To Be in Dialogue: 
A ‘Therapeutic’ Approach and the Example of the Council of Chalcedon

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology of the University of St. Michael’s College and Graduate Centre for Theological Studies of the Toronto School of Theology. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology awarded by the University of St. Michael’s College.

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Abstract

The primary goal of this thesis is to find new and relevant insights about dialogue, especially religious and doctrinal dialogue, for today. This objective will be achieved, first, by studying, and providing insights about, the nature and purpose of dialogue and its relationships to unity and truth. Then, working from a general understanding of how human beings order their lives relationally, the findings thus achieved will be applied to the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) as a concrete source of historical discovery.

Chapter I outlines a non-essentialist, actional approach to dialogue, where the study of dialogue results not in a better understanding, but a better practice of basic dialogic interactions that constitute human existence. Chapter II investigates the relationships among dialogue, unity, and truth. It demonstrates that it is not the case that dialogue leads to truth that, in turn, brings about unity, but that dialogic interactions lead to unity that, in turn, results in a common discovery of truth. Chapter III examines some of the socio-cultural and historical factors that shape (either enhance or undermine) the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure of a dialogic interaction. Chapter IV explores five socio-religious elements (democratic, cognitive, “supernaturalist,” violent, and socio-political), and how they shaped the hearts and minds of the bishops engaged in dialogic interaction at conciliar gatherings in Late Antiquity. Chapter V, building on the results of the previous four chapters, provides a detailed examination of the first six sessions of the
Council of Chalcedon, and how it arrived at its final outcome, the Definition of Chalcedon. The Conclusion offers a summary of key insights and an outline of the basic dynamics characterizing all dialogic interaction, including those in ecumenical and interfaith encounters.

Dialogue is a basic constituent of human existence that facilitates the unfolding of human life. A study and practice of dialogue is meant to identify and remove the obstacles that hinder the unfolding of dialogic interactions and human life. This thesis provides practical insights concerning how to succeed in the pursuit of this goal.
Acknowledgements

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I also wish to acknowledge the invaluable gifts I received from my parents. The memory of them, their example of life, faith, and personal character remained a constant guiding principle in working through the complexities of my thesis topic.

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To my parents, Katalin Pataki and Antal Prokecz,
and to my spouse and colleague, Dr. Christine Mader
Introduction

The primary objective of this thesis is to find new and relevant insights about dialogue, especially religious and doctrinal dialogue, for today. In order to achieve this objective, I will first study, and provide insights about, the nature and purpose of dialogue, and its relationship to unity and truth. Then, working from a general understanding of how human beings order their lives relationally, I will apply my findings to the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) as a concrete source of historical discovery.

With the recent, extraordinary developments in the means of human communication and mobility, existing cultural, political, and religious differences are quickly becoming an undeniable reality of everyday life. As humanity forges ahead on the path of what appears to be a greater integration, the increasingly relevant question is not whether there will be a greater unity among humans, but what the nature and quality of this emerging unity will be. Hence, the inevitability of dialogue is becoming more and more obvious in all aspects of human communal life, including religious and faith life.

In this thesis, after exploring general aspects of dialogue, I will mainly focus on religious and doctrinal dialogue. This choice has been driven not only by personal interest, but also by recent global events. My four-year participation as a diocesan representative in a Christian-Muslim dialogue group, with its ups and downs, as well as joys and frustrations, clearly contributed to this interest on a personal level. Worldwide phenomena, however, such as the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the rapid development of a vast array of tools for electronic communication, and more recently, a dramatic increase in the migration of peoples, as well as local and international conflicts claiming religious validation, render religious and doctrinal dialogue not only an everyday reality but also a necessity. Dealing effectively and
constructively with religious and doctrinal differences, therefore, has become more important than ever, both in ecumenical and interfaith contexts.

It is true that much of the twentieth century saw an unprecedented progress in ecumenical and interfaith relations and dialogue. It is also encouraging that religious leaders worldwide have publicly committed to the pursuit of these ongoing efforts. However, despite these positive signs and the emerging inevitability of religious and doctrinal dialogue, there are also discouraging signs and developments in intra- and interfaith dialogue. There appears to be a slowing down of fruitful dialogue in both of these contexts. There are new intra- and interfaith

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1 Beginning with the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, the subsequent establishment of the Faith and Order Movement, and the 1948 founding of the World Council of Churches, the ecumenical movement was set in full motion. Since then, achievements in reconciliation include the 1965 ending of the Great Schism of AD 1054 between Eastern and Western Churches; from 1973 on, a series of joint declarations between popes and patriarchs of Oriental Orthodox Churches have expressed common faith on Christological issues; the 1982 World Council of Churches’ Faith and Order convergence text Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry [Faith and Order Paper 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982)]; and the 1999 Lutheran World Federation and Roman Catholic Church document, the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000).

In the interfaith context, progress is indicated, for example, by the creation of global organizations, including the World Conference on Religion and Peace (Kyoto, Japan, 1970); the United Religions Initiative (California, USA, 1993); the Movement for a Global Ethic, which had its basic document—the “Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic”—signed by over two hundred religious leaders at the 1993 founding meeting of the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago; King Abdullah’s Interfaith Dialogue Initiative (Saudi Arabia in 2008). The bilateral talks at world, national and local levels are ongoing but, unlike in ecumenical dialogue, the outcomes of these dialogues do not yet form a coherent body of theological discourse.


3 After the encouraging progress of the 1970s and 1980s, slowdowns in the ecumenical context have been discussed by authors such as Kasper and Braaten [Walter Kasper, Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue (London: Continuum International, 2009), 1-2; and Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., The Ecumenical Future: Background Papers for “In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton
disagreements and divisions, resulting in new conflicts, including violent ones. Finally, even when achieved, doctrinal and confessional agreements do not seem to bring about the changes and healing of divisions in community life that one might have expected.

The simultaneous coexistence of these positive achievements, and the persistence and emergence of new difficulties and conflicts underline the complex nature of religious dialogue. The complexity of these forms of dialogue is summed up well by John Zizioulas, as he comments on the intricacies of the recent rapprochements between Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches concerning the church-dividing interpretations of the Council of Chalcedon. He states that unity “is not to be sought primarily through dialogue and negotiations of a confessional character.” In other words, if dialogue is understood mainly as a confessional


For example, Margaret O’Gara describes new and divisive doctrinal disagreements and conflicts among Christians, mostly in the areas of ordained ministry, sexual morality and other life issues [Margaret O’Gara, “Witnessing the Ecumenical Future Together,” Journal of Ecumenical Studies 46, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 372-3].

In the interfaith context, despite some groundbreaking achievements in dialogue and mutual understanding, conflicts—too often violent—erupt among different faiths with increasing frequency. Perhaps in view of this, there are emerging voices questioning the validity of such efforts. See, for example, John L. Allen Jr., The Global War on Christians: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Anti-Christian Persecution (New York: Image, 2013); and Daniel Rynhold, “The Philosophical Foundations of Soloveitchik’s Critique of Interfaith Dialogue,” Harvard Theological Review 96, no. 1 (January 2003): 101-120.

For example, in the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1999) failed to make any significant difference in the everyday life and relationship of the two communities. In a similar way, the Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Churches, in a series of bilateral dialogues, cleared all the originally divisive Christological differences stemming from the controversies surrounding the Council of Chalcedon (451) and its subsequent interpretations, but failed to bring about tangible changes in the relationship and experience of unity among the communities involved [Ronald G. Roberson, “Oriental Orthodox-Catholic International Dialogue,” in Celebrating a Century of Ecumenism, ed. John A. Radano, foreword by Walter Kasper (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 304-314].

negotiation, its outcome will read as a confessional agreement about doctrinal truths (*homologia*). If, however, dialogue is primarily approached as an event of establishing a commonly shared form of life, it will lead to a common witness of life (*martyria*) that includes a common understanding of truth. The outcome of the first will be viewed primarily as a rational agreement subject to further interpretation in order to answer the demands of newly arising life situations which, inevitably, also create opportunities for new disagreement. At the same time, the outcome of the latter will result in a shared form of life that gives witness to, and articulates, the truth it commonly beholds. While the usual approach to dialogue is the former, I will opt in this thesis for an approach to religious and doctrinal dialogue (and dialogue in general) in line with the latter.

Traditionally, dialogue has often been conceived of as a special learned human behaviour, grounded in a corresponding theory, in which a rational consensus regarding truth brings about unity within a community. During the past few decades, there have been a growing number of enquiries along these lines, resulting in numerous and diverse theories about dialogue, and theories about theories-of-dialogue. In this thesis, I will take an alternative approach.

In Chapter I, in order to sidestep the creation of further meta-theories about dialogue, I will explore Dmitri Nikulin’s insight about the ontological nature of dialogue, that “to be is to be in dialogue.” By so doing, and by building on Ludwig Wittgenstein’s theoretical framework of language-games and forms of life, I will investigate the possible ramifications for a non-

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essentialist approach to dialogue. Instead of considering dialogue as a particular form of learned human interaction grounded in a particular theory, I will argue that dialogue, as a language-game with an ‘I’-'other’ dialogic structure, eludes definition just as all language-games do. Dialogue, instead, simply unfolds in and through the countless forms and instances of human interactions, constitutive of human existence, where the ‘face of the other’ that makes the human individual an ‘I’ receives what is its due, its justice.⁹ Therefore, the study of dialogue is not about formulating the perfect definition and theory about dialogue in order to design the most effective system or process to which human interactions will have to conform. Instead, the study of dialogue is about the facilitation of the better practice of these basic human interactions (constitutive of human existence), by identifying and eliminating the obstacles that impede the unfolding of dialogue, of the human being’s fundamental capacity to be (in dialogue).

In Chapter II, based on the outcome of this ‘therapeutic’ approach to dialogue, and drawing on Wittgenstein’s understanding of following a rule (in the rule-governed actions of a language-game), and on his non-essentialist approach to knowledge, certainty and truth, I will investigate the relationships among dialogue, unity and truth. I will propose that it is not the case that dialogic interactions lead to truth that, in turn, brings about unity. Instead, I will suggest that, contrary to this commonly held sequence, ongoing dialogic interactions lead to unity which, in turn, leads to a discovery or recognition of truth by all those involved.

In Chapter III, taking the outcomes of the previous two chapters into account, I will examine some of the socio-cultural and historical factors that shape (either enhance or undermine) the ‘I’-'other’ dialogic structure of a dialogic interaction. For this purpose, I will first

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⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Philosophical Series 24 (1969; repr., Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994). Note that the ‘face of the other’ in Levinas denotes much more than the physical face. It refers to the ‘other’ in its whole being, as the ‘other’ appears to the ‘I’. Also, the ‘other’ can refer to an immanent ‘other’ or the absolute ‘Other’.
turn to Chie Nakane’s insights about the vertical (according to frame) and horizontal (according to attribute) organization of groups and societies. I will demonstrate that making a distinction between these two organizational principles, and appreciating their dynamic complementarity, are essential for achieving and maintaining trust and unity within a group or society. For a better understanding of how trust contributes to vertical and horizontal organizational principles in a group or society (and, ultimately, to unity), I will also briefly consider Adam B. Seligman’s understanding of, and distinction between, trust and confidence.

Building on this background, in Chapter IV, I will examine Ramsey MacMullen’s analysis of early Christian councils. In particular, I will analyze the four socio-religious elements he identifies in his study (democratic, cognitive, “supernaturalist,” and violent), and add one additional element (socio-political) of my own formulation. In so doing, I will probe the ways in which these elements formed and shaped the hearts and minds of bishops gathering in councils and their efforts to maintain the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure of their dialogic interactions for an effective outcome of these conciliar gatherings. I believe that the two-thousand-year-old Christian conciliar tradition provides an unparalleled experience of sustained and cohesive dialogic interaction in the history of humanity. Thanks to the meticulous recordkeeping of some of the tens of thousands of conciliar events and the similarly well-documented, continuous living tradition that received and appropriated the results of these events, we have an unmatched body of evidence concerning religious dialogue and dialogue in general. If we want to pick one instance of this long and rich tradition for an in-depth study, the Council of Chalcedon emerges as an obvious choice.

In Chapter V, I will turn to a more detailed examination of the first six sessions of the Council of Chalcedon, during which a doctrinal consensus was attained. The achievements of the
council were remarkable. After decades of doctrinal and political discord and, at times, hate-filled infighting between the patriarchal sees of Alexandria, Constantinople, Antioch and Rome—which became especially apparent during the two councils of Ephesus (AD 431 and AD 449)—over three hundred bishops gathered as a deeply divided group. Yet, in a mere fourteen days, between October 8 and 22 of 451, they reached near unanimity on what had been fiercely disputed doctrinal issues prior to this. Despite representing not only contrasting doctrinal views but varied political interests, different languages and cultures as well, they not only managed to get along, but formulated one of the most complex doctrinal statements in the history of Christianity. Anyone with experience in dialogue group work or group facilitation knows that this would be a remarkable achievement even in a homogeneous group, much smaller in size, let alone in a group of over three hundred bishops, divided by multiple interests. What made this possible? How did this historical event unfold that it resulted in such success? The answer to these questions can be summed up as follows: The presiding officials and the participating bishops managed to keep the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure strong enough for a common language-game and form of life to be established. This, in turn, resulted in a common discovery of truth.

Beyond its remarkable historical status and achievements, there are also other important reasons for an intensive study of this council. It is well documented, both in ecclesiastical and secular historiography. For example, we have the complete Acts of the council and an extensive collection of pre- and post-conciliar documents available to us. Furthermore, it covers a well-

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10 The fact of the disagreement and schism following the council only highlights its remarkable achievement, and underscores the efficacy of its consensus-seeking approach.

defined time period with a manageable amount of data. Also, it is far enough removed in history that we can engage in a reasonably balanced evaluation of its circumstances and proceedings.

In the Final Conclusion, I will provide a summary of the results of my research. Instead of proposing a new theory about dialogue, I will itemize the key turning points in the dynamics of the unfolding dialogic interaction of the council. I believe that the dynamics thus identified are not specific to the Council of Chalcedon, but that they could characterize any dialogic interaction. Therefore, I suggest that what we will learn about dialogue from the Council of Chalcedon is applicable to any dialogic interaction in our everyday lives.¹²

While recent global events appear to indicate a growing openness to, and need for, dialogue (including religious and doctrinal dialogue), in actuality, there seems to be a diminishing willingness to commit to such formal, bi- and multilateral processes. To address this problem, I propose a new approach to dialogue. I will explore dialogue as a constitutive element of human relations and life, unfolding in the countless forms of encounters with the ‘other’, including the Divine ‘Other’. My hope is that this will provide a better understanding of, and appreciation for, the dynamics of dialogic interaction, and that it will provide a key for all to use to help identify and remove the obstacles preventing the unfolding of these interactions and human life itself. This will enable us to stay, and excel, in dialogue. By so doing, we will learn how to discover unity in diversity in a common form of life and, consequently, to uncover truth about reality, that is, who we are to one another, who God is for us and who we are for God.

¹² Given the interdisciplinary nature of this topic, the research in each field is limited to the scope delineated by the works of the authors selected. In other words, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an exhaustive study of every topic referred to in each discipline.
Chapter I: On Dialogue—A ‘Therapeutic’ Approach

Short Historical Overview of the Practice and Notion of Dialogue

The term ‘dialogue’ has become a key concept within a great number of areas of human inquiry, creativity and social interaction, especially in the last two decades. Not only philosophers, theologians and scholars of composition, but also educators, artists, communication theorists, social, behavioural and natural scientists, as well as political and social organizers and activists, have come to a growing appreciation and understanding of the pivotal role the concept and practice of dialogue plays in their respective fields of inquiry and engagement.

This does not mean that the recognition of the crucial role of dialogue in human experience has been limited to recent times. Extant historical sources provide us with ample evidence regarding the important role dialogue has played in the intellectual, religious and societal life of various cultures and communities throughout the ages. Already in the ancient civilizations of Southeast Asia, Mesopotamia, North Africa, Europe and South America, a privileged position was attributed to dialogue. For example, the *sutra* (“discourse” in Sanskrit)—the foundational form of religious literature in many Asian traditions such as Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism—is inherently dialogical and, as such, it presents religious teaching in a dialogic form. In Mesopotamian literature, there are a large variety of dialogues set in the context of historical epics and cultic rituals.¹ The Jewish tradition and the Jewish scriptures are testimony to a continuous unfolding of a dialogue within the context of a personal relationship between God

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and the People of Israel. Among the native populations of South America, ceremonial or cultic dialogues fulfill an essential function as models of solidary interactions. In Greco-Roman Antiquity, starting with Parmenides, Zeno and Socrates, and further developed and popularized in the writings of Plato, dialogue (diálogos) became one of the favourite ways of doing philosophy and distinguishing epistêmē (certain knowledge) from doxa (human opinion), not only in the Academy, but also in public, competitive (agon) dialogic (philosophical) disputation. As a result, this practice shaped the societies of ancient Greece and Rome. It became a favourite method for arriving at truth not only in philosophical circles but also among people in public office (as members of councils, magistrates, senates). This practice of competitive dialogue (disputations) proved to have long-lasting effects on European culture and society as well. Two thousand years later, it is still the standard way of proceeding in such valued public institutions of our democratic societies as the parliamentary and legal systems. In Late Antiquity, Christianity emerged from Judaism in the form of a personal encounter with God, in the person of Jesus. Therefore, it cannot come as a surprise that Christian scriptures and tradition, reflecting and articulating this personal encounter, are fundamentally and inherently dialogical as well.

In European culture, subsequent historical periods, building on these ancient sources and foundations, in one way or another, preserved and/or recovered the importance and practice of

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4 The Christian scriptures, along with private and public prayer practices (liturgies), are fundamentally dialogical in nature, and debate and disputation played an important role in the formation of the Christian tradition and Orthodoxy. For the latter, see Averil Cameron, “Texts as Weapons: Polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages,” in Literacy and Power in the Ancient World, ed. Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 198-215.
dialogue in the religious, intellectual and public life of the community and wider society. For example, as local synods and ecumenical councils in constant search for unity became constitutive aspects of church leadership, they preserved the centrality of dialogue in church life—including liturgy and everyday life—and governance. The scholastic system of learning during medieval times reintroduced disputations as the favoured way of arriving at theological (and philosophical) truth, while the Renaissance rediscovered and further developed the literary form of dialogue, as well as the use of dialogue in scientific enquiry. During the Reformation, the more competitive forms of dialogue, such as public disputations and polemics, gained prominence once again. The Enlightenment and Modernity were marked by a rediscovery and more widespread use of the dialogical forms of Antiquity in literature, philosophy, science and other aspects of life.

In the last century, especially in response to the unprecedented growth in communication technology and theory, there has been a diverse and voluminous scholarly output concerning the different ideas related to the nature, form and purpose of dialogue. As an illustration of this quickly growing field of study, Cissna and Anderson conclude, in a 1998 article, that it is “no

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6 This is discussed by Grafton, Most and Settis, in reference to the works of authors such as Petrarch, Leonardo Bruni and Leon Battista Alberti [Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and Salvatore Settis, eds., The Classical Tradition (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 266-67].

7 See Galileo’s Dialogue concerning the Two Chief World Systems: Ptolemaic and Copernican, trans. Stillman Drake, with a foreword by Albert Einstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), in which the dialogue form may have been used by Galileo not only as a literary device, but also as a means to present Copernican views not as his own, but as belonging to one of the characters in the book.

8 By the time of the Enlightenment, the use of the vernacular gained popularity, and a renewed appreciation for Classical dialogue was shown by authors such as Addison, Shaftesbury and Berkeley in England, and Descartes, Montesquieu and Diderot in France.
longer possible to review [dialogic scholarship] comprehensively, yet briefly.”9 When they proceed to give an admittedly cursory overview of dialogic scholarship, 91 of the 116 publications they refer to in the article, were published between 1990 and 1998.

The field covered by this vast dialogic scholarship is also diverse. Cissna and Anderson refer to areas such as anthropology, education, psychology and psychotherapy, sociology, political theory, literary theory and criticism, linguistics, international development and religion. Inevitably, as we will discover, these different areas of human interest, with their particular tools and approaches, will have different descriptions and definitions of dialogue. The diversity of the particular fields and their corresponding notions of dialogue are well illustrated, for example, by Robyn Penman’s experience, while attending a 1999 international communication conference. According to her account, she participated in “every session that had the word dialogue in its title,” only to realize that “there were almost as many different usages of the word as sessions held.”10

Perhaps the only common element among the many attempts to describe and define dialogue is that they have very little in common. Descriptions and definitions of dialogue range from identifying almost any exchange of meaning as dialogue to preserving this designation for only a relatively few human interactions. Some cast a wide net and consider all linguistic and non-linguistic forms of person-to-person, person-to-nature/world interaction, and even


communication between animals, between plants, and even within living cells as dialogue; others restrict its meaning to certain face-to-face verbal communication between human beings.

There are those also whose views are situated somewhere in between: for example, the idea of Vološinov that a verbal performance in printed form, such as a book, ought also to be considered a form of dialogue.

Based on this cursory historical overview, we can draw the following conclusions: first, there does not seem to be a time or place in history, that some form of dialogue did not play an important role in the life of humanity; second, there always has been a great diversity among the forms of dialogic interactions, corresponding to the diversity of the physical, historical and socio-cultural contexts within which the dialogic interactions have taken place.

**Etymology of the Word ‘Dialogue’**

The word ‘dialogue’ itself is the product of one of the above-mentioned socio-cultural contexts in history, namely, the world of philosophical inquiry in Greek Antiquity. It comes from

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12 “Plants anticipate future conditions by accurately perceiving and responding to reliable environmental cues. Plants exhibit memory, altering their behaviours depending upon their previous experiences or the experiences of their parents. Plants communicate with other plants, herbivores and mutualists. They emit cues that cause predictable reactions in other organisms and respond to such cues themselves. Plants exhibit many of the same behaviours as animals even though they lack central nervous systems. Both plants and animals have faced spatially and temporally heterogeneous environments and both have evolved plastic response systems” [Richard Karban, “Plant Behaviour and Communication,” *Ecology Letters* 11, no. 7 (July 2008): 727]. In another article, G. W. Felton and J. H. Tumlinson discuss the phenomenon of plant-insect dialogue [Gary W. Felton and James H. Tumlinson, “Plant-Insect Dialogs: Complex Interactions at the Plant-Insect Interface,” *Current Opinion in Plant Biology* 11, no. 4 (August 2008): 457-63].

13 In their article, Shyjan and Butow come to the conclusion that interactions among the nucleus and mitochondria and chloroplast can be viewed as a dialogue [Andrew W. Shyjan and Ronald A. Butow, “Intracellular Dialogue,” *Current Biology* 3, no. 6 (June 1993): 400.]


the Greek *diálogos*, related to *dialégesthai*, the present middle infinitive of the verb *dialegō*, where *diá* means “through, across,” and *legō* means “collect,” “gather” and “lay in order;” hence, used of logical expression, such as “say,” “speak,” “narrate,” “discourse.” Prior to Plato, the term *dialégesthai* could refer to informal talk or speech, but also to definable, rule-governed activity “for the purpose of answering a question or arriving at a decision,” often pursued with competitive or eristic bent. In order to distance himself from his sophist opponents, Plato describes *dialégesthai* not as an eristic (*erizein* or *eristikē*) and antilogic (*antilogia* or *antilogikē*) practice aimed at competitive success, but as the *correct* understanding of philosophy, namely, the practice of seeking truth. Since only a skilled practitioner of *dialégesthai*—a dialectician (*dialektikos*)—could dialogue in this way, Plato, by the time he wrote the *Republic*, presented the art of dialectic (*hē dialektikē*) as the highest form of practicing the art of dialoguing (*dialégesthai*).

Given the relatively narrow socio-cultural context and corresponding etymology in which the word ‘dialogue’ and its meaning originated, it might be an expected outcome that any attempt to describe the wide variety of above-mentioned historical and socio-cultural experiences of person-to-person and person-to-world interactions with a single word, would run into difficulties. While *dialégesthai* refers to the rather specific form of face-to-face human interaction for the pursuit of truth by skilled practitioners, there are a huge number of human interactions that

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16 The mistaken belief that ‘dialogue’ means a conversation only between two people can be traced back to a 16th-century confusion between the Greek “*diá*” and “*di*,” where the latter means “two,” “double” or “twice” and is derived from “*dis.*” As a result, and at about the same time as this misunderstanding came about, the word “trialogue” was coined and introduced to describe an interaction among three people.


18 Ibid., 38-9.
simply cannot be fully described or articulated by the meaning of the word *dialegesthai* as delineated by Plato. Therefore, a forced association of the word dialogue with this multitude of experiences of “dialogue-like” interactions will inevitably further complicate the understanding and interpretation of the differing meanings given to the word “dialogue.”

**Descriptive and Prescriptive Accounts of Dialogue**

Stewart and Zediker suggest that all the different understandings of dialogue can be categorized according to two main general approaches: one is called the *descriptive*; the other, the *prescriptive* approach. In what follows, I will give a short overview of each of these, and draw some conclusions regarding the usefulness of this categorization.

a) **Descriptive approaches** to dialogue classify the irreducibly social, relational and interactional aspects of human existence and meaning-making as dialogue. In this approach, ultimately all human life is inherently social, relational and interactional and, as such, dialogical. Some of the more prominent proponents of this approach include Mikhail Bakhtin, Dmitri Nikulin, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Thomas Luckmann. As Stewart and Zediker point out, while having a general approach to dialogue, these authors also have their respective research agendas and, for this reason, they also include some *prescriptive* elements in their understandings of dialogue. However, their theorizing remains “grounded in a dialogic ontology that is a description of the universal human condition as relational.”

Furthermore, Stewart and Zediker also highlight that these descriptive approaches to dialogue imply that human beings are inherently dyadic and social, that human personality should be conceived of not as individualistic

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20 Ibid., 226.
but as interpersonal, that knowledge is socially constructed, that human behaviour is fundamentally responsive and that social life is essentially indeterminate and messy.\(^{21}\)

Bakhtin is widely considered “the most prominent descriptive dialogic theorist,” as noted by Stewart and Zediker.\(^{22}\) While Bakhtin never offers a definition of dialogue, the word functions for him as a “master concept” that is “present in exchanges at all levels—between words in language, people in society, organisms in ecosystems, and even between processes in the natural world,” and serves as an essential key to the understanding of every aspect of his work throughout his career.\(^{23}\) For him, dialogue is not the means to something else, but the goal or end, and is ontological: it embodies a life lived in openness to others\(^{24}\) and to the possibility of new understandings. Life is an event of co-being in dialogue, in which the ‘I’ is constantly responding to the countless stimuli and addresses of the innumerable aspects of its environment and world. In this interaction, the mind’s goal is to make sense of the world by reducing the number of its meanings (of its aspects) to a finite, manageable number.\(^{25}\) This is achieved when the human being participates with his or her “eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit,” and “whole body and deeds.”\(^{26}\)

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\(^{21}\) Ibid.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 225 and Penman, 84. While, as Penman points out, communication literature has mainly accepted this view, it is worth noting that Bakhtin himself used the concept of dialogue in different ways that can be grouped into two main approaches. In one approach, all usage of language is dialogical because it orients to a listener, and in another, only some language use is dialogical, namely when it “exploits the play of contexts and voices and encourages ‘social acts’ of engagement between people” (Penman, 84).


\(^{25}\) Holquist, 47-8.

Nikulin closely follows and builds on Bakhtin’s understanding of dialogue and, similarly to Bakhtin, adopts a descriptive approach. For him, dialogue “is a process of meaningful but unfinalizable allosensual exchange that can always be carried on without repetition of its content and that implies communication with other persons in the vocal expression of one’s own (but not ‘owned’) personal other.” Further elaborating on Bakhtin’s ontological understanding of dialogue, Nikulin underlines that being is always a concrete personal being with the other. To be does not mean simply to exist. Rather, to be is to be with the other. In other words, being consists in a personal dialogue, in an allosensual opposition and interaction—or “co-being”—with the other. Therefore, to be is to be in dialogue. However, despite such an unequivocally ontological, hence general, approach to the nature of dialogue, Nikulin maintains that dialogue is only to take place between persons. This is at odds with the views of (the later) Bakhtin.

For Gadamer, the words ‘dialogue’ and ‘conversation’ are interchangeable. Since language is more than just a means of communication, it is the principle of understanding. Only by means of language can being be understood. Dialogue (or conversation) is a process of coming to an understanding, by virtue of the fusion of horizons (or perspectives on the world),


29 Nikulin, On Dialogue, 155.

30 This is seen in the section on “Language as the Medium of Hermeneutic Experience,” in Gadamer’s Truth and Method [2nd rev. ed., translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 383-9].

31 Ibid., 384-5.

32 “Being that can be understood is language” (Gadamer, Truth and Method, 474).

33 The term ‘horizon’ is used by authors such as Husserl and Heidegger also. For Gadamer, it means that language does not only function as a means of communication, but it provides the speaker with a vantage point or world view.
of those participating in the dialogue. Since everyone has a different horizon or perspective, the fusion of these, by participation in dialogue, leads to common understanding or consensus. As common understanding or consensus is achieved step-by-step, a person’s horizon is broadened and, as such, is constantly changing, inviting further fusion and consensus in turn. Hence, despite the constant fusion and achieved consensus, understanding and dialogue remain ongoing and unfinalizable. It is the totality of language that delineates the horizon of all horizons, the horizon of the world. Therefore, dialogue is fundamentally ontological for Gadamer (as it is for Bakhtin and Nikulin), and his approach to discussing the term remains descriptive.

Luckmann’s approach to dialogue can also be characterized as descriptive. According to Luckmann, “dialogue is a universal component of human life,” that has evolved from more primitive forms of social communication, without entirely replacing these forms of communication.34 The universality of dialogue as a human phenomenon is highlighted by Luckmann’s assertion that communicative equality (or symmetry) is not a necessary attribute of dialogue. Rather, it is simply a possible outcome of dialogue and, as such, constitutes a special form of dialogue, which Luckmann calls conversation.

b) *Prescriptive accounts* of dialogue consider it as a special and, as such, qualitatively different, form of communicating. According to these approaches, while dialogue retains its descriptive characteristics common to all forms of communication, it is conceived of as an ideal to be striven for or a goal to be achieved as an outcome of a series of choices and ethical considerations. Therefore, according to prescriptive accounts, dialogue is limited to “dialogic moments,” in which one or more of the dialoguing partners experiences a momentary change in

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communicating practice, during which the dialogue partner hears or says something unexpected.\textsuperscript{35}

Authors espousing prescriptive accounts of dialogue include Martin Buber, David Bohm and Paulo Freire. Buber unequivocally states that all human life is inherently relational—\textsuperscript{36} in this he is in agreement with those espousing a descriptive approach—and his central insight is that the “world is twofold for man,” in accordance with the “twofold attitude” characterizing a person’s relationships: the instrumental, objectifying, monologic subject-object, or ‘I-It’ relationships, and the subject-subject or ‘I-Thou’, dialogic relationships, characterized by mutuality and immediacy (applicable to both human-human, and human-nonhuman, relationships).\textsuperscript{38} In other words, the ‘I-Thou’ dialogic interactions are specific relationships, with clearly prescribed qualities such as openness, directness, mutuality, presence, and limited to moments or short periods of time, and creating life-changing possibilities for both the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’.\textsuperscript{39} Given their short duration, the ‘I-Thou’ dialogic experiences will eventually revert to the more common and permanent ‘I-It’ monologic relationships and interactions. Consequently,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{35} Cissna and Anderson, 68-77.

\textsuperscript{36} Buber’s relational ontology is based on such foundational insights as “[a]ll actual life is encounter” and “[i]n the beginning is the relation.” See Martin Buber, \textit{I and Thou}, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 62 and 69, respectively.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 53.

\textsuperscript{38} In his 1929 essay “Dialogue,” Buber further develops this basic insight about the “twofold attitude” of the human being and introduces the idea of three kinds of dialogue: genuine, technical and monologue disguised as dialogue. Genuine dialogue (spoken or silent) takes place when participants turn to each other with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation, as prescribed by the specific characteristics of an ‘I-Thou’ relationship. Technical dialogue happens when people exchange words and information for the purpose of objective understanding of an issue or problem at hand. Finally (Buber considers this the most common of the three), monologue disguised as dialogue occurs when people exchange words and platitudes, believing that they talk to each other, when in actuality they never cease to talk to themselves about themselves and consequently engage in an ‘I-It’ relationship [Martin Buber, \textit{Between Man and Man}, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith, with an introduction by Maurice Friedman (London: Routledge, 2002), 22.]

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., XII-XIII, 10, and Stewart and Zediker, 227.
\end{footnotesize}
most instances of human communication are characterized by an ‘I-It’ relationship, and human communications in general constantly oscillate between the ‘I-It’ and ‘I-Thou’ poles of the human communicative continuum. Therefore, ‘I-It’ relationships, in themselves, are not necessarily wrong or evil. They simply lack the prescribed qualities of an ‘I-Thou’ dialogic relationship.

Bohm’s approach to dialogue is a reaction to what he perceives as a general breakdown of communication “everywhere, on an unparalleled scale,” despite the great progress in the field of communication technology. While he considers “convey[ing] information or knowledge” or “mak[ing] things common” one, indispensable form of communication, that form does not include some other, important forms, for example, dialogue. In other words, for Bohm just as for Buber, dialogue is a special form of communication with clearly identifiable prescriptive norms. These norms stipulate that, in dialogic interaction, “each person does not attempt to make common certain ideas or items of information that are already known to him. Rather, it may be said that the two people are making something in common, that is, creating something new together.”

For Freire, as for Buber, speech communication is the identifying feature of human existence, and he considers Buber’s ‘I-Thou’ and ‘I-It’ primary words to form the basis of the relations between Self and Other. However, like Buber, he also attaches prescriptive qualities

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40 David Bohm, On Dialogue, 1.

41 Ibid., 2-3.

42 Ibid., 3.

43 "The antidialogical, dominating ‘I’ transforms the dominated, conquered ‘thou’ into a mere ‘it’. The dialogical ‘I’, however, knows that it is precisely the ‘thou’ (not-‘I’) which has called forth his own existence. He also knows that the ‘thou’ which calls forth his own existence in turn constitutes an ‘I’ which has in his ‘I’ its ‘thou’. The ‘I’ and the ‘thou’ thus become, in the dialectic of these relationships, two ‘thous’ which become two ‘Is’" [Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971), 167].
to these interactions, in order for them to be considered a dialogue: love, humility and faith. Consequently, he contrasts these loving, humble dialogic (which he calls ‘horizontal’ ‘I-Thou’ interactions between equals), with the unloving, imposing (oppressive) and objectifying anti-dialogic ‘I-It’ interactions that are ‘vertical’. For Freire, “the goal of dialogue is not to persuade the other but, through the understanding of that other as ‘other’, to transform the issues and the quality of contact between the two in a similar or common struggle.”

Having completed this brief overview of some examples of descriptive and prescriptive approaches to dialogue, we can conclude that, while such distinctions can be helpful to organize the great variety of understandings on this topic, they do not adequately address or account for the significant differences that remain between the particular understandings of dialogue belonging to one or the other general approach. This is even more puzzling if we take into consideration that most of the existing approaches in the Western philosophical tradition, and all of the authors discussed above, directly or indirectly, trace the idea of dialogue back to a common source, that is, to the Greek philosophical tradition and, more specifically, to Plato.

Perhaps a closer look at how Plato arrived at his use and notion of the word ‘dialogue’ will help. Earlier I indicated that the persisting significant differences among the different approaches to the understanding of dialogue are due in part to the fact of the rather narrow socio-cultural context and corresponding etymology of the word *dialogue*, as used by Plato and the subsequent Greek philosophical tradition. A quick look at how Plato arrived at his notion of

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45 Whether a definition of dialogue that would satisfactorily describe all different approaches to dialogue is possible or even desirable, I will discuss later in this chapter.
dialogue will show that he, in fact, turned a descriptive form of human interaction into a prescriptive one, and called it “dialogue.”

This becomes clearer if we consider that Plato’s insight of doing philosophy in dialogue form was heavily influenced by his familiarity with, and admiration for, mime, a form of drama practiced in ancient Greece and Rome. In mime, players performed without a mask and relied to a great extent on acting (and inter-acting) to tell stories of everyday life, often verging on the gross. Mime, as a literary genre, developed in Sicily, where Sophron of Syracuse (fifth century BCE) wrote short dramatic pieces in colloquial prose for at least two characters. When Plato decided to make use of some of the basic concepts of mime in developing his philosophical method, he took rich and multidimensional human interaction consisting of body language (gestures, facial expressions, body positions and movements) and spoken language, and reduced it to a verbal, face-to-face interaction, which he called “dialogue.” This reduction of the concept of human interaction to the notion of the Greek word dialégesthai was arbitrary. It was not done out of consideration for describing all the possible forms of human interaction, well exemplified by mime. Rather, it was done to articulate a limited form of dialogue that suited the practice and requirements of doing philosophy. Therefore, if Plato’s understanding of dialogue (dialégesthai) is already a reductionist, or, in our case, prescriptive understanding of human interaction, it is no wonder it cannot provide a comprehensive description of the great variety of human interactive experiences which baulk at being forced into the narrow confines of the meaning.

Finally, a further methodological or contextual reason for the great diversity of understandings of dialogue is that, given the already prescriptive, and thus limiting,

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understanding of Plato’s notion of human interaction, each author not satisfied with the confines of Plato’s prescriptive approach, will inevitably have to search for a new understanding or definition. Since every such attempt will be carried out from within a particular philosophical tradition (with a corresponding context of human experience), each attempt will also necessitate developing a theory of dialogue that will fit into its own theoretical and interpretive framework. While this is a common practice in human inquiry, it also indicates that the development of a new understanding of dialogue is going to take place through an ongoing dialogue with other understandings of dialogue, resulting in a dialogue about “dialogue,” which is always changing as new insights are attained. As such, the dialogic process is ongoing and unfinalizable. This activity leads to new theories, and metatheories.\footnote{See, for example, Tineke Abma et al., “Dialogue on Dialogue,” 164-180; and Rob Anderson and Kenneth N. Cissna, “Fresh Perspectives in Dialogue Theory,” 1-4. The eight articles subsequent to the introductory article in this issue of Communication Theory discuss existing theories of dialogue from eight different perspectives.}

In order to eliminate or bypass these issues, I will discuss ‘dialogue’ in what follows by emulating aspects of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s approach to philosophy as an action-based, non-foundationalist “therapeutic” endeavour, as opposed to a theory-based and theory-generating enterprise. Wittgenstein held, both in his earlier and later writings, that philosophers should not try to supply a theory or provide explanations, because philosophy “just puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything.—Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain.”\footnote{Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, 3rd ed., (1967; repr. of English text with index, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 126.} Instead, like therapists, they should provide reminders and examples so that people can see things without added explanation, that is, to see things as they are. There is no single philosophical method that could successfully accomplish this. Instead, what is needed is the application of a series of therapeutic methods, because, as Wittgenstein puts it, the form of
a philosophical problem is: “I don’t know my way about,” and the role of philosophy is to find one’s way by untying the knots in our thinking, or by showing the fly the way out of the fly-bottle.

To accomplish this, I will first consider the relationship between Wittgenstein’s understandings of language-games, and dialogue. Second, I will explore the roots and prevalence of dialogue and its basic dynamics. Finally, I will investigate the possibility of defining what dialogue is and related issues, and what it means to be in dialogue.

Language-Games and Dialogue

Wittgenstein conceives of language as a rule-guided human activity that, like a game, has constitutive rules, namely, those of grammar. Let us consider his well-known example for such a language-game, involving a builder and an assistant building a house. As their profession, the activity of building a house is an integral part of their lives, both as individuals and as a team. In the course of building a house, the builder and assistant are working with different building materials, such as blocks, pillars, and beams. For a successful completion of their task, the builder and assistant communicate with each other, using a simple language. At times, the builder calls out in a certain order and tone of voice: “Block!” “Pillar!” “Beam!” In response, the assistant brings from a certain place a particular number and kind of blocks and puts them in a specific place, holds on to a pillar while the builder secures it with the blocks, or goes to another place, picks out a beam of the right length after measuring it, and returns it to the builder.

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50 Ibid., 123.
53 Ibid., 2.
Someone familiar with the rules governing the building of a house, watching this activity and listening to the exchange between builder and assistant, likely will consider this a clear and purposeful social interaction or dialogue. Another person, not familiar with the ins and outs of house building, and only hearing the interaction without actually seeing the builder’s and assistant’s actions, most likely will find it a rather confusing and unintelligible monologue. In this case, the inexperienced listener would not know that the speaker was engaged in the rule-governed activities of reporting, memorizing words or giving orders, while calling out those words. However, for the sake of this second listener, let us consider a significantly more complex version of the dialogic interaction between the same builder and assistant, concerning the same event, unfolding something like this: “Do you know where the blocks are? Yes, I believe I do! Could you bring a dozen for me? Certainly, I am bringing them right away. Thank you! Here they are. Where should I put them? Next to my foot, but be careful not to injure my foot. Of course, I will be careful.” In this case, even if unable to see the action, any listener could have a reasonably clear understanding of this rule-governed interaction or dialogue. (Similar alternative interactions or dialogues could be construed about every other event of the building process.)

In the first version of the dialogue, when the builder calls ‘Block!’ the assistant does not simply form a mental picture in the mind about a block and stay put; neither does he engage in a rather detailed verbal interaction, as in the second dialogue. Instead, demonstratively, he acts out his response, and walks to the place where the blocks are to be found, picks up a certain number of them, brings them to the builder, and puts them where the builder can reach them. This dialogical interaction, that Wittgenstein calls a ‘primitive language-game’, is ‘played’ according to the rules of a game-like human activity we might call ‘building a house’ that is seamlessly integrated into a corresponding human life-situation or form of life. By referring to language as a
human activity or ‘game’, deeply embedded into everyday human life and activity, Wittgenstein shows that language—and, hence, in our case, dialogue—cannot be understood only as a set of signs abstracted from the actions and broader context of ordinary life. While such sets of signs (written or spoken) form an essential part of language and dialogue, the signs have little or no meaning without the life situation within which those signs are used. In other words, the meaning expressed by language is determined by ‘use’, and this use is governed by the rules of the particular language-game.

In the second version of the dialogue, we encounter a more complex and elaborate verbal interaction in the context of the same rule-governed human activity of building a house and its corresponding form-of-life. In this case, the assistant’s response also involves verbal utterances, while the assistant performs the activity of carrying the blocks to the builder. However, these utterances do not add anything to the effectiveness, depth, content or outcome of the language-game and of the ensuing dialogue between builder and assistant. In both cases, builder and assistant understand each other fully and the blocks and other building materials needed by the builder are delivered as requested. In other words, for example, the added verbal response, “I know where the blocks are and I am bringing them right away,” in the second dialogue, is redundant. The assistant already responded to the builder’s call through his actions, retrieving the blocks as requested. Thus, the common experience of following the rules of the human activity of building a house provides the necessary context for symbolic (verbal) communication between builder and assistant. The more the participants share in this experience, the more they are able to assume each other’s perspectives and abbreviate their verbal interactions, substituting for wordy statements such signs as gestures, glances, and tones of voice. It is important to note, therefore,

that the mere fact of exchanging information is not sufficient for effective social interaction or
dialogue. What counts much more is the *quality of the relationship* generated by following the
rules of the interaction.\(^5\) Because of this, redundant or unnecessary symbolic communication
may actually become an obstacle to effective dialogue.

In conclusion, we can make the following observations: Both language-games and
dialogues are rule-governed (social) interactions embedded in forms of life. Hence, to imagine a
language-game or dialogue is to imagine a form of life.\(^6\) Because of this, a given life situation or
form of life, with its corresponding rule-governed human activity, determines the meaning of the
signs constituting the dialogue. Finally, it is also obvious that an excess of verbal signs—too
much verbal interaction about otherwise assumed details—could slow down or even destroy the
flow of a rule-governed human activity (building a house) in which the language-game and
dialogue are rooted, integrated, and find their meaning.

**The Difference between Language-Games and Dialogues: The ‘I’-‘Other’ Structure**

We have established that language-games and dialogues are rule-governed human
activities unfolding in corresponding forms of life. Does this mean that they are the same? If not,
how are they different? The difference between language-games and dialogues consists in this:
while every dialogue has an identifiable ‘I’-‘other’ structure, not every language-game needs to
have one. In the above language-game involving a builder and an assistant, the ‘I’-‘other’
structure is clear. However, there are language-games, in which the ‘I’-‘other’ structure either
breaks down or, is simply missing. When the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of a dialogue breaks down in a
language-game, it usually becomes a monologue or monologic action, which is not the same as a

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\(^5\) I will discuss this further in “Dynamics of Dialogue” below.

soliloquy or talking to oneself as an ‘other’. The cases of language-games missing an ‘I’-‘other’ structure also include situations with multiple participants in a language-game where, due to the complexity of a language-game, not everyone participating in it is also part of the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of a dialogue. Both of these situations will become clearer in what follows, as I discuss the roots and prevalence of dialogue and its ‘I’-‘other’ structure and, subsequently, explore how changes in the structure and dynamics of the ‘I’-‘other’ interaction render it either a dialogical or non-dialogical language-game.

The Roots and Prevalence of Dialogue: The ‘I’ and the ‘Other’

As we have seen from the example of builder and assistant, language-games and dialogues integrate two kinds of communication: communication by actions (physical movements, gestures, body language, facial expressions), and communication by symbols and signs (words, sign language, expressive sounds, tones of voice). As a result, dialogues can be thought of as: a) action dialogues, involving minimal or no symbolic communication; b) dialogues by symbolic communication with minimal or veiled physical interaction; or c) a mix of the two. In the history of humanity and in the personal development of a human being, we can recognize a movement from a) to b), or, as Luckmann puts it, “[L]anguage as a historical sign system evolved from pre-linguistic reciprocal communicative action.”

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57 As Nikulin points out through the examples of Hamlet and Marcus Aurelius’s *Ad se ipsum*, in a soliloquy or talking to oneself, the ultimately inexpressible ‘I’ sees and addresses itself from without as an ‘other’, in a context different from that in which the ‘I’ finds itself at the moment of seeing and addressing itself (Nikulin, *On Dialogue*, 195). Or, in other words, the ‘self’ becomes an ‘other’—who is different from the currently thinking ‘I’—by being referred to and understood in the context of past experiences of language-games and corresponding forms of life.

58 Luckmann, “Social Communication,” 45-46. Studies in the area of human cognitive evolution have yielded similar insights. For example, Donald, tracing the path from Miocene primate ancestors of hominins to anatomically modern humans in literate societies, identifies the following development in forms of representation: stage one: non-verbal action-modelling; stage two: linguistic modelling; stage three: extensive external symbolization, both verbal and non-verbal [Merlin Donald, “Mimesis Theory Re-examined, Twenty Years after the Fact,” in *Evolution of Mind, Brain, and Culture*, ed. Gary Hatfield and Holly Pittman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2013), 176-77].
learns the meaning and correct use of the word ‘chair’ not by learning its definition in the context of ‘a theory of chair’, through verbal dialogue, but by watching and imitating how others in their primarily non-verbal actions make use of a chair. In other words, the child learns the meaning of the word ‘chair’ by learning by imitation to participate in the language-game of ‘sitting on a chair’.59

Considering this insight, we can see that, while it is possible to conceive of a purely action dialogue (for example, dancing), it remains impossible to carry on a purely language-based dialogue without at least the presumed presence, perhaps only in memory, of some actional aspects of that dialogue. In the example of Wittgenstein’s two builders, when the assistant hears the command ‘Block!’, he has to know what actions are associated with the verbal sign ‘block’ in physical life in order to understand its meaning. The verbal sign ‘block’ is only meaningful when usable or applicable in action. Therefore, an action dialogue is a more foundational form of dialogue than verbal dialogue or dialogue by other abstract signs such as writing or sign language.

In view of the foundational aspect of action dialogue, and since action is not specific or limited to human existence, one wonders about more elemental forms of dialogue in other types of communicative interactions, for example, non-human ones. Bearing in mind the countless possible forms of interaction in the inanimate world and among individual living organisms, any reciprocal transfer of information could be construed as a form of communicative interaction.

59 To illustrate further the primacy of action dialogue over communication by symbols, I would like to refer to a personal experience of visiting some Finnish friends in Helsinki with two Hungarian friends. One Hungarian friend and I spoke English, and so did my Finnish friends, a young couple with a five-year-old child. The child spoke only Finnish, and my other Hungarian friend did not speak either Finnish or English. So, throughout the afternoon that we spent together, four of us ended up interacting in English, and the child and my Hungarian friend spent the afternoon interacting by simply doing things together (walking, pointing things out to each other, playing) and talking to each other in Finnish and Hungarian, respectively. To my great amazement, they did this continuously, with great ease and remarkable success. Despite speaking completely different languages, they spent the whole afternoon interacting and dialoguing, and they both found it satisfying.
For example, a proton and an electron, in their physical interaction, share necessary and sufficient information determined by the laws of physics. By so doing, they engage in a communicative interaction that results in the hydrogen atom.

Considering the sentient world, the biological interaction between living organisms such as cells, plants and animals, is a more complex phenomenon. Because the sharing of information between individual organisms (cells, plants, or animals) is regulated by a code transmitted either by genetic programming or by learning, or a combination of the two and, as such, it may function as an adaptive process, communicative interaction can take the form of social communication. While social communication constitutes a new level or form of communicative interaction, it presumes and builds on the characteristics of the physical communicative interaction of the inanimate world.

Finally, among humans, dialogue has emerged as a specific form of social communication that “determines in a significant way the everyday conduct of the members of our species as members of historic cultures and constitutes the fabric of human social organization.” As such, it incorporates and seamlessly integrates all previous forms of communicative interaction, and acquires an ‘I’-‘other’ structure. As we have seen in the case of the child learning the correct meaning and use of the word ‘chair’, the capacity for this kind of

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60 I am adopting Luckmann’s understanding of ‘social communication’. For Luckmann, “[s]ociality refers to the regulation of communicative behaviour by means of a code” (Luckmann, “Social Communication,” 47). As he points out, in the widest sense of the term “social,” even the transmission of information from one cell to another, can be conceived of as an elementary form of social communication. Nevertheless, by applying what he calls “sensible” restrictions, he limits the meaning of the word “social” to communication between “individuated organisms” (Ibid., 45-47). Since, as I pointed out earlier, some authors consider this kind of communication not only a social interaction but also a dialogue, I am using the term “social” in its wider sense.

communication is inherited as a physical, biological and cognitive capacity or instinct, but its actual use is a learned behaviour.

It is important to point out that the line between dialogue (as a form of social communication) and other forms of social communication (between voluntary and involuntary or instinctual, and between conscious and subconscious) is blurred. For example, while initially it takes a conscious effort for a child to learn how to use the muscles in her mouth and lips to form the sounds constituting the word ‘chair’, these actions sink back into the subconscious and become routine and/or instinctual once the child has learned these actions properly. If, however, the child has just had her tooth pulled and parts of her mouth are still numb from the anaesthetic, the forming of the sounds constituting the word ‘chair’ can once again become a conscious effort. This apparent blur or overlap between dialogue and other forms of social communication is expressed by Luckmann as follows: “Generally one may observe that in face-to-face communication the use of language recombines with the partly instinctive, partly intentional employment of other means of communication.”

In order further to highlight this apparent confusion in the understanding of the word ‘dialogue’, let us consider the example of a sculptor’s communicative interaction with a boulder, which eventually yields a sculpture. Playing the language-game of ‘sculpting a sculpture’, the sculptor looks at the boulder, ‘sees’ a beautiful image in it, and communicates this vision to the boulder using a chisel and hammer as means of communication appropriate to the language-game of ‘sculpting a sculpture’. It is a step-by-step communicative interaction. Every blow of the

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62 By “inherited” I mean that the hearing and understanding of the verbally communicated word “chair” by the child involves the physical interaction of air particles carrying the sound waves, the sensory and transmissive function of the ear and the nervous system and the cognitive function of the brain, etc. In other words, verbal communication does not stand on its own. It is integrated in the interactive and communicative forms from which it developed.

hammer transfers a piece of information to which the boulder ‘responds’ by cracking and splintering in a certain way (in the ‘language’ dictated by its physical rock-nature). In this interaction, the sculptor not only ‘sees’ the image in the boulder, but she can also ‘feel’ its rock-texture as it ‘responds’ to the blows. Could this communicative interaction, then, since it is both intentional and conscious (from the perspective of the sculptor), and it also unfolds between an ‘I’ (sculptor) and an ‘other’ (boulder, an ‘it’), be construed as a dialogue?

In seeking an answer to this question, let us first consider another example. Similar instances of asymmetrical\(^{64}\) communicative interactions or dialogues could be construed between an owner (‘I’) and her eye dog (an ‘other-it’). In this case, the dog not only responds to the owner’s communications, as was the case with the boulder in the previous instance, but at times the dog, to which its owner literally entrusts her life, takes the initiative in the communicative interaction. While there is a significantly higher level of reciprocity in intentionality and consciousness between the owner and her dog than between sculptor and boulder, it is still not a full reciprocity and symmetry. For this reason, some will claim that such communicative interaction or social communication does not qualify as ‘dialogue’.\(^{65}\) Does this mean, then, that a mother cannot dialogue with her baby, because the baby has little or no ability for conscious and intentional communication, even as compared to an eye dog? Might this also mean that we cannot dialogue with people living with mental disabilities, who sometimes have diminished capacities for conscious and intentional communication? Mothers with babies and family

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\(^{65}\) Ivana Marková, “Introduction,” in *The Dynamics of Dialogue*, 7. Other authors, such as Martin Buber, disagree (see the next footnote). See Buber, *I and Thou*, 53-59.
members of mentally disabled people would disagree with such suppositions. Yet, a blind person would not entrust her life to an infant or a mentally disabled person when crossing the street!

According to Buber, the answer to this question is not concerned with symmetry and reciprocity between the identities of the ‘I’ and the ‘other’; rather, it has to do with the nature and quality of the relationship between them. This point is well illustrated by his basic insight about the difference between the ‘I-Thou’ and ‘I-It’ relationships, where the disparity between relating to the ‘other’ as ‘other-self’ (a ‘Thou’ or ‘You’), or as an ‘other-it’ (an ‘It’) does not correspond to a ‘person’–‘non-person’ distinction, but is determined by the quality of the relationship.66 Indeed, in Buber’s view, it does not matter whether we are addressing a person, a tree, a cat or a piece of art. As long as our relationship with the ‘other’ is characterized by such qualities as the involvement of one’s whole being, openness, immediacy and trust, we will address and experience the ‘other’ as a ‘You’ or ‘Thou’.

From this, we can see that it is the quality of the ‘I’-‘other’ relationship that makes it dialogic. Still, the question remains: What actually constitutes this relationship? Buber refers to this relationship (Beziehung) existing between the ‘I’ and ‘You’ as the “between” (Zwischen), which is a primordial67 ontological reality and a “real place and bearer of what happens between men [sic],” which is “ever and again reconstituted” in the meetings of the ‘I’ and ‘You’, and which is rooted in “one being turning to another as another.”68 Despite giving such vivid

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66 Ibid.
67 “In the beginning is the relation” (Buber, I and Thou, 69).
68 Buber, Between Man and Man, 241. Also, in his “Elemente der Zwischenmenschlichen,” he writes, “I have a superstitious belief in a between-human. I am not it and you are not it either, but someone comes into being between you and me who is the You to me and I am also You to the other. In this way, each of us has his own between-human with reciprocal double name” [See Jeong-Gil Woo, “Buber from the Cartesian Perspective? A Critical Review of Reading Buber’s Pedagogy,” Studies in Philosophy and Education 31, no. 6 (November 2012), 574n6].
descriptions of the “between,” Buber admits in his response to his critics that he cannot provide a definition for it in an “arithmetical and geometric” language and that, after all, it is best referred to as a mystery, a mysterious entity.69

Although it has been established that the “between,” as a real yet mysterious ground of the ‘I’-‘other’ relationship, is a “real place” that is not identical either with the ‘I’ or the ‘You’, the question remains, What is the relationship of the ‘I’ and ‘You’ to it? There are two possible options: either each is participating in it (by mutual action, for example), or each is relating to it ‘from the outside’, so to speak. If the first case scenario is true, how are the ‘I’ and ‘other’ relating to one another within the context of their participation and, if the second, how are they relating to the “between?” This indicates that a pursuit of such a foundationalist approach to the nature of the relationship between the ‘I’ and ‘other’ simply leads to an infinite regression of questions.

In order to resolve this issue, I suggest invoking Wittgenstein’s non-foundationalist approach to language-games.70 For example, let us recall the previous example with the eye dog. If we can establish and enter a language-game called ‘crossing the street with an eye dog’, within which we can look at and consider an eye dog as an ‘other-self’, then we are in fact dialoguing with the eye dog. This does not mean that looking at the dog results in an anthropomorphization of the dog and that we actually see in it a human-like ‘you’. Rather, it means that, while in the

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70 “You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there—like our life” [Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 559]; and “Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end;—but the end is not certain propositions’ striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game” (Wittgenstein, On Certainty, 204). A more detailed discussion of Wittgenstein’s non-foundationalist approach will be provided in Chapter II of this thesis.
presence of the dog, we allow ourselves to be drawn into a relationship with it in such a way that we make ourselves open and vulnerable to its presence, through which we allow it to ‘speak’ to us, and to form and shape our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. In this relationship, it does not matter whether the eye dog has consciousness or intentionality. What matters is that we are engaged in a certain relationship in the context of a language-game called ‘crossing the street with an eye dog’, in which the eye dog assumes the role and status of an ‘other-self’ or ‘you’, and is perceived and treated with the openness, directness, vulnerability and mutuality proper to an ‘other-self’ or a ‘you’.

Now what do we see when looking at the dog, especially if we are a blind person relating to the eye dog? What prompts us to allow ourselves to be “drawn in,” to be or become “open and vulnerable,” to allow the dog’s presence to “form and shape our thoughts, feelings and behaviour?” Is it a certain feeling or insight about the dog? In answering these questions, let us consider the following two examples: Consider a classroom situation. The teacher is giving a spirited presentation, and he and his students enjoy each other’s undivided attention. As frequently happens, students, catching the teacher’s attention and establishing eye contact, nod and smile appreciatively and approvingly. The teacher feels genuine connectedness, and has the impression that he is engaged in a genuine dialogic event, only to find out later that, despite the perfect appearance and almost tangible right impressions and feelings that filled the “sphere” of the “between” between student and teacher, the students in fact had a poor, or no grasp, of the material after all, and that they only wanted to appear in a certain way.

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71 As Nikulin puts it, in his discussion of Buber’s ideas on the difference between the ‘I’ of the ‘I’-Thou’ and ‘I’-It,’ “The I does not constitute the Thou but becomes the I proper once the Thou is present, not as an object … but as a pure relation of mutuality” (Nikulin, On Dialogue, 18).
Contrast this with the following (real life) example: 2010, USA-Canada Olympic Hockey final game, tied at 2:2, seven minutes and thirty-eight seconds into sudden-death overtime. Iginla is battling a defender in the left corner. From behind him and his opponent, he hears his name screamed. With no doubt, no hesitation, he blindly passes the puck in the general direction. Crosby, moving in at high speed, with no hesitation, and a quick-release, one-timer wrist shot at seven minutes and forty seconds, achieves the winning goal for Canada. All those involved were under tremendous stress, pushed to their limits physically, emotionally and psychologically. There were no warm feelings, glances, undivided attention, only desperation and great skill, and an exhilarating sense of unity and harmony, a deep connectedness, mutual trust and reliance, coming as a result of years of endless practice.

The difference between the two examples could be summed up as follows: in the classroom exam example, from those participating in the language-game of “learning a lesson,” not all followed the rules that constitute the language-game well, or at all, while those participating in the language-game of “playing hockey” in the second example all followed the rules of their language-game to the best of their abilities. While in the first case the students, for whatever reason, did not or could not follow the rules, and the teacher was under the false impression of being engaged in meaningful dialogue, in the second case, the players completely and without hesitation gave themselves over to the following of the rules of the game of hockey, with no sense of certainty about the outcome, and despite the apparent disparity in their individual actions, found themselves deeply connected, in harmony and in dialogue.

Getting back, then, to our language-game of ‘crossing the street with an eye dog’, it becomes clear that the blind person’s relationship with the eye dog is constituted not by certain perceptions or feelings about the eye dog, but by the fact that, as a result of long and rigorous
training, with self-giving and dedication and without hesitation, both of them follow the rules of the language-game of ‘crossing the street with an eye dog’. It is not because she feels in a certain way that the blind person can confidently participate in the language-game of ‘crossing the street with an eye dog’ but, because of her and the dog’s ability to participate in the language-game well, she feels in a certain way about the dog. Consequently, the dialogic relationship between the ‘I’ and ‘other’ is not a “sphere,” a “thing” or an “ontological reality,” that can be defined; rather, it consists in one’s ability, and actual following of the rules of a language-game, in knowing one’s way about in a language-game. In other words, following Wittgenstein’s non-foundationalist approach, we can say that, similarly to language-games, there is no other foundation to dialogue than rule-governed action or, more specifically, rule-governed interaction. Therefore, the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of a dialogue is brought about and is maintained by our capacity to follow, along with the actual following of, the rules of a dialogic language-game.

**A Language-Game—but Not a Dialogue**

Thus far, we have determined that dialogue is a language-game and that, as a language-game, it is rooted in rule-governed action. From this, it is also possible to draw the conclusion that there are as many forms of dialogue as there are language-games. In what follows, I will explore in more detail what distinguishes dialogue from language-games. As I indicated earlier, the basic difference between dialogue and language-games is that a dialogue always has a basic ‘I’-‘other’ structure, while a language-game does not. The first reason for the absence of such a structure is the breakdown or disintegration of an existing ‘I’-‘other’ structure, which reduces a dialogic interaction to a monologue. The second reason for the absence of a permanent ‘I’-‘other’ structure in a language-game is due to its complexity.
a) A breakdown of the ‘I’-‘other’ structure leading to monologue

In what follows, I will further explore the event of a dialogue breakdown and its degeneration into a monologue. To do this, I will examine the dynamics of the ‘I’-‘other’ relationship, drawing especially on Levinas’s approach to dialogue and his notion of the ‘face of the other’.

While, for Buber, the ‘I-Thou’ relationship is reciprocal, and the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ mutually presuppose each other, the ‘I’ still maintains the initiative in the relationship by being the one who initially addresses the ‘Thou’.

Levinas, while retaining much of Buber’s thought, including his basic ‘I-Thou’ structure of dialogue, substantially transforms its inner dynamics. His ‘I’-‘face of the other’ paradigm, for a face-to-face dialogue, shifts the initiative from Buber’s ‘I’, to the ‘other’. Levinas’s basic insight is that, before we can speak about the ‘face of the other’, it speaks to us, addresses us, and puts a demand on us simply by its appearance in our field of vision. The ‘other’ breaks open the self-centred world of the ‘I’, lifts the ‘I’ out of the totality of all there is, and forces it to call itself an ‘I’ in distinction and/or opposition to the ‘other’. Therefore, the question is not whether the ‘I’ will have a relationship with the ‘other’, but how that relationship is going to unfold. Most importantly, will the ‘I’ give justice to the ‘other’ by giving whatever its due is, or will the ‘I’ refuse to do so, either unequivocally or by

72 It is the ‘I’ who contemplates the tree, who accepts it as a picture, feels its movement, can assign it to a species, etc. (Buber, I and Thou, 57).

73 The ‘face’ and the ‘face of the other’ refer to complex notions in Levinas. The ‘face’ does not simply refer to a physical face but to the (whole) presence of the ‘other’; and the ‘other’, as radically different from the ‘I’, can refer to another person or the absolute Other (God). It is beyond the scope of my topic to provide a more detailed analysis of these terms. Also, further, in this thesis, ‘face of the other’ will refer to the ‘other’, unless otherwise indicated.

74 Emmanuel Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 66, 75-76, 200, 201, 218-19.

75 “[T]he face presents itself, and demands justice” (Ibid., 294).
trying to ignore the unignorable presence of the ‘other’? Such a denial of the ‘other’, according to Levinas, amounts to a violation or killing of the ‘other’.

This seminal interaction between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ could be summed up by saying that the ‘face of the other’ makes me ‘I’. However, it is important to note that the ‘face of the other’ does not make me an ‘I’ without my cooperation. In other words, while it is true that the ‘other’ has the initiative in making me ‘I’, that initiative is not an absolute initiative. Indeed, the reason the other could at all appear in the field of my vision and break into my self-centred world is because I had my eyes open, so to speak. In other words, a certain passive-active presence, a child-like, self-offering receptivity characterizes my basic stance prior to the ‘other’ breaking into my world, which is also the foundation of my freedom to accept (by giving justice to) the ‘other’ or to reject (or as Levinas puts it, “kill”) the ‘other’.

Regardless of whether I accept or reject the ‘other’, it still remains true that the ‘face of the other’, simply by putting me into the position of having to make the ethical choice to be for or against it, forces me to become an ‘I’ and, subsequently, continues to form and shape my sense of ‘I’.

This fundamental dialogical relationship between ‘I’ and ‘other’ is well illustrated by the infant-mother relationship. The infant, with its fundamental openness, encounters the face of its mother. Because of the lack of reflective capacity, the infant’s reactions to the promptings of the face of the mother are immediate: for example, when engaging in the basic language-games of ‘smiling at each other’ or ‘being sad’, whenever the mother smiles, the child smiles; whenever the mother is sad, the infant shows sadness. Eventually the child learns to accept or reject the promptings of the face of the mother as the ‘other’ and with this, the child learns its own identity by accepting or rejecting certain aspects of its ‘I’, as it is shaped by the ‘other’.

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76 Ibid., 197-201.
Further to illustrate the basic dynamics of the dialogic ‘I-other’ relationship and what leads to its breakdown, I will consider a counter-example to such a relationship, that is, a monologic relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’, exemplified in the case of a drowning person. The drowning person, primarily motivated by fear, feels completely alone and abandoned, and has no awareness of the ‘face of the other’. His actions are frantic and ‘incomprehensible’ from the perspective of playing the language-game of swimming (he cannot dialogue with the water: he does not know how to swim). Driven by the instinct of self-preservation, he is willing to do almost anything to save himself. He becomes so much focussed on himself (self-centred) that the outside world, the ‘other’, is all but non-existent to him. In this situation, he cannot feel, hear or see anyone else, and can easily harm or even kill the ‘other’, for example, in the event someone tries to rescue him. A monologue, then, is a degeneration of dialogue when, for whatever reason, the ‘other’ is denied its justice and is ‘killed’, either by being ignored (for whatever reason), or intentionally or unintentionally eliminated (for example, as might happen in the case of the prospective rescuer of the drowning person).77

As this latter example illustrates, a degeneration and eventual disintegration of the basic ‘I’-‘other’ structure of dialogue turns dialogue into a monologue, where the ‘other’ is not felt, seen or heard, and is not responded to. However, the disintegration of the basic ‘I’-‘other’ structure of dialogue does not stop with the ignoring and virtual or actual elimination (‘killing’) of the ‘other’. With the absence of the ‘other’, there is nothing or no one to break open the self-centred world of the ‘I’ and call the ‘I’ into existence. Hence, the elimination of the ‘other’ does not only break down the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of dialogue, but it undermines the existence and life

77 This does not mean that every stress situation inevitably leads to self-centredness and an elimination or “killing” of the ‘other’. It is not the situation that causes the disintegration of the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of dialogue, but one’s self-centred reaction to it.
of the ‘I’ as well (the drowning man drowns). Because of this, the disintegration of the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of dialogue affects not only a dialogue with another ‘other’, but also, in the case of a soliloquy, it affects the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of talking to oneself as ‘other’ as well. In other words, to be is to be in dialogue, and not to be in dialogue is not to be at all.

From this, we can see that the dynamics of dialogue are governed by principles similar to those governing life-giving human relationships in general: openness, vulnerability, mutuality, and justice. When these principles are operative in following the rules of a language-game, human dialogue unfolds as a life-giving and formative event. When some or most of these principles are absent, human dialogue degenerates into a monologue, undermining human life and human existence itself.

Finally, having considered the dynamics of the breakdowns of the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of a dialogue and its disintegration into a monologue, I would like briefly to mention some examples of apparent disintegration which are actually not what they appear to be. Such seemingly borderline cases of dialogue include dialogue with the dead, dialogue with authors and composers (dead or alive) by reading their writings or playing their music, and dialogue with God. Some of these instances of dialogue either partially or completely lack some or all of the physical or biological aspects commonly associated with an ‘I’-‘other’ relational structure. Despite this, we are able to carry on a dialogue with such individuals or entities either by remembering past experiences of such physical and biological aspects, or by relying on the expressive nature of symbols that can invoke the physical or biological aspects common to human relationships.\footnote{Buber’s suggestion that even complete silence can be a dialogue still implies human experience which cannot take place without the physical aspects of human life and existence. Even if human dialogue can exist without signs, it cannot exist in an “objectively comprehensible form” (Martin Buber,\textit{ Between Man and Man}, 5).} This suggests that the evolution of communicative interaction and social
communication does not stop with dialogue as we know it, defined by its physical and biological context and characterized by its intentional and conscious structure. In these cases, dialogue pushes the limits commonly associated with its ‘I’-‘other’ relational structure. It minimizes its dependence on its usual physical and biological context by transcending language as a historical-signs system, but it never becomes completely detached from it, and certainly never loses a focus on the ‘other’ (whatever form that focus, and ‘other’ may take), and the ‘other’ never stops making demands on the ‘I’, nor does it stop forming it into being an ‘I’.

b) Complex language-games and the temporary absence of the ‘I’-‘other’ structure

A second reason for a possible absence of a permanent ‘I’-‘other’ structure from a language-game is due to the complexity of the language-game. In language-games with more than two participants, a direct ‘I’-‘other’ relational (dialogic) structure is not maintained all the time by all participants; yet, all remain participants of the language-game. For example, let us consider again the builder-assistant language-game, but this time not with two but with three participants: a builder and two assistants. The builder gives orders separately to each of them. At a certain hour, however, one of the assistants takes a lunch break. By doing so, while in principle still remaining a part of the team of builders and of the ongoing language-game, he is not paying attention to the builder, nor does the builder see, hear or communicate with him. While still part of the language-game, he temporarily falls out of the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of the dialogue.

This does not mean that complexity in itself will jeopardize the basic ‘I’-‘other’ structure of dialogue. Let us consider again the builder-assistant language-game, with three participants and, this time, no one is on a lunch break. When the builder calls out “Block!” either one or both assistants will get up and go to the same or two different locations and bring the same or different kinds of blocks and put them in the same or different places where the builder can reach
them. If the builder indicates which assistant he is addressing, for example, by looking at him, only that assistant responds to the call and, in this case, the identities of the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ are obvious. If, however, there is a rule-governed agreement between the two assistants as to who will respond to the builder’s call, and also when and how—for example, they respond to the call together, or in alternating order, or one looks after one item while the other looks after the other—then, they are the constitutive participants of another rule-governed human interaction or dialogue involving the two of them, and together as a ‘you’ (plural), they form the ‘other’ of the original dialogue. In other words—and this is true for any human interaction—when we encounter two or more people at any given time, we either consider them individually in their individual identity (individual aspects), or in their corporate individuality (corporate aspects), as members of a group organized and integrated by certain rules of interaction. We either see them as a singular ‘you’ or as a plural ‘you’. We simply cannot see them both in their individual and corporate aspects at the same time.

Inversely, when the assistants address the builder, they do so either independently, perceiving themselves as individuals (in their individual aspects), or as members of a group organized by rules (in their corporate aspect). In the first case, the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of the dialogue is clear. In the latter case, the ‘I’ will be replaced by the integrated subject (corporate ‘I’) of the first person-plural (‘we’). The builder, as a ‘you’ (singular), becomes the ‘other’. Both the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ can be either individual or corporate entities. Therefore, regardless of the number of people participating in a dialogue, the ‘I’-‘other’ structure can always be preserved.79

79 For this reason, the idea that a dialogue is possible simultaneously among three or more individuals, as suggested among others by Nikulin and Bohm, has to be qualified. The dialogue is always between an ‘I’ and one ‘other’, although both the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ can be more than one individual, integrated by another language-game. See Dimitri Nikulin, *On Dialogue*, 204-5, and David Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 6-7.
In conclusion, we can say the following: first, dialogue is a form of language-game that is rooted in a rule-governed (inter)action, that integrates all aspects and forms of communicative interactions and social communications that make up the physical, biological and human aspects of the language-game. Second, since communicative interaction (including different forms of social communication and dialogue) is a determining factor of all aspects of reality, we can say that dialogue is not only a universal form of human communication and the human condition, but that ‘to be’ is ‘to be in dialogue’. Third, the ‘I’-'other’ relationship is the basic structure of dialogue, and the ‘other’ in this relationship can refer either to another subject, to a sentient being, or to an inanimate object. Regardless of what category of being the ‘other’ belongs to, its treatment as a ‘you’ depends on the nature and quality of the relationship the ‘I’ has with that ‘other’, and not on the nature of the ‘other’. Finally, with the disintegration of the basic ‘I’-'other’ of its structure, a dialogue can collapse into a monologue where the ‘other’ is not felt, seen or heard.

What is Dialogue? Is a Definition Possible?

So far, I have considered the phenomenon and notion of dialogue in its conceptual diversity in the course of history, provided a brief overview of its etymology, and highlighted the persisting difficulty of arriving at a common understanding of what dialogue is. By comparing dialogue to Wittgenstein’s language-games, I introduced a new, non-foundationalist paradigm for its study. First, I indicated its character as a language-game with an ‘I’-'other’ structure. Then, I investigated its roots and prevalence, and how the different forms of interactions and communications (physical, social) are present, presumed and integrated in the ‘I’-'other’ dialogic


81 Dimitri Nikulin, Dialectic and Dialogue, x, 75. See also Nikulin, On Dialogue, 257, and David Bohm, On Dialogue, 7.
interaction. Subsequently, I discussed the nature of the ‘I’-‘other’ relationship as another important determinant of the nature of dialogue. Finally, I examined the dynamics of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic interaction and relationship as an ethical event, with justice as its necessary measure or requirement.

However, none of these investigations provided us with a definition of dialogue. If anything, they uncovered different basic paradigms, and a corresponding variety of approaches to, and understandings of, what dialogue is. For example, while Bakhtin, Buber and Levinas are working with an ontological approach and paradigm, Luckmann opts for a decidedly historical and evolutionary one. Whereas Nikulin thinks that dialogue implies equality, Luckmann maintains that dialogue is inherently asymmetrical. At the same time as Nikulin and Bakhtin maintain that dialogue is always rooted in oral speech, Buber, Levinas and Luckmann claim that oral speech is only one aspect or form of dialogue. Even as, for Gadamer, dialogue leads to consensus, dialogue is inherently allosensual for Bakhtin and Nikulin, and consensus would simply stop the dialogue. Although, for Gadamer, ‘conversation’ and ‘dialogue’ are interchangeable, for Luckmann, ‘dialogue’ leads to ‘conversation’. Finally, while, for Buber, dialogue is possible with inanimate objects, for Nikulin, it is not possible.82

When it comes to definitions, we encounter similar diversity. Bohm, while not providing an actual definition, provides a description of dialogue along the lines of “a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us … [that] will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding.”83 In a similar way, while

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82 A systematic, in-depth comparison of these authors’ respective ideas on this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Gadamer refers to dialogue in terms of a “fusion of horizons,” and describes some of its characteristics, he does not actually provide a definition for it. At the same time, Luckmann provides us with the following, which he calls a “purely formal” definition of dialogue: “[D]ialogue is sign-bound face-to-face communication which involves that high degree of immediacy and reciprocity which occurs when the streams of consciousness of the participants in social communication are fully synchronized.”

Nikulin, while he painstakingly avoids providing a definition of dialogue in his On Dialogue (giving a long description of the different aspects of dialogue, but not an actual definition), he gives the following definition in his Dialectic and Dialogue: “[D]ialogue is a process of meaningful yet unfinalizable allosensual exchange that can always be carried on without repetition of its content and that implies communication with other persons in the vocal expression of one’s own (but not ‘owned’) personal other.”

From these attempts to describe or define dialogue, we can conclude the following: first, there are authors (for example, Bohm) who do not even try to define what dialogue is. Second, we can see in Luckmann’s and Nikulin’s definitions that the words ‘communication’ and ‘exchange’, the main explanatory words (or undifferentiated genera) in their respective definitions, are simply synonyms for the words ‘interaction’ and ‘dialogue’ and, as such, are themselves in need of further definition. Third, the fact that the definitions can use different

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84 Gadamer, Truth and Method, 388.
86 It is meaningful at every moment and it always can be carried further (Nikulin, Dialectic and Dialogue, 77-78).
87 It refers to constructive, non-confrontational disagreement (Ibid., 78-79).
88 Ibid., 79.
synonyms as expressions of the same concept shows that each definition highlights a different shade of meaning of the word ‘dialogue’, suggesting a slightly different family resemblance among the dialogic actions each author attempts to define. Fourth, looking at the above description and definitions of dialogue, we realize that any attempt to provide a definition of dialogue is self-referential, because to describe or define ‘dialogue’, is a dialogue in itself. Since we are already involved in dialogue, we cannot make it an object of our investigation without constantly changing the progress of the investigation as our understanding of dialogue changes. Indeed, in our pursuit of a definition for dialogue, we are constantly interacting with past and present experiences of dialogue, with colleagues, and with authors discussing dialogue, which results in an unfinalizable process of dialogue. In our actions, then, we are already showing and demonstrating what a dialogue is.

Generally speaking, dialogue, like a language-game, is a rule-governed human activity and, as such, it does not have any other foundation or definition than performing the activity itself by following the rules that characterize the language-game, by playing the language-game and being engaged in dialogue. As there are countless forms of rule-governed human activities and language-games, there are equally many forms of dialogues, for example, conversing, arguing, dancing, sculpting a sculpture, preaching to birds like St. Francis, playing a musical instrument, breastfeeding a baby, talking to oneself, praying, contemplating, writing a thesis, playing the game of hockey, playing chess, talking to the dead, reading a novel, interacting with nature. Given the great variety of dialogues, permeating every aspect of human existence as its constituent parts, we are able to say with authors such as Bakhtin, Nikulin, Buber, Bohm and Levinas that: ‘to be’ is ‘to be in dialogue’, in which the ‘face of the other’ makes and forms the ‘I’.
Finally, there is also a more technical consideration for why defining dialogue is impossible. The definition of a word properly consists of a genus (wider class to which something belongs) and differentia (distinguishing features). In the case of defining dialogue, authors cannot even agree on a common genus, let alone on naming all the distinguishing features (differentia) that would accurately describe (define) all instances and forms of dialogue. Therefore, arriving at a commonly accepted definition of dialogue is simply unlikely. What we can do, short of formulating a definition, is establish family resemblances among forms of dialogue, based on the similarities between the rule-governed human activities that constitute them.

‘To Be’ is ‘To Be in Dialogue’ and Its Consequences

Based on the insights from the previous sections of this chapter, we can say that human beings, by virtue of their inherently relational nature, are made to interact and made by interaction with their environment, including their fellow human beings. As such, human beings are constantly involved on an existential level in a myriad of rule-governed human interactions or dialogues or, as Nikulin puts it, for human beings, “to be is to be in dialogue,” and since “a dialogue has to happen (italics mine) … to be is to be in a dialogical event.”89 By virtue of such interactions, human beings seek to satisfy their innate and fundamental openness to be and to be more with and by the ‘face of the other’ (Levinas). In the context of such rule-governed interactions or dialogues (with an ‘I’-‘other’ structure), to be and to be more, as a human being, means to be fully engaged in, and excel at, the practice of the rule-governed dialogic interaction the human being is involved in at any given moment. What this indicates is that the understanding of the nature of dialogue ought not to be sought at the level of theoretical

89 Nikulin, On Dialogue, 257.
reflection but at the level of practice (*how* to be and *how* to remain in dialogue). In other words, *dialogue or dialogic action precedes definition and theory*. Therefore, in order to understand better what dialogue is, our primary concern should be about becoming more skilled and practiced in dialogue, the event in which we are all involved by virtue of our being and the event that makes us who we are.

Theories about dialogue come about when the practice of a rule-governed human interaction or dialogue is impeded or its 'I'-'other' structure breaks down, and the ensuing difficulties need to be analyzed and explained in order to restore the dialogic relationship. Indeed, we do not first teach children the theory of walking or speaking when teaching them how to walk or speak. Instead, we simply do the walking and speaking with them during which time they learn how to walk or speak by imitating our actions. We use explanation (theory) only if they get confused in the process of imitation in order to help them become better at walking and speaking, and at learning and understanding how to avoid or overcome bad moves or habits.

Given the inherently actional nature of dialogue and that, when it comes to the study and understanding of dialogue, dialogic interaction precedes the theory articulating such interaction, our study of dialogue should not be concerned with trying to understand *what* dialogue is, but should be focused instead on an understanding of *how to go about* doing dialogue. Adopting such a Wittgensteinian approach to our inquiry into the nature of dialogue, our primary concern will be a better understanding of the nature of dialogic interactions for the purpose of identifying and removing the obstacles that hinder our practice and participation, as opposed to developing new theories or conceptual superstructures that people have to accept before they can engage in a

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90 There is a distinction to be made between ‘theory’ and ‘rule’. While theory answers questions of ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how’, a rule is a verbal or written expression of an event of imitation. For example, the rule ‘be respectful to others’ does not answer any questions about ‘why’, ‘what’ or ‘how’; it simply describes a behaviour pattern that ought to be imitated. I will discuss the issue of rule-following in the next chapter in more detail.
dialogic interaction with us. In other words, such a study of dialogue ought to facilitate a situation in which we can fully, and to the best of our abilities, engage in the dialogic interactions that determine our existence, so that we may have better lives, and become better human beings, to be and to be more.

A ‘Therapeutic’ Approach to Dialogue

What distinguishes dialogue from all other language-games is its ‘I’-‘other’ structure. Since, by virtue of our being, we are in dialogue, the most important feature of our ‘learning’ to dialogue (in the process of becoming who we are or ought to be) is to prevent any possible degeneration or disintegration of this dialogic structure. Earlier, we identified two major aspects of this dialogic ‘I’-‘other’ structure: following the rules of a rule-governed human interaction (being able to play or participate in a language-game), and justice (to give the ‘face of the other’ its due). In the case of following the rules of a human interaction, the focus is on the ‘I’ having the necessary ability or skills to act according to the rules which characterize and determine a particular language-game or dialogue. In the case of justice, the focus is on the ability of the ‘I’ to provide a proper response to the demand of the ‘face of the other’. Consequently, our efforts to preserve the integrity of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure ought to focus on rule following and giving justice, or more exactly, on what prevents us from following the rules of a rule-governed human interaction or dialogue and giving the ‘other’ his or her due.

A person’s ability to play or participate in a language-game is primarily due to skill, resulting from practice. A hockey player, for example, in order to participate in the language-game of ‘playing hockey’, needs to acquire certain physical and mental skills and stamina by imitating the moves and thinking of other skilled players and, by so doing, to learn to follow the rules of the game of hockey. For a successful appropriation of these skills, the learner must
remain focused on the ‘other’ instead of the ‘I’, and the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of the interaction must be maintained. Therefore, by imitation and much practice in following the rules of hockey, a person is made into a skilled hockey player by the ‘face of the other’.

In a similar way, in the case of giving the ‘other’ its due, the ‘I’ has to remain focused on the ‘other’ despite any promptings of personal feelings or attitudes to do the opposite. Personal feelings or attitudes that may prevent us from having a proper or ‘just’ reaction to the presence of the ‘other’ are by definition self-centering and, as such, may include ignorance, selfishness, greed, distrust, fear, hate. Due to the self-centering nature of these feelings and attitudes, they all have monological tendencies, and actions governed by them inevitably lead to further monological behaviour. Given that we can be either focused on ourselves or on the ‘other’, every human action is either ‘self’-centring or ‘other’-centring; each action turns a person either towards him- or her-‘self’, or towards the ‘other’. Identifying and changing a person’s self-centring feelings and attitudes are paramount for the maintaining of the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of a dialogic relationship.

The absence of these self-centring attitudes shines through when a little child, encountering the ‘face of the other’, reaches out and grabs the hand or finger offered to her with no hesitation, no fear and no expectation. She grips it so tightly that one wonders about the source of the strength in that tiny hand. When, however, she turns her attention to another ‘other’, she lets go of the finger cleanly, without hesitation or the slightest jerk, and turns her full and unreserved attention to the other ‘other’.

A karate master, after decades of practice and tens of thousands of repetitions of each technique, encounters the ‘face of the other’ in his opponent. He does not know what his opponent’s next move is going to be, but whatever it is, it will be a challenge. It will require of
him that he make the appropriate, clean, unhesitating response that does justice to the opponent’s move. For this, he must have the same openness and freedom in his response that the little child had when reaching for an ‘other’s’ hand or finger. His mind cannot be bewitched by fear, anger, over-confidence, or expectations that turn his attention towards himself, preventing him from seeing his opponent as the opponent is: the ‘other’ master who brings the best out of him, the ‘face of the other’ that makes him who he is, that is, a good karateka. Seeing his opponent in this way, he will have a clean response, without hesitation or the slightest jerk in his movement, as the presence of his opponent (the ‘face of the other’) demands of him.

In both of these examples, the operative idea is responding to the ‘face of the other’ cleanly, without hesitation or jerking, as justice demands (to give whatever the other’s due is). The difference between the two examples is that, while the child does what she does because she has not yet unlearned (for whatever reason) that fundamental other-centred, passive-active openness that is natural to human existence when encountering the ‘face of the other’, the karate master’s response is the result of the long and hard practice of re-learning, by ongoing rule-following activity, what he somehow managed to unlearn, that is, the child-like, other-centred attitude he once possessed.

Dialogue, then, as a human interaction (regardless of its form), structured by an ‘I’-‘other’ relationship, unfolds as an ongoing skillful practice of providing the proper (just) response when encountering the ‘face of the other’, in order to bring about a right relationship with that ‘other’. This constant practice, then, develops a person’s skills of participation in the rule-governed interaction of a language-game, and to use Wittgenstein’s image, it will “let the fly out of the fly bottle,” and clear the mind from the fettering or bewitching effects of attitudes such

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91 This basic attitude is the same with which, in the Christian experience, the individual approaches God in prayer.
as fear and hate. Dialogue, therefore, has a freeing and healing (therapeutic) effect that brings about a right relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’.

The Outcome of Dialogue

Having discussed the therapeutic nature of the practice of dialogue and how it effects its ‘I’-'other’ structure by bringing about a right relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’, we have to ask what other outcome dialogic interaction has? Every dialogic interaction, as a rule-governed activity, strives to realize its goal or purpose, and the hope is that, with sufficient practice, this goal and purpose will be realized more quickly and more fully. For example, in the case of the dialogic interaction of builders, this desired outcome would be a house that best resembles the plans according to which it was built. In the dialogic interaction of the language-game of hockey, the hoped-for outcome is for the players to play the best game possible and to decide who the better hockey team is. For Socrates, the goal of participation in a dialogue was to produce the best answers possible to certain philosophical questions. In these and similar examples of dialogic interactions, the common denominator is the ongoing practice of removing the inhibiting factors that prevent a better realization and understanding of how things are (the truth), according to the rules articulating the purpose and goal of a particular dialogic interaction. In other words, the general desire behind every dialogic interaction is arrival at the truth available in the context of a given dialogic interaction.

Instead of a Conclusion

Throughout the preceding explorations of the concept of dialogue, we have demonstrated that any study or theory of dialogue ought to lead to a better practice of dialogue. This better practice will not be achieved by introducing new layers of theory to be superimposed on the vast and complex web of dialogues we are continuously engaged in as part of being human. The
problem is not with theory, but with our ability to follow the rules of our already existing and unfolding practice. A better practice, therefore, will be achieved, through a constant and increased dedication to following the rules of existing practice, by eliminating those aspects of our dialogic relationships that undermine their ‘I’-‘other’ structure: obstacles such as fears, greed, obsessions and other unfreedoms that impede our interactions and that no one else can eliminate but us. This means that dialogue, as a constituent of human existence, cannot be relinquished to the experts alone. Instead, we all ought to become experts of dialogue by ever more practice in our personal dialogues. For example, in the area of doctrinal or interfaith dialogue, the participation of professional theologians does not relieve all Christians in their own professions of their duty to meet and engage someone from another denomination and/or faith in an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic and right relationship. What is important is that everyone engages in dialogue about faith-related issues in their respective capacity: a theologian as a theologian, a carpenter as a carpenter, an economist as an economist, and so on.

With ongoing practice, dialogic action becomes more and more simple, life-giving and, above all, unitive. Dance partners, after much practice, move, act and feel as one. This does not necessarily mean uniformity; nor does it exclude it. Such unity is established by the quality of the ‘I’-‘other’ relationship which, while not implying a necessary uniformity, must, in the least, be life-giving and freeing. I will take these insights into consideration in my thesis as I proceed with my investigation of the Council of Chalcedon as an event of dialogue.
Chapter II: On Knowledge, Certainty, and Truth, and Their Relation to Unity

In Chapter I, I proposed a ‘therapeutic’ approach for the uncovering and elimination of those aspects of human relationships that impede our capacity to know how to go about the practice of dialogue. This was in contrast to undertaking a systematic study of what dialogue is that would result in a comprehensive theory and a corresponding definition of dialogue. I demonstrated first that dialogue, as a rule-governed human interaction, is in effect a language-game with an ‘I’-‘other’ structure that, like other language-games, has countless forms and, as such, eludes description by a single definition. Second, I discussed the insight that dialogue, in its countless forms, is a constitutive element of human existence (“to be is to be in dialogue” and “not to be in dialogue is not to be at all”) and that dialogue is the event of our becoming who we are and who we ought to be through the ‘face of the other’ that ‘makes me I’. In other words, dialogue is not a social construct or invention; rather, it is the source of all social constructs and inventions. Third, I showed that any study of dialogue (any dialogue about dialogue) ought to be concerned with identifying and removing those aspects of our ‘I’-‘other’ relationships that impede our striving for excellence in our practice of (or being in) dialogue. Fourth, after highlighting how these dialogic relationships consist in rule-governed actions, I suggested a non-foundationalist understanding of dialogue: namely, that the only ground of our knowledge of what dialogue is consists in the action of doing the dialoguing itself. Fifth, I considered the role of justice (giving the ‘other’ what is his or her due) in maintaining and enhancing the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of dialogue and in being in dialogue. Finally, I explored briefly the outcome of dialogue as: ‘seeing things as they are’ or truth.

Building on this foundation now, I will discuss in this second chapter the relationships among dialogic interaction, knowledge, certainty and truth, and how these are related to unity. I
will propose that it is not the case that dialogue leads to truth, which in turn brings about unity; rather, it is dialogue—as a rule-governed interaction—that brings about unity, which in turn leads to the uncovering of truth (of how things are). I will do this by discussing Wittgenstein’s understanding of meaning and rule-following, by exploring his approach to knowledge and certainty and, subsequently, by considering his non-essentialist or deflationary approach to truth. Finally, I will examine how all of these contribute to the primacy of unity in a search for truth.

Setting the Scene

To situate and manage this complex series of issues more easily, let us consider Jastrow’s well-known duck-rabbit image and the experience of aspect-seeing or aspect-dawning as discussed by Wittgenstein.¹

As the image of the duck-rabbit appears to us by ‘breaking into’ our ‘field of vision’, and establishes the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of a dialogic interaction as a foot imposes an impression in wet sand, it engages our senses² and places a demand³ on the ‘I’. If, in our response, we (the ‘I’) give the ‘other’ what it deserves (its justice)—instead of ignoring, dismissing or ‘killing’ the


² Recent studies in cross-sensory experiences show that, when we look at an object, for example, at the duck-rabbit image, it is primarily our visual senses that are engaged, although we cannot completely separate and exclude our other sensory capacities from this visual experience. When engaged by an ‘other’, all of the senses of a person are engaged, even if to differing degrees. A more detailed investigation of the fast-growing field of cross-sensory experiences is beyond the scope of this thesis, but see, for example, Monica Gori, Giacomo Mazzilli, Giulio Sandini and David Burr, “Cross-Sensory Facilitation Reveals Neural Interactions between Visual and Tactile Motion in Humans,” Frontiers of Psychology 2 (April 2011): 1-9.

³ As discussed by Levinas. See above, pp. 38-9.
‘other’—we realize that we sometimes see a duck, and at other times a rabbit, even though the actual image (the ‘other’) remains unchanged. How can we account for the two different visual experiences, corresponding to the two different (duck and rabbit) aspects of the same, unchanging reality? According to Wittgenstein, the event of having a visual experience—the ‘dawning’ of the figure—of a duck or a rabbit while looking at the same image, lies between the event of seeing (which is a state), and the event of interpreting (which is an action), and only in part does it resemble each of these concepts.4

When our perception of the duck-rabbit image is closer to the event of seeing, the duck or rabbit aspect of the duck-rabbit image is unmistakably impressed upon us. This implies that seeing an aspect is not subject to our will. We cannot but acknowledge and report the undeniable presence of either a duck or a rabbit aspect to us, just as we cannot but acknowledge and report the redness of an apple when looking at a red apple. In seeing an aspect, the initiative does not lie with us, and our assumed role can be described as passive, open, vulnerable and dependent. Furthermore, seeing is a state with duration.

Interpretation, on the other hand, involves an active role and it consists in entertaining hypotheses about the nature and identity of the ‘other’—the perceived object that broke into our field of vision and remains the same. While interpreting, we not only notice the properties of the perceived object, but we notice these in the context of certain relations between them and the properties of other images or objects that make up their respective language-games and forms of life.

This shows that, in order to have a visual experience of the duck or rabbit aspect of the duck-rabbit image, we have to be “already conversant with the shapes of those two animals,”\(^5\) to inform our language and everyday life. This implies an active participation in the different language-games and corresponding forms of life which contain, describe, and make use of these shapes and images and what they represent. By participating in or playing a particular language-game and engaging in a particular form of life, we acknowledge, make use of, and live by, the rules which govern the relations between a given concept or image and other objects. This activity, in turn, provides us with a corresponding experience. Therefore, our ability to have the experience of seeing a duck or a rabbit, and to switch between these two experiences while observing the same, unchanging image of the duck-rabbit, consists in the person’s (the subject’s) actions of participating in the publicly accessible language-games, governed by publicly accessible rules, or as Wittgenstein puts it, “the substratum of experience is a mastery of technique.”\(^6\) Inversely, an inability (or unwillingness) to participate in a language-game results in the absence of a corresponding experience, that we can also refer to as aspect-blindness. For example, a colour-blind person cannot play the same game as a colour-sensitive person.\(^7\)

In sum, we can say that experiencing things as they are—whether by seeing, feeling, hearing, or something else—is a dynamic event occurring in the context of a relationship between an ‘I’ and an ‘other’. It is a participation in a dynamic interaction (among all relevant objects making up a particular language-game or form of life) which is defined and governed by a certain rule. Our following of the rules of a particular language-game and corresponding form

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\(^6\) Ibid., §208.

of life, constitutes the experiencing—seeing, feeling, hearing, etc.—of the ‘other’, as the ‘other’ is, in the context of that language-game and form of life. In short, our seeing and experiencing of the ‘other’ is rooted and consists in action.

This, however, means that the same object experienced or considered in two different language-games and in their corresponding forms of life, will have different uses and different corresponding meanings. Hence, people, conversant only in one or the other language-game would claim: “It is a rabbit!” or “It is a duck!” In light of such starkly differing claims, how can either of them be certain about the truth of their respective claims regarding the nature and identity of the perceived object? Could they come to a common agreement? If so, does this lead to relativism? Furthermore, if they can come to a common agreement, what is the process of arriving at such agreement? Having arrived at such agreement, is the truth about an observed object subject to, and a result of, a negotiated, rational agreement?

As we can see, the simple task of naming or identifying the object we referred to as a duck-rabbit by people, who have learned to refer to it in different language-games and corresponding forms of life, leads to significant difficulties. Therefore, in what follows, I will explore the above questions in a systematic way. First, I will discuss the nature and function of language-games and forms of life in relation to meaning and rule-following. Drawing on this discussion, I will look at the truth-value of the different propositions identifying the above-described Object (the duck-rabbit image). Subsequently, I will discuss whether this approach to naming, to truth and to certainty can lead to relativism. Finally, I will discuss the issue of unity, the nature and quality of the relationships establishing unity, and truth.
Language-Games, ‘Meaning Is Use’ and Rule-Following

a) Language-games and ‘meaning is use’  In Chapter I, I already introduced Wittgenstein’s concept of language-games as rule-governed human interactions, by discussing one of his well-known examples for language-games involving a builder and an assistant. Leaving the Tractarian picture theory of meaning behind him, in which the meaning of a word (name) is the object to which it refers, the later Wittgenstein developed the idea that the “meaning of a word is its use in the language.” This ‘use’ is a rule-governed activity or a language-game. Just as a game is considered a meaningful activity because of its discipline and rules, a language has meaning because of its discipline and rules, its constitutive grammar.

For example, understanding the meaning of the word ‘rabbit’ consists in sufficient familiarity with how to go about things when encountering the long-eared furry mammal commonly referred to in the English language as ‘rabbit’. Or, to use another example, understanding the word ‘table’, when referring to a four-legged wooden object, consists in knowing how to use it properly in the rule-governed human activity of ‘Having Dinner at a Table’. In other words, if someone keeps consistently referring to the image of the duck-rabbit only as a duck, or to the four-legged wooden object only as a bench (for example, by sitting on it), this person has no knowledge of the appropriate behaviour (what to think, how to feel or act) when encountering a rabbit or a table, respectively. Consequently, he or she does not understand the meaning of the word ‘rabbit’ or ‘table’.

When we consider these rule-governed human activities (games) and the corresponding language that describes them as language-games, the ‘moves’ in the context of these rule-


governed human activities function as propositions in a language-game.\textsuperscript{10} Therefore, an understanding of the meaning of the words ‘rabbit’ or ‘table’ consists in knowing how to use each word properly in the respective language-games of ‘Encountering a Rabbit’ or ‘Having Dinner at a Table’. Using a word properly means following the rules (grammar) of a language-game.

I have already indicated in the previous chapter that the number and range of such rule-governed human activities (games) is practically unlimited. This, of course, indicates that the number of language-games, as pointed out by Wittgenstein as well, is also limitless.\textsuperscript{11}

b) Rule-following is a key constitutive element of rule-governed activities or language-games, including dialogic interactions or dialogues. Having considered the ontological character of dialogue—“to be is to be in dialogue”—we can say that to participate in a language-game or dialogue is to participate in a rule-governed activity, or to follow a rule. In other words, by virtue of our being, we are rule-followers, and the question is not whether we are engaged in rule-following but whether we follow a particular rule or go against it. In addition, just as there are countless instances and forms of rule-governed activities (language-games and dialogues), there are also countless instances and types of corresponding rules\textsuperscript{12} and rule-followings.

Wittgenstein, in discussing how rule-following works, compares it to encountering and obeying a signpost. In making this comparison, he asks the questions, “[H]ow can a rule shew

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., §7.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., §23.

\textsuperscript{12} Wittgenstein never provides an actual definition of ‘rule’, but discusses it in connection with related or similar concepts, such as ‘practice’, ‘custom’, ‘institution’ and ‘skill’. See, for example, his \textit{Philosophical Investigations}, §199. He considers ‘rules’, as many other philosophical concepts, a family-resemblance concept, the meaning of which he insists on giving only in reference to similarities between paradigmatic examples [G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, \textit{Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 179].
What has the expression of a rule—say a signpost—got to do with my actions? What sort of connexion is there here?"¹³

To answer these questions, let us consider a signpost indicating “watch for crossing animals,” posted at the side of a road winding through a forest. A person familiar with signposts in general and traffic signs in particular, driving by the sign every morning, slows down and proceeds with caution. However, on Saturdays and Sundays, he not only slows down, but pulls over, stops his car and waits. His passenger asks him, “What are you doing? The sign only says ‘watch for animals’.” He replies, “Can’t you see? I am watching for animals.” Or, at another time, at the beginning of the annual hunting season, he drives on the road as usual, stops at the sign, gets out of the car, takes his weapons and starts hunting by ‘watching for animals’. If the passenger would start arguing with the driver at this point, saying, “But don’t you see, what the sign ‘really’ means is ...,” and giving an explanation why the driver should do such and such, she or he would be simply providing yet another interpretation that itself is subject to further interpretation. In other words, there could be countless interpretations of the sign and the rule indicated by it, and—as Wittgenstein puts it—“because every resulting course of action can be made out to accord with the rule,” in reality, “no course of action could be determined by the rule. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.”¹⁴ Where there is neither accord nor conflict, then, a rule stops being a rule and there is no rule-governed activity.

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¹⁴ This is a reformulation of what is commonly referred to as Wittgenstein’s ‘Rule-Following Paradox,’ which reads as follows: “This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule....And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here” (Ibid., §201).
The root cause of this problem, according to commentators,\(^{15}\) is the understanding of ‘rule’ as a ‘thing’—an abstract, reified metaphysical entity expressed by a sign or string of words (as understood in classical realism and Platonism). When understood as such, ‘rule’ is separated from the action of its execution or application. Therefore, the grasping of such an independently existing ‘rule-thing’ requires a tool, which is language. Since language in itself is a rule-governed activity constituted by a ‘rule’ and, as such, is subject to further interpretation, the ensuing infinite regress of interpretations undermines the rule’s normative character and the ‘rule’ ceases to be a rule. As Verheggen puts it, classical realism and Platonism are not the solution to the problem of loss of normativity and objectivity of rules,\(^ {16}\) and the scepticism\(^ {17}\) arising from it, but are its cause.

According to Wittgenstein, this infinite regress is due to the misunderstanding that the grasping of a rule consists in giving an interpretation of it, as opposed to exhibiting or showing its meaning in the specific actions of ‘obeying the rule’ or ‘going against it’.\(^ {18}\) Therefore the solution to the epistemological problem of how a rule and its execution and/or application are connected (our initial question) cannot consist in providing yet another explanation and interpretation; rather, it ought to consist in the problem’s elimination or dissolution through grasping the rule, simply following it in action. This action of rule-following, however, is rooted in training—“I have been trained to react to this sign in a particular way, and now I do so react to it”—which means that, since I can be trained only by someone other than me, training and rule-


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 292.

\(^{17}\) See the discussion in, for example, Saul Kripke’s *Wittgenstein: On Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

following is only possible in the context of a rule-following community, where there exists a regular use of the rule, a custom.\textsuperscript{19}

Since it is ultimately community training that connects the rule and its correct application by enabling a person to grasp the rule through following it correctly, it is also the community (for example, the majority of its members or the opinion of its trusted experts) that provides the normative and/or objective standards for such a correct following of the rule. Can the community be trusted? What happens when the whole community is in error, for example, when the magician convinces her whole audience that the rabbit is in her hat while, in actuality, it is in her pocket? This seems to indicate that the normativity and objectivity of community standards for a correct following of a rule—whether established by the community’s trusted experts, by the majority of its members or unanimously by the whole community—only applies to the members of that particular community, and it fails to address the possible disparity of normative standards between different communities, potentially resulting in a different following (grasping) of the same rule (sign) encountered by the members of those communities. We seem to be back at our initial problem and question concerning the connection between a rule and its application. Can Wittgenstein’s groundbreaking insight regarding ‘meaning is use’ not provide us after all with an adequate alternative to Platonism and classical realism?

It seems that central to this issue is our understanding of the function of ‘community agreement’, namely, does ‘community agreement’ refer to an invention or creation of rules, or to an agreement about obeying particular identifiable rules or going against them? In other words, are rule-governed practices invented by community agreements, as social constructs, or are they inherent constitutive aspects of (human) existence, independent of human creative capacities

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., §198, §202.
and, as such, recognized and decided upon by the community as beneficial or not, as something to go by, or against?

In answering this question, I will recall our earlier discussion of dialogue. In Chapter I, in reference to Luckmann’s view that dialogue has evolved from more primitive, pre-linguistic forms of social communication, I concluded that dialogue, as a specific form of social communication, incorporates and seamlessly integrates all previous forms of communicative interaction. Since all these interactions are governed or constituted by corresponding rules, linguistic rules also incorporate and seamlessly integrate non-linguistic rules of interactions characterizing both the sentient and non-sentient world. Consequently, because of their seamless integration, the different kinds of rules form an integrated continuum and, as such, are interdependent with one another. For example, when a child is learning the rule of ‘holding a spoon properly’, she does so not in a vacuum, but in specific circumstances and in relation to other activities, objects and events in her environment, in the context of a form of life. In other words, the child is engaged in a dialogue (a language-game, with an ‘I’–‘other’ structure) with a spoon, in the context of a form of life, where she is trained by her parents (together with the combined physical, biological, emotional and cognitive aspects of her whole environment) to hold the spoon right side up and in this or that hand, so that when she encounters a spoon, she can successfully engage in the rule-governed activity of ‘holding the spoon properly’.

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20 See above, p. 18.

21 In my references to children’s acting, learning and knowing in this thesis, I am emulating the sense in which Wittgenstein frequently refers to the same issues both in his Philosophical Investigations (for example, §§5-9) and in his On Certainty, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper & Row, 1969; repr., New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), (for example, §§ 159-161, 534-536). It is worth pointing out that, while Wittgenstein does not discuss topics specifically related to child development and children’s education, his basic insight about children’s actions due to imitation (as they participate in language-games), preceding rational consideration, is also supported by current research. An overview of some of this research is to be found in Emily J. H. Jones and Jane S. Herbert, “Imitation and the Development of Infant Learning, Memory and Categorization,” Revue de Primatologie 1 (November 2009), accessed August 12, 2017, http://primatologie.revues.org/236; DOI: 10.4000/primatologie.236.
In a similar way, when the driver encounters the road sign ‘watch for crossing animals’, and slows down while proceeding with caution and watching out for animals, the rule he is acting by assumes and seamlessly integrates a whole series of rules involving the physical, biological, emotional and cognitive realities of which he is a part with his whole being, such as the complex physical, biological, emotional and cognitive interactive process of seeing the road sign and manipulating the controls of the car. His grasping of the rule of ‘watch for crossing animals’, through his action (of following the rule), does not ‘hang in the air’, so to speak; rather, it is embedded in a form of life (with its constitutive rules and corresponding interactions) that is, on the one hand, independent of him (he can go by or against the rule), and on the other, that shapes his ability or makes it possible for him to go by or against the rule.22

Therefore, while the possible ways to grasp (follow) a rule are virtually ‘countless’, as we have seen, all these possible grasps of (ways of following) the rule are rooted in, and integrated with, reality, a form of life (with its constitutive interactions and corresponding rules) that is independent of us, and yet of which we are a part, and that forms a continuum with our actions. Wittgenstein calls this the natural history of human life and experience.23 However, while this reality or form of life creates space, and grounds our rule-following actions, it also shapes and

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22 Verheggen, in her discussion of what makes agreement possible, gives the outlines of a ‘contextually realist’ (my words) account of rule-following in the context of linguistic practice: “[O]ur linguistic practices are themselves based on facts external to us, facts to which we can all have access but which are independent of us” and so “not only does it make no sense to think of meaning as being grounded by something independent of our practices, it also makes no sense to think of our practices as being independent of what makes them possible” (Verheggen, “Wittgenstein’s Rule-Following Paradox,” 305-6.) This is a similar, yet different, approach to my proposed account of rule-following in terms of dialogic interactions (following Luckmann), language-games and forms of life (as we will see below). I did not encounter similar thoughts in other authors that I had the opportunity to consult. A more detailed study of this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.

limits them. For example, the child encountering a spoon cannot simply start hovering over the table as a way of obeying the rule of ‘holding a spoon properly’. In a similar way, the driver, as he encounters the sign ‘watch for crossing animals’, cannot grow grass from his ears as a form of going by the sign. These options would not be grounded in, or supported by, their respective forms of life or natural histories, regardless of any community agreement. At the same time, all the other options for grasping the above two rules, such as, holding the spoon hollow-side up, or in one’s left or right hand, or slowing down and proceeding with caution, or pulling over, or starting a hunt, are supported by their respective independent and complex realities, their respective forms of life. Consequently, these are possible ways of obeying the given rule or sign and, as such, they are not created or invented by community agreement.

It is important to realize that, when a community arrives at an agreement about following a certain rule (for example, by accepting the words of trusted experts, by majority vote or unanimous agreement), saying, ‘this is simply what we do’, it is not an agreement about an abstract reified entity existing independently from its application and/or its expression by a string of words or a sign; rather, it is an agreement about a practice, about an institution, and a form of life, meaning ‘this is simply how we live.’ A failure to make such a distinction will only reintroduce the problem of lack of normativity (of rules) discussed above. If, however, such a distinction is preserved and agreement about a rule or a sign is considered as an agreement about a practice, institution, or form of life, the normativity of rules will be maintained.

From our discussion thus far, we can see that the connection between the rule and its application—the grasping of the rule—consists in the action of obeying it, which is a result of

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24 A community’s agreement about one particular practice and institution, and going against other practices and institutions in a given language-game and corresponding form of life, does not deny the existence of other possible practices and institutions in other language-games and corresponding forms of life. See my further discussion of this at the end of this chapter.
practice and training. Furthermore, we have also seen that the normativity of the rule is rooted in action and that a community’s agreement about following a certain rule and going against others in a given language-game and form of life is agreement about practice and not about a concept. This primordial centrality of action in following a rule is further demonstrated by the insight that it is not the case that we derive action from the rule, but that consistent action first creates a space for the rule to emerge; second, it shows and/or demonstrates the rule. For example, a pianist looking at a musical score is able to follow the instructions (rules) of the composer because her training and skills have created a space in which the notes come alive, so to speak; thus, her playing demonstrates the rules to her audience. If she had no training and skills whatsoever in playing the piano, or music in general, she could not even grasp what the score was about, let alone follow and demonstrate the rules contained in it by playing the piece.

Despite the well-founded claims of this insight, however, one could argue that there are many rules that are first decided—abstractly, as it were—and only then learned and practiced. For example, governments frequently formulate new laws concerning taxation, trade, traffic and the implementation of human rights and equality, just to name a few. Composers create new music with new notation. Church councils introduce new laws concerning doctrine and liturgical practice. It is after their abstract formulation, one can argue, that these laws are put into practice, often accompanied by a variety of coercive measures.

While these claims affirm the formulations of new rules, a closer look at them shows that the newly formulated rules do not introduce previously unknown forms of behaviour that are alien to, or outside of, the context of what came before. The introduction of taxation simply extends the sharing of personal wealth with individuals outside a person’s own family. Traffic laws only organize existing movements of vehicles and peoples, and composers simply regroup
existing notes, revise or reshape forms and develop the techniques of instrument use to express, in music, human contexts waiting to be articulated. Finally, Church councils highlight existing forms of human behaviour as communally appropriate or normative for expressing relationships with God and neighbour. Therefore, such abstract formulations of rules do not question the primordial centrality of action in following a rule.

A centrality of action, as discussed above, implicitly means a centrality of skill. More practice results in greater skill which, in turn, results in more effective or accomplished action, or grasping and following the rules without much thinking or hesitation. The most effective rule-following occurs when the action of following a particular rule becomes second nature to us, a part of who we are or, as Wittgenstein puts it, when we “obey the rule blindly.”\textsuperscript{25} For example, in the case of the pianist, this ‘blindness’ with regard to the rules has two aspects. First, if she is very well practiced, she will play the notes from memory without physically looking at the score and, in her actions (playing), she will exhibit or show the rules to her audience. Second, she will play the notes with a high level of spontaneity that will likely exceed a mere following of the mental picture she may possess of the arrangement of the notes in the score.\textsuperscript{26}

Next to obeying a rule blindly due to skill, there is another situation where we might engage in blindly following a rule, namely, in a novice-master relationship.\textsuperscript{27} In this case, the ‘blindness’ is the result of a complete lack of skill rather than great skill in rule-following. Blindly following a rule (of the master’s instructions) in this instance is the result of a complete trust and dependence that the novice assumes and exhibits in his relationship with the master.


\textsuperscript{26} While musicians learn and memorize music differently, the more practiced they are, the less attention they have to give to every detail and notation on the score because these have been appropriated so well.

When the master says, “Do such and such,” the novice does “such and such” without question and hesitation: he follows the rules blindly.

The crucial element common to both of these instances of following a rule blindly is trust. In the first case, it is a trust in one’s own skill, while, in the second case, it is a trust in the master’s skills in following a rule, or playing a language-game in the context of a corresponding form of life.

A final point that needs to be addressed concerning rule-following is its teleological aspect and its relationship to normativity. As we have seen, rules are constitutive aspects of language-games, including dialogic interactions. Since both language-games and dialogic interactions can also be described as rule-governed activities embedded in corresponding forms of life, rule-following always points beyond itself to something larger than itself. This ‘larger-than-itself’ reality—be it a goal, context or purpose to which rule-following points—shapes and limits the normativity of rule-following. It also facilitates the possibility for the rule-follower to excel in following the rule. For example, the pianist wants to excel in conveying a musical experience, the hockey player wants his team to win, and a Christian wants to become a more Christ-like person.

Regarding rule-following, then, these summary observations can be made: First, contrary to classical realism and Platonism, grasping the meaning of a sign or rule does not consist in an intellectualist interpretation or discernment of abstract reified entities expressed in words or signs, but in the action of obeying it; second, we come to obey a rule through a process of learning or training, by being trained in a custom or social practice; third, the grasping of a rule (through ‘use’ and ‘practice’) is embedded and integrated in a form of life; fourth, community agreement does not create or make rules, but discerns whether to obey or go against a given,
identifiable rule, shaped by the context of a form of life; fifth, our agreed-upon actions and corresponding language-games and forms of life are family-resembling and, as such, form a continuum with existing language-games and forms of life; finally, there is a primordial centrality of action, which means that it is not the case that we can derive action from rules; rather, it is the case that training, resulting in skilled action, provides space for, and demonstrates, the rule.

Instead of providing a conclusion to this short overview of the nature and function of language-games, forms of life and rule-following, well summed up by Wittgenstein’s seminal insight that the meaning of a word or rule consists in its use, I would like to highlight another question. As we have seen, when the above-mentioned duck-rabbit image and, later, a wooden object, are referred to, or grasped by sets of different rules (of corresponding language-games and forms of life), both will inevitably acquire correspondingly different meanings. This, however, raises fundamental questions about the universality of truth and meaning. Is it possible to grasp the true identity of elements of reality, such as the duck-rabbit image and the wooden object, or will human beings forever struggle with irreconcilable, deep divisions due to the confines of their respective language-games and forms of life? Does this lead to relativism? Is conflict unavoidable?

In order to address these questions in more detail, I will now discuss how one arrives at determining the truth-value of propositions, which describe objects with multiple aspects, uses and (perceived) identities within a language-game, in the hope that this will yield helpful insights for answering the question about the possibility of truth concerning such objects, when they are considered from the perspective of multiple language-games. I will first discuss the notions of ‘belief’, ‘certainty’, and ‘trust’, and their roles in uncovering ‘how things are’ (truth) in the
context of a particular language-game and form of life. Next, I will consider the differences among ‘empirical’, ‘grammatical’, and ‘hinge’ propositions and their roles in differentiating ‘knowledge’ and ‘certainty’. This will be followed by a treatment of Wittgenstein’s non-foundationalist approach to truth.

Belief, Certainty, and Trust

How does a child growing up in a home arrive at the knowledge that, for example, the above-mentioned four-legged wooden object is a table? Does he one day look at it and make a conscious decision to believe that yes, the object everybody is referring to as ‘table’ is in fact a table? Wittgenstein would suggest something different. In his view, the child gradually grows in awareness of his environment as a whole, believing simultaneously that the object referred to as a table is a table, that the opening in the wall referred to as a door is in fact a ‘door’, and that the whole room, the whole house, is what it is said to be: a ‘room’ and a ‘house’. Wittgenstein puts this as follows:

> When we first begin to believe anything, what we believe is not a single proposition, it is a whole system of propositions. (Light dawns gradually over the whole.)

In other words, the child learns to believe a great number of things concurrently, and he learns these things by acting according to the rules expressing these beliefs. He will sit next to the table and eat from it. He will walk through the door, opening and closing it, and live and function in the room and the house just as the rest of the family does. Whatever he accepts as true about his environment, he does so not because the individual nature of each item (for example, the ‘tableness’ of the table—in the Aristotelian sense) has become so overwhelmingly obvious and

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29 “Children do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc.,—they learn to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc. etc.” (Ibid., §476).
convincing for him, but rather because all the other things in the house surround or provide a context for the table.

When the child accepts with certainty that the table is a table, he does so because he continues to live his life according to what it means for a table to be a table. In other words, the certainty and the truth of the proposition “This is a table” is not grounded in a ‘deeper truth’ or outside evidence, but in the actions of the child and his family who, all along, have been consistently and decisively following the rules of their daily rule-governed behaviour, using a table in everyday life.

Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end;—but the end is not certain propositions’ striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting which lies at the bottom of the language-game.30

The parents tell the child to “come and sit at the table,” not to “come and sit at what is perhaps a table.” If the parents were not consistent in their actions and certain in their knowledge that the Object at which they had their meals was a table, the child could not learn to act and know with certainty that the Object at which he is having his meals is a table, and he could not learn the innumerable language-games involving the table. Quoting Goethe, Wittgenstein sums it up in this way: “In the beginning was the deed.”31

Such a practice or deed, however, presumes a fundamental trust towards what the action is about. As Wittgenstein puts it, “[A] language-game is only possible if one trusts something (I did not say ‘can trust something’).”32 When one trusts in this way, one has no thoughts about

30 Ibid., §204.
31 Ibid., §402.
32 Ibid., §509.
In other words, it does not occur to the child to check out whether it is really a table he is approaching before sitting down for dinner. He simply sits next to the table and eats from it. This simple unreserved act of trust enables him to participate in the rule-governed human activity of ‘Having Dinner at a Table’ and in the corresponding language-game.

**Empirical, Grammatical, and ‘Hinge’ Propositions**

Propositions such as “I am sitting at the table” or “This is my hand” seem to be empirical propositions like “The table is two feet wide” or “The store opens at six,” but they are also different in an important way. Since empirical propositions are either true or false, they are subject to investigation regarding their truth and falsity. In everyday experience, however, we do not subject to investigation propositions such as “I am sitting at a table,” while having dinner at a table, or “This is my hand,” while reaching for a glass, because it would disrupt our ability to play the language-game of ‘Having Dinner at a Table.’ Such propositions are not subject to investigation and/or verification. Rather, they function as grammatical propositions or rules which do not state truths about the nature of things, but which govern the use of their constituent expressions. In other words, they do not assert that I am sitting at the table or that this is my hand, but they indicate how I must act while participating in the language-game of ‘Having Dinner at a Table’, what my body position should be in relation to the table and how I can bring the glass to my mouth to drink. Hence, as such, these propositions are neither true nor false. They are either trusted (accepted), and acted upon, or rejected.

Some propositions of the empirical kind, then—and not only logical and grammatical propositions—are trusted and accepted through and by one’s training in rule-governed activity. These become immutable laws, part of the scaffolding of our thoughts, and they “form the

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33 Ibid., §510.
foundation of all operating with thoughts (with language).”

It is against this foundation or background that all other propositions will be judged true or false, while these propositions themselves, as grounding propositions, are not subject to judgement of truth or falsity.

Wittgenstein calls these hinge propositions:

[T]he questions that we raise and our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn.

We just can’t investigate everything, and for that reason we are forced to rest content with assumption. If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put.

Does this mean that our language contains a set number of hinge propositions? No, the status of the hinge propositions is not permanent. For example, when participating in the rule-governed human activity and corresponding language-game of ‘Having Dinner at a Table,’ the proposition “I am sitting at the table” is going to be a hinge proposition because, while I am having dinner at a table, it is assumed that I am sitting at the table. However, if we play another language-game called “Where Do I Sit?” and the objective of this language-game is for a blindfolded person to find out where he or she is sitting, the same proposition is not going to be a hinge proposition. In this case, the proposition “I am sitting at the table” will be an empirical one, subject to verification regarding its truth and falsity.

To say of man, in Moore’s sense, that he knows something; that what he says is therefore unconditionally the truth, seems wrong to me. – It is the truth only inasmuch as it is an unmoving foundation of his language-games.

34 Ibid., §211, §401-2, §512.

35 Ibid., §94.

36 Ibid., §205.

37 Ibid., §341.

38 Ibid., §343.

39 Ibid., §403. Wittgenstein had a long-standing interest in G. E. Moore's “A Defence of Common Sense” (1929) and “Proof of an External World” (1939). While visiting Norman Malcolm in Ithaca during the last eighteen
As Robert G. Brice points out, there are hinge propositions referred to by Wittgenstein in

*On Certainty* “that reside at the bottom of a particular language-game” (particular hinge propositions) and there are other hinge propositions “that reside at the bottom of the language-game”\(^{40}\) (general hinge propositions). For example, “I am sitting at the table” is at the bottom of a particular language-game and Brice refers to it as a “particular hinge proposition,” while the proposition “I am a human being” would be at the bottom of all language-games as a “general hinge proposition.”\(^{41}\) Wittgenstein considered these propositions to simply [get] assumed as truism[s], never called into question, perhaps not even ever formulated. It may be for example that *all enquiry on our part* is set so as to exempt certain propositions from doubt, if they are ever formulated. They lie apart from the route travelled by enquiry.\(^{42}\)

**Knowledge and Certainty**

While playing a certain language-game, I am *certain* about the content of the hinge propositions, and this certainty is expressed in my ability to act or to play the language-game. The question arises, then, whether being certain of the content of a hinge proposition, while playing a language-game, also means that I *know* its content. In other words, is ‘being certain’ the same as ‘knowing’?

When I say “Today is Monday,” I express my knowledge of what day it is today. But what if I have made a mistake and it is actually Tuesday and not Monday? Then people will correct me and they will conclude that I made a mistake. Now, if I look at my hand while I am...
holding a glass to toast a friend and say “This is not my hand,” people will think I am demented. Both propositions pronounce a judgement and both are in error but, while the first one is considered a mere mistake, the second one elicits a swift and dramatic judgement regarding the speaker’s mental state. Why the difference? When someone makes a mistake, it still fits with what that person knows correctly in general. In other words, when a person makes a mistake, he or she is still able to play the language-game. However, when one is insufficiently certain about a hinge proposition, one stops being able to play the language-game.

In general, we can say that knowledge must have grounds in a language-game and must be supported by evidence present in a language-game. However, we do not have grounds or evidence for certainty other than our actions, willed and unfolding according to the rules of a language-game. Knowledge also must be subject to testing, to making sure and to verification, which is part of the language-game itself. Since these activities can yield positive or negative results, our knowledge must be open to doubt. Certainty, on the other hand, cannot tolerate doubt because it is itself groundless: it is rooted in action and not in cognition. “[T]he end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting.” Therefore it does not make sense to try to give grounds to something that is groundless.

When Wittgenstein states that certainty is rooted in ‘acting’, he is not referring to past actions as constituent facts of our form of life. Rather, he stresses the enacted nature, a kind of

43 Ibid., §110.


45 Certainty may be caused or originated by experience; however, it is not grounded in or justified by experience. See Wittgenstein, On Certainty, §§131, 429.
unreasoned, unhesitating, “animal” nature\textsuperscript{46} of our fundamental beliefs or certainty that cannot be meaningfully said, only shown or exhibited by action.\textsuperscript{47} Consequently, certainty is not a form of life, but a pre-reflective action, and as such, it precedes uncertainty. We tend to entertain the concept of certainty only in the light of its absence, when encountering or experiencing uncertainty. Uncertainty, then, as a lack or absence of certainty, is exhibited in lack of action or inability to act due to hesitation.

The groundlessness of certainty does not mean that certainty is unreasonable. On the contrary, there are very good reasons why we are certain about a particular thing. These reasons need not be articulated and it would be counterproductive to do so. Furthermore, even if articulated, such reasons would not constitute evidence.\textsuperscript{48} For example, when I am raising my glass for a toast, I have very good reasons not to doubt that the hand holding up the glass is mine (for example, I can see my hand holding the glass), but I do not need to recall these (good) reasons while holding the glass and giving a toast, because my certainty regarding my hand holding the glass is assumed by my action, and such questioning would only disrupt my ability to play the language-game of ‘Having Dinner at a Table’ (and offering a toast). However, even if I were to question the identity of the hand holding the glass, my ‘good reason’ that I can see that my hand is holding the glass could also be questioned: How do I know that my eyesight is correct? In other words, my ‘good reasons’ do not provide evidence.

\textsuperscript{46}“But that means I want to conceive it as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal. I KNOW that this is my foot. I could not accept any experience as proof to the contrary.—That may be an exclamation; but what follows from it? At least that I shall act with a certainty that knows no doubt, in accordance with my belief” (Wittgenstein, \textit{On Certainty}, §§359-360).


Is this certainty subjective or objective certainty? According to Wittgenstein, certainty can be either objective or subjective.\textsuperscript{49} In the case of subjective certainty, we simply display complete conviction and absence of any doubt and, through this, we seek to convince others. Some authors, as outlined by Carol Caraway, equate subjective certainty with knowledge.\textsuperscript{50} However, as Caraway points out, this is a misinterpretation of Wittgenstein’s remarks: Wittgenstein clearly states that subjective certainty does not require grounds, while knowledge does.\textsuperscript{51} Because knowledge requires grounds, if sufficient grounds are missing, our knowledge is shown to be mistaken. Subjective certainty, however, does not require grounds and cannot be mistaken. Therefore, when subjective certainty is shown to be lacking sufficient reason, what is shown is not a mistake, but a lack of certitude.

In the case of objective certainty, doubting is unintelligible. “We are … objectively certain of something when doubting it is unintelligible in such a way as to make it impossible to understand what it would be to be mistaken—which is what it is for a mistake to be logically excluded.”\textsuperscript{52} In short, in the first case, mistakes as lack of certitude are possible; in the second case, mistakes are logically excluded. For example, I could feel certain, but be mistaken that today is Monday (when it is Tuesday), and if I am adamant enough, I could even convince others about it, but when sufficient reason is shown, my certainty can change. In contrast, it would be impossible to imagine who else’s hand it could be that holds up my glass while I am giving the toast.


\textsuperscript{50} Carol Caraway, “Is Wittgenstein’s View of the Relationship between Certainty and Knowledge Consistent?” \textit{Philosophical Investigations} 1, no. 4 (October 1978): 17.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 17-18.

\textsuperscript{52} Stoutland, 205.
As we have seen in this short overview, the difference between knowledge and certainty is clear: the first is grounded in a language-game and a corresponding rule-governed human activity; the second is groundless in this sense, but ‘grounded’ only in one’s actions. In other words, knowledge and certainty belong to different categories.\(^{53}\) What is common in these two ‘groundings’ is their fundamentally non-essentialist nature. The difference between the two is that, while the first involves a complex set of life situations with its rules and actions, the second is constituted by one’s ability, will and decision to act, and action itself. In the section which follows, I will discuss whether this constitutes a new foundationalism.

Prior to this, however, I will further highlight the importance of maintaining a distinction between knowledge and certainty. Staying with the example of giving a toast during a dinner, let us consider the following situation: When I am about to give a toast and I introduce my actions with the words, “I am raising my glass in my hand to …,” but a friend suddenly interrupts me, saying, “Actually, it is not your hand. Remember? You lost your hand in an accident. You received that hand through a hand transplant, and it used to belong to ….” Now, if my knowledge were the same as my certainty regarding the identity of my hand, my friend’s unexpected remark would likely cause hesitation on my part and disrupt my action due to lack of certainty. If, however, I continue my free-flowing action of raising the glass and giving a toast without hesitation, I will demonstrate my certainty about my bodily integrity (that the hand raising the glass is my hand), despite a rational consideration (knowledge) of my personal history involving an accident and a hand transplant (how the hand raising the glass is my hand). If I continue to demonstrate my certainty through my actions that ‘This is my hand’, I will retain my openness to consider and discuss seemingly competing pieces of information about how it is

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possible that ‘This is my hand’. A lack of such a distinction between certainty and knowledge may become a serious obstacle to seeing things as they are (truth) in the context of dialogue, including religious dialogue.\textsuperscript{54}

\textbf{Wittgenstein’s New Kind of Foundationalism}

Brice points out that some authors, such as A. C. Grayling, have misinterpreted Wittgenstein’s ‘hinge-propositions’ as a form of propositional foundationalism.\textsuperscript{55} While some earlier remarks in \textit{On Certainty} may contribute to such mistaken interpretations, remarks 204 and 205 (already cited, but repeated here) clearly set the record straight, and unmistakably connect hinge-propositions with action:

\begin{quote}
Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end;—but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of \textit{seeing} on our part; it is our \textit{acting}, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not \textit{true}, nor yet false.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

Elsewhere, Wittgenstein says:

\begin{quote}
Why do I not satisfy myself that I have two feet when I want to get up from a chair? There is no why. I simply don't. This is how I act;\textsuperscript{57}
Sure evidence is what we \textit{accept} as sure, it is evidence that we go by in \textit{acting} surely, acting without any doubt.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

According to Brice, Wittgenstein moves away from a propositional certainty to a certainty based on, and manifested in, action.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{54} For example, if the \textit{certainty} that Jesus Christ is, at the same time, perfect in his humanity and perfect in his divinity (as stated at the Council of Chalcedon) is mistaken for \textit{knowledge} about how he could be so, then a disagreement in the \textit{how} may be interpreted as the doubting or rejection of the \textit{that}.

\textsuperscript{55} Brice, 4-5.

\textsuperscript{56} Wittgenstein, \textit{On Certainty}, 204-5.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., §148.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., §196.

\textsuperscript{59} Brice, 4-5.
Danièle Moyal-Sharrock argues that, although this action-manifested certainty is a unique kind of foundationalism, it does not generate an “ahistorical metaphysical framework;” it is “anthropo-logical;” it is a contextual, historical and a “human-bound foundationalism.” Consequently, the logical necessity embedded in this foundationalism “sheds its metaphysical, metahuman features, and becomes an Einstellung, an unhesitating attitude.”

Brice believes Moyal-Sharrock wrongly identifies the logical necessity resulting from this human-bound foundationalism as a re-formed logical necessity by Wittgenstein. As he points out, Wittgenstein distinguishes between an “ordinary kind of logical necessity that occurs in the language-game of logic, and an odd or ‘peculiar’ kind of necessity, non-ratiocinated and non-propositionalised, that operates outside of, or ‘below’ these language-games.” This peculiar necessity or unhesitating attitude is actually prior to the language-game of logic and it is a necessary condition for it. It is an instinctual, animal-level conviction that manifests itself in, and underpins, the rule-following activities of our forms of life.

A second author discussed by Brice is Avrum Stroll, who contrasts Wittgenstein’s foundationalism with traditional foundationalism. According to Stroll, what is identified as ‘foundational’ by traditional foundationalists, belongs to the same category as the items depending on them. For example, “the cogito [‘I think, therefore I am’] is a piece of knowledge, though more fundamental than certain other pieces of knowledge that depend on it.”


61 Ibid., 133-4.

62 Brice, 8.

63 Ibid., 8-9.

64 This is quoted in Brice, 12. See also Avrum Stroll, Moore and Wittgenstein on Certainty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 141.
Wittgenstein rejects traditional foundationalism. While he acknowledges that pieces of knowledge depend on certainty, he maintains that knowledge and certainty belong to different categories. Exploring this difference, Brice contrasts Stroll’s reference to traditional foundationalism as “homogeneous,” with what he calls “non-homogeneous foundationalism.” People belonging to the first group identify what is ‘foundational’ as items belonging to the same category as the items that depend on them. Alternatively, the non-homogeneous or heterogeneous foundationalists identify two different categories: “propositional knowledge and non-propositional, non-ratiocinated action, where the latter offers ‘foundational’ support for the former.”

Building on some of the insights of the above three authors, Brice contends that Wittgenstein, as one of his final contributions in On Certainty, made a distinction between a great variety of language-games and their “actional support” (certitude), where “[e]ach and every language-game assumes non-propositional, actional foundations.” These actional foundations of the new, non-propositional foundationalism introduced by Wittgenstein are: a) inherently dynamic (they consist in action) as opposed to static, and b) non-essential as opposed to essential. As such, one could refer to them as a groundless (‘thing-less’) grounding (event, deed).

Truth and Falsity

The above insight about the actional grounding of language-games and, consequently, of the actional grounding of meaning and knowledge, is paramount to the understanding of Wittgenstein’s account of truth and falsity. A child learning her first words from her parents will

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65 Wittgenstein, On Certainty, §308.
67 Ibid., 12.
68 Ibid., 14-15.
not wonder whether they are telling her the truth about a table being a table, a door being a door or a house being a house. Indeed, a child, by trusting her parents in and through imitating their actions, first learns about her environment through participating (acting) in a variety of language-games (such as eating at a table, walking through a door, and living in a house) and corresponding forms of life. Her interaction and dynamic relationship with her parents becomes the most basic ‘hinge proposition’ or source of certainty that grounds all her other present and future actions and learning. To put it differently, as the child participates in her first language-games, or dialogic interactions with an ‘other’ (for example, parents, objects in her environment), the truth about things in her environment (the truth of propositions) simply appears to her in the context of her trusting actions. Through these actions, she will see (grasp) ‘things as they are’ in the context of the corresponding language-game and form of life. Only at a later stage of development will these actional (pre-linguistic) responses to the demands of the ‘other’, appearing in her field of vision, become conceptualized and expressed in spoken or written propositions. From this we can see that, just as certainty precedes doubt, truth precedes falsity. Consequently, only after she has experienced trust, certainty and truth can she learn the meaning of doubt and falsity, as a new and separate language-game.\footnote{Wittgenstein, \textit{On Certainty}, §160.}

The above-described learning experience of a child illustrates the primordial character of the event of the ‘(face of the) other’ appearing in a person’s field of vision and demanding a (just) response, and it also illustrates the primacy of the initiative of the ‘other’ in an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic interaction. Furthermore, it highlights that a language-game is possible only if one trusts

\footnote{Ibid., §115, and Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}, §249.}
something or someone,⁷¹ and that the truth of proposition ‘p’ within a language-game is rooted in, and shown with certainty by, one’s trusting actions—this is how things are (‘p’) or:

‘p’ is true = p.

In other words, just as the child, engaged in a language-game and corresponding rule-governed activity called ‘Having Dinner at a Table’, trusts that her parents’ reference to the object they are sitting at and eating from as ‘table’ is true, that simply that is how things are, we too initially trust that a proposition expresses (is equal to) ‘how things are’ (that it is true) unless our trust (certainty) is not completely supported by other aspects of the language-game, and we need to confirm it by investigating whether things are as we are told they are. Concerning the truth (or falsity) of a proposition Wittgenstein writes:

At bottom, giving ‘This is how things are’ as the general form of propositions is the same as giving the definition: a proposition is whatever can be true or false. For instead of ‘This is how things are’ I could have said ‘This is true’. (Or again ‘This is false’.) But we have

‘p’ is true = p
‘p’ is false = not-\( p \).

And to say that a proposition is whatever can be true or false amounts to saying: we call something a proposition when in our language we apply the calculus of truth functions to it.⁷²

This approach to an understanding of truth is close to what is known as the redundancy theory of truth, pioneered by Frank Ramsey, who was inspired in his work by Wittgenstein’s thought.⁷³ The crucial idea in this theory is that the word ‘true’ in “p is true” is redundant, it is

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⁷³ See the discussion by Hans-Johann Glock, in his article on “Truth,” in *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*, 365-8. Despite the closeness of Wittgenstein’s account of truth to the redundancy theory of truth, it is not the same. As Glock points out, virtually, there is no theory of truth that has not been ascribed to Wittgenstein; yet neither of them is completely identical with Wittgenstein’s account of truth.
merely a stylistic verbiage and it does not point to anything in reality. For example, to say that “‘this is a table’ is true” is equivalent to saying that ‘this is a table’. The word ‘true’ adds no property and/or force to the proposition ‘this is a table’. It merely states that ‘this is how things are’ as we play the language-game of ‘Having Dinner at a Table’.

What happens when the proposition “‘p’ is true” is met with disagreement, when, for example, a person points to the duck-rabbit image and says, “That is a duck,” and another claims, “That is a rabbit,” or, when the proposition “That is a table” (referring to a wooden object) is contested by another’s claim, “That is a bench?” Are there any identifiable conditions that indicate which proposition is to be recognized as true? Or, does this mean that it is human agreement (negotiated human opinion) that decides what is true and what is false? Wittgenstein’s response to this question is as follows: “It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life.”

Let us examine this statement more closely.

By stating that it is what people say that is true and false, Wittgenstein reminds us that things, data and facts in themselves cannot be true or false; only propositions (‘what people say’, or moves in the language-game) are true or false. In other words, since ‘meaning is use’, it is how people play the language-game, make use of, relate to, or interact with the ‘other’ (person, thing, available data and facts), that renders a proposition true or false.

Indeed, as the ‘other’ appears in the field of vision of the ‘I’, demanding a response (that the ‘I’ gives the ‘other’ its due, its justice), it establishes an ‘I’-‘other’ structure and elicits a dialogic interaction governed by a certain (set of) rule(s), in the context of a form of life. In this event, the initiative lies with the ‘other’ and, consequently, the ‘I’ becomes dependent on the

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'other’. It is the ‘face of the other’ that makes the ‘I’ who the ‘I’ is.\textsuperscript{75} In this experience, the response of the ‘I’—“That is a duck”—and its truth, will be conditioned by the criteria established by the constitutive aspects of the language-game and form of life, in which the ‘I’-'other’ encounter takes place (constitutive rules, and the whole natural history of those involved). For example, when the image of the duck-rabbit appears in the field of vision of a person familiar with the form of life of ducks, she will (effortlessly or ‘blindly’) follow the rules of the language-game that involves encountering a duck, grasp the image as a duck and, consequently, recognize the proposition ‘That is a duck’ as true. Yet, another person, acquainted with the form of life of rabbits may act in a similar way and recognize the proposition ‘That is a rabbit’ as true, or someone conversant with neither of these language-games and corresponding forms of life, and unable to play either of them, might perceive the duck-rabbit image as an unrecognizable drawing. These examples show that equally accessible things and data have no truth value in themselves and, when used in a proposition in the context of a language-game and rule-governed human activity, can yield conflicting truth claims. What leads to such diametrically opposing results in understanding a proposition? Wittgenstein’s answer is: disagreement in forms of life. Comparing the Ground of Truth in Different Theories of Truth Before discussing how agreement or disagreement in forms of life affects the truth and falsity of a proposition, I will examine what the ground of truth is in some of the different approaches to a theory of truth.\textsuperscript{76} Without attempting a comprehensive study of all the different approaches, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will consider only two examples and for a

\textsuperscript{75} I have discussed this above in Chapter I in connection with Levinas’s concept of the ‘other’.

\textsuperscript{76} It is important to keep in mind that Wittgenstein never intended to, or did, develop a ‘theory’ of truth, or a theory of anything. His aim in doing philosophy was not a multiplication of theories but, on the contrary, the freeing of the mind from the constraints of theories or, as he described it, to ‘let the fly out of the fly bottle’.
limited purpose, that is, to be able to draw a contrast with, and gain a better understanding of, Wittgenstein’s approach to truth. In line with this, I will first look at the correspondence and coherence theories of truth, and compare them with the understanding of truth in Ramsey’s redundancy theory.

The *correspondence* theory is the most traditional and widely accepted theory of truth. According to it, a proposition is true if it corresponds to a state of affairs (the "facts" or "reality") and false if it does not correspond. It posits a *determinate relationship* between thoughts or statements/propositions, on the one hand, and states of affairs (the "facts" or "reality") on the other, and it operates on the assumption that truth is a matter of accurately copying the state of affairs and representing it in thoughts, words and other symbols, *in and through this determinate relationship*. Most scientists and many philosophers hold some version of the correspondence theory of truth.

In this approach, the truth of a proposