A telling instance is the political economy of John Stuart Mill. In the 1870's, following a long period of all but unquestioned hegemony, Mill's doctrines became subject to mounting criticisms. Collini says, "as the waves of criticism broke over the great edifice in the 1870's, cracks appeared so abundantly as to cause wonder that it had ever stood at all. Open season was declared for the hunting down of inconsistencies in Mill's economic writings."¹⁰⁰

Of course, it would be a mistake to isolate either the worldview

factors or the intra-theoretical reasons for the decline of a philosophy. Only if they are taken together can an account be rendered both of the fact that the edifice has stood so long and of its eventual downfall. The lesson to be drawn is that a worldview approach to the history of ideas cannot replace a painstaking search for tensions and inconsistencies within the theories themselves.

(5) Finally, it is crucial to understand the relation of both theory and worldviews to reality. This point may seem trite but in fact it is both the most important as well as the most difficult to grasp.

Scientific theories are explanations of the world. They are not caught in worldviews as if in webs. Hence one major source of dissatisfaction with specific theories, apart from inner contradictions, is the perception of discrepancies between the explanations offered and the real world. One example is the Keynesian revolution in economics, which unquestionably owed its momentum largely to the inability of the once powerful neo-classical equilibrium theories to account for protracted depressions, as experienced during the 1930's. Similarly, the grand equilibrium theories of so-called structural-functionalism in sociology (i.e., Parsons *et alia*) are today under suspicion because of persistent economic underdevelopment of large parts of the world.

These examples show that theories are not self-contained entities. They are about the world, or facets of the world. How, then, can they at the same time be derived from worldviews? It is important to see that the examples given do not really take us outside a discussion of worldviews, for one's general outlook shapes how one weighs arguments presented for and against specific theories. What is compelling to one person may be less than convincing to another. Worldviews, then, regulate the traffic between scientific theories and reality. But they do not do so as self-contained and self-sufficient entities. As mentioned above, it is quite possible for their trustworthiness to be affected by discrepancies between their claims and the world.

I am concerned here with the *limits to worldviews*—not with external limits, such as would confine their influence to specific areas of science and praxis, but rather with structural limits. Worldviews do not create worlds, as the pluralists maintain. Rather, they guide our understanding of the world and offer direction to the unfolding of its structures by human action. Worldviews may compete with one another, and even clash, while remaining bound to a common reality. I think the best way to express this is in terms of the distinction in Reformational philosophy between structure and direction.¹⁰¹ The competition

and clashes between worldviews are foremost a matter of different choices concerning the *direction* in which to unfold the structures of reality. But these different directions can only be realized in being brought to bear on the common *structures* of our world.¹⁰² These structures place limits on the free choice of direction, and thus on the efficacy of worldviews. "Being does not change by being conceived differently," reads a line from a poem by Ruckert (*Doch anders wird das Sein durch anders denken nie*).¹⁰³ This is not entirely true, for the choice of direction does have a bearing on "Being," yet, understood Christianly, the sense in which it is true is a great comfort.

Footnotes

1. I am grateful to the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, for enabling me to work on this paper in its stimulating environment as a guest from February to June 1985. My thanks are due also to Mrs. Donna Kruihof of the philosophy department at Calvin College for typing the manuscript, and to Richard Mouw for valuable suggestions for improvement.
2. This does not mean all these areas will be covered in my survey. I will concentrate on social philosophy, cultural anthropology, and the sociology of knowledge.
3. James Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 17.
4. Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 2.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 34, 35.
7. Cf. Albert M. Wolters, "Dutch Neo-Calvinism: Worldview, Philosophy and Rationality," in *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition*, ed. H. Hart, J. van der Hoeven, N. Wolterstorff (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1983), 113-116.
8. Cf. Walsh and Middleton, 169-173.
9. Strictly speaking, to ascribe a mediating function to worldview is characteristic only of what in Wolters' typology is the "worldview-yields-philosophy" model (of which Dilthey is the prime architect). See Wolters' paper in this volume. See also Klapwijk's comments in this volume.

10. Robert Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 91.
11. Clifford Geertz, "Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 141.
12. W. K. Frankena, "Ethical Theory," in R. Chisholm *et alia*, *Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 452.
13. Helmut Gipper, *Gibt es ein sprachliches Relativitäts-prinzip? — Untersuchungen zur Sapir-Whorf Hypothese* (Stuttgart: Fischer, 1972), 102, 103.
14. Theodor Geiger, *Ideologie und Wahrheit* (Neuwied: Luchterland, 1953), 123.
15. See especially Redfield, 88-89.
16. Gipper, 16.
17. Geiger, 71, 123, 124.
18. Gurjewitsch, Aaron J., *Das Weltbild des mittelalterlichen Menschen*, translation of *Kategorii Srednevekovoi Kultury* (Moscow, 1972), especially 25-27.
19. Gipper, 16, 17.

20. Since I have drawn the dividing line between *Weltbild* and *Weltanschauung* as sharply as possible, I should add some remarks to soften the line somewhat. It is easy to find instances in which one term is used where we would have expected to find the other, or instances in which qualities are attributed to the one that we have used to characterize the other.

Karl Mannheim, for instance, asserts that *Weltanschauungen* arise spontaneously and unintentionally, and are taken for granted by those adhering to them. To my mind, these characteristics are more typical of (primal) *Weltbilder*. Robert Redfield, on the other hand, in outlining the basics of the "primitive" worldview, formulates one typical characteristic of a *Weltbild* that we have ascribed to *Weltanschauung*. Taking his cue from G. H. Mead's social theory, he stresses the idea of a *self* as the *subject* behind the primitive worldview: "...it seems necessary to suppose that every world view starts from the man who is the viewer and includes the idea of a self. Everybody looks out on a world from a viewpoint which he identifies with that being toward which, alone, he finds himself looking when he looks inward" (Redfield, 91). Finally, it is implied in the distinctions I have made that the word "philosophy" (in a broad sense) could only be used, if at all, as an equivalent of *Weltanschauung*. However, largely through the influence of Paul Radin's *Primitive Man as a Philosopher* (New York: Appleton,

1927), 127, the word “philosophy” is employed by anthropologists to refer to a *Weltbild*. Clyde Kluckhohn, for instance, appeals to Sapir’s observation that the “real world” is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of a people. He concludes that, “A language is, in a sense, a philosophy.” *Mirror for Man: The Relation of Anthropology to Modern Life* (New York: Wittlesey House, 1949), 166.

21. For instance, the title of John McMurtry’s *The Structure of Marx’s World-View* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

22. Friedrich Engels, *Marx, Engels Werke (MEW)* (Berlin: Dietz, 1962), 21:274-307.

23. “Es ist überhaupt keine Philosophie mehr, sondern eine einfache Weltanschauung, die sich...in den wirklichen Wissenschaften zu bewahren und zu bestätigen hat.” *MEW*, 20:129. See also 19:207.

24. *MEW*, 21:148-151, 172.

25. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1957), 5:375.

26. *Ibid.*, 379, 404.

27. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1962), 8:225.

28. See especially Dilthey, 5:399.

29. Dilthey, 8:235 and *passim*.

30. “Die historische Vergleichung zeigt die Relativität aller geschichten Überzeugungen....Und nun das andere, Befreiende: die Weltanschauungen sind gegründet in der Natur des Universums und dem Verhältnis des endlichen auffassenden Geistes zu denselben. So drückt jede derselben in unseren Denkgrenzen eine Seite des Universums aus. Jede ist hierin wahr. Jede aber ist einseitig.” *Ibid.*, 224.

31. With respect to Mannheim, I have to admit that my research has been limited. Dr. H. E. S. Woldring of the Vrije Universiteit is preparing an extensive work on Mannheim’s development in which his worldview conception, among other things, will be highlighted.

32. Max Scheler developed a *Weltanschauungslehre* in the 1920’s. Since its influence on social theory seems uncertain, I have left it out of consideration. For a useful survey, see Peter Hamilton, *Knowledge and Social Structure: An Introduction to the Classical Argument in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 75-87.

33. Hamilton, 121.

34. Charles W. Smith, *A Critique of Sociological Reasoning: An Essay in Philosophical Sociology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 110.

35. Vojin Milic, "Sociology of Knowledge and Sociology of Science," *Social Science Information* 23, no. 2 (1984):227.
36. Stanley L. Jaki, *The Road of Science and The Ways to God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 240. (This volume contains Jaki's Gifford lectures, 1974-75 and 1975-76.)
37. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed., enl. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 111-114, 127, emphasis added.
38. *Ibid.*, 110.
39. Jaki, 240.
40. Paul Q. Hirst, "Witches, Relativism and Magic," *The Sociological Review* 32, no. 3 (August 1984):579.
41. Robin Horton and Ruth Finnegan, Introduction to *Modes of Thought: Essays on Thinking in Western and Non-Western Societies* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), 50. This book contains an essay by Barnes.
42. Gipper, 15-18.
43. Cf. Gipper, esp. 17-18, and Hanna Weber, *Herders Sprachphilosophie*, Germanische Studien, Heft 214, Berlin, 1939, 28-29. (See also 32-33 on Herder).
44. David R. Lipton, *Ernst Cassirer: The Dilemma of a Liberal Intellectual in Germany, 1914-33* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 116.
45. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 3:16, 78, 118, 119. Also Lipton, 120.
46. On Wittgensteins' use of the notion of world-picture, see the paper by William Rowe in this volume.
47. See Walsh and Middleton, 34.
48. Kluckhohn, 160.
49. Rodney Needham, *Belief, Language, and Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), Chap. 10 ("Relativities").
50. *Ibid.*, 246.
51. For a balanced assessment, see Harry Hoijer, ed., *Language in Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).
52. Redfield, 84-86.
53. Robert Redfield, "The Primitive World-View," in *Human Nature and the Study of Society: The Papers of Robert Redfield*, ed. Margaret Park Redfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 269.
54. Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, 88-89.
55. *Ibid.*, 90-100.
56. E.M. Mendelson, "World View," *International Encyclopedia of*

the *Social Sciences* (1968) 16:579. I wish to thank Albert Wolters for bringing this reference to my attention.

57. Geertz, 129-137.

58. Another example of Redfield's influence is Stanley Diamond, ed., *Primitive Views of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964). This book was published earlier as a collection of essays in honor of Paul Radin. See especially A. Irving Hallowell's essay, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View," 49-82.

59. Mary Douglas, *Edward Evans-Pritchard* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 51-52.

60. Edward Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 194; Robin Horton, ed., "African Thought and Western Science" in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan Wilson (Evanston: Harper & Row, 1970), 154.

61. Evans-Pritchard, 338.

62. See Bernstein's excellent account: Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 98-103.

63. On this score there is a marked difference between Horton and Evans-Pritchard. The latter stresses that scientific thought is a specialized experience, one in which we do not engage all the time. Hence, as Mary Douglas says, "The contrast between primitives and ourselves is much exaggerated by pretending that we think scientifically all the time." (Douglas, 26).

64. Horton, "African Thought and Western Science," 153, 155.

65. In an essay published in 1982, Horton partially retracts his earlier position. Critics have convinced him that the Popperian contrast between *closed* and *open* predicaments suggests too strongly that traditional modes of thinking and believing are static and rigid. He now concedes that this dichotomy is "ripe for the scrap heap." See Robin Horton, "Tradition and Modernity Revisited," in *Rationality and Relativity*, ed. Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 211, 226.

In this essay, Horton replaces his old scheme with a more complex one. First, he distinguishes between *primary* and *secondary* theory. Primary theory is the knowledge required for coping with the circumstances of everyday life. Its categorical distinctions are immediately related to life as experienced: left/right, inside/outside, contiguous/separate, before/at the same time/after, human beings/others, self/other, etc. (228). This type of knowledge has a universal character; on this score, no crucial differences obtain between primitives and moderns. Second, Horton distinguishes between two kinds of secon-

dary theory. Secondary theory is required for coping with special circumstances. It attempts to provide explanations for the realities that lay hidden underneath the surface of everyday life. As such, secondary theory is common to all cultures, but the modes of explanation differ greatly between traditional cultures on the one hand and modern culture on the other. Traditional secondary theory explains in terms of gods and spirits, and thus remains within the bounds of a people's common tradition. By contrast, modern secondary theory (i.e. science) explains in terms of particles, currents, waves, and impersonal causal forces—concepts that have no analogy with the concepts of everyday life—and hence is anti-traditional, or “progressivistic” (228-232).

Clearly, Horton has left the rigid closed-open distinction well behind him, as is shown by the weight he places on traditional culture's capacity to come up with creative adaptations to change, as well as his insistence that in modern societies the pursuit of science is a specialized activity of a group of professionals only (compare Evans-Pritchard's view, footnote 63). However, on two important points his position remains the same:

(1) Myth and religion (both traditional, tribal religions and the world religions) remain on the same continuum with modern science. Religion, Horton flatly declares, is “a system of theory and practice guided by the aims of explanation, prediction, and control.” (208) As such, myth and religion are rational (256), but their rationality, being restricted by everyday experience and tradition, cannot measure up to the “universal rationality” of science (cf. 258).

(2) Science is autonomous, i.e., essentially independent from the primary world of the myths, religions, and worldviews.

66. Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 1:109, 247, 321, and *passim*.

67. *Ibid.*, 1:304, 348 and 2:119, 128-130.

68. *Ibid.*, 1:339, 340, 353, 354; compare 2:137-147.

69. *Ibid.*, 1: 81, 85, 296, 335.

70. *Ibid.*, 2: 584.

71. See the section on “Philosophy and Science” in Dilthey, 5:406-413.

72. “Das Messer...des historischen Relativismus, welches alle Metaphysik und Religion gleichsam zerschnitten hat, muss auch die Heilung herbeiführen. Wir müssen nur gründlich sein. Wir müssen die Philosophie selbst zum Gegenstand der Philosophie machen.” Dilthey, 8:234.

73. According to Harms, Mannheim later gave up this hope. John B.

Harms, "Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge and the Interpretation of *Weltanschauungen*," *The Social Science Journal* 21, no. 2 (April 1984):44.

74. Smith, 106, 107, 115.

75. *Ibid.*, 118.

76. Redfield, *Human Nature and the Study of Society: The Papers of Robert Redfield*, 84.

77. Wolters, "Dutch Neo-Calvinism: Worldview, Philosophy and Rationality," 117.

78. Irving Fetscher, *Marx and Marxism* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), translation of *Karl Marx under der Marxismus: Von der Philosophie des Proletariats zur proletarischen Weltanschauung* (Munich: Piper, 1967), 181.

79. Russell R. Dynes, "Sociology as a Religious Movement: Thoughts on Its Institutionalization in the United States," *The American Sociologist* 1 (November 1974):169-176.

80. Cf. Bernstein, 51-56, 73.

81. Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 32.

82. David Miller, *Social Justice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). See especially p. 9.

83. Fernand Dumont, *L'anthropologie en l'absence de l'homme* (Paris: Presses univ. de France, 1981). There is an interesting parallel between Dumont's critique of meta-theories and Jean-François Lyotard's critique of meta-narratives. On Lyotard, see the essay by William Rowe in this volume.

84. *Ibid.*, 82. Compare 180.

85. *Ibid.*, 81.

86. *Ibid.*, 355, speaking of the Marxist utopian vision.

87. *Ibid.*, 75, 77.

88. On this point I differ from Jan Verhoogt, who holds that it is incorrect to attribute a worldview to rationalism (see his paper in this volume). But I agree with his account of rationalism's desire to achieve (or rather *impose*) a consensus.

89. See the statement by Dilthey in footnote 72. Similarly, Hegel expressed on various occasions the conviction that Reason alone is able to heal the wounds it has itself inflicted. For example, he said in his lectures on the history of philosophy: "(E)s liegt im Denken aber auch die Heilung des Bösen, was durch das Denken angerichtet ist." G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in Zwanzig Banden* vol. 19; *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, II (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), 499.

90. Bernstein, 51-93.

91. See Basil Mitchell, *Morality: Religious and Secular* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 12.

92. See the perceptive arguments of Kalus Kienzler: "Ist vom 'Christlichen' nur noch 'nach-christlich' zu reden?" in *Wertepluralismus und Wertewandel heute*, Schriften der phil. Fakultäten der Universität Augsburg, nr. 23 (München: Vogel, 1982), 6-7. Kienzler argues that the Age of the Worldviews owed its emergence to the secularization of the Christian "space." The sense of the unity of the human community was lost; the one called himself Christian, the other communist. Worldviews began to compete with one another (*die Weltanschauungen gerieten in Konkurrenz*). But something of a communal horizon remained nonetheless: a shared search for meaning (*der Raum war zwar weithin entchristlicht, dahinter hatte sich aber der allgemeinere Horizont der Sinnfrage aufgetan*). However, this community is now gone. Secularization has proceeded far enough to destroy the shared search for meaning. As a consequence, the Age of Worldviews has passed (*die Zeit der Weltanschauungen ist ebenso vorbei*).

93. Wolters, "Dutch Neo-Calvinism: Worldview, Philosophy and Rationality," 115.

94. Compare Lyotard's defense of "another idea of rationality," "one which acknowledges the endless *agon* of interpretation while affirming the *Ich stehe hier* of the imperative." See Stephen Watson, "Jürgen Habermas and Jean-François Lyotard," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, no. 2 (1984):14.

95. S. Griffioen, "Marxism as an Instrument?" *Reformed Ecumenical Synod Theological Forum*, February 1981 (Grand Rapids), 4.

96. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Archbishop Alberto Bovone, *Instructions on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation,"* trans. National Catholic News Service, Washington, 14, no. 13 (September 1984):199.

97. See Geertz, 122, and Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, 99.

98. One major difficulty is to determine the boundaries of worldviews. Does it make sense to assume that the two main schools within Hegelianism, i.e., the Old and the Young Hegelians, sprang from the same worldview, given the vastly different conceptions of Rosenkranz and Michelet on the one hand, and Bauer and Marx on the other? Would it be more accurate to say that by and large they shared the same Hegelian concepts and idiom, but held to different worldviews, and that hence their works were animated by opposing "spirits"? We would

also have to consider the possibility of a shared vision operating at a deeper level yet (see Addendum, point 3).

99. Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 71, 72.

100. *Ibid.*, 252.

101. See Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*.

102. Kuyper saw the need to link worldviews to creational ordinances, but he did not succeed in working this out philosophically. (See Introduction to this volume). To my mind, Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd advanced decisively from where Kuyper left off.

103. Ruckert, "The Wisdom of The Brahmin."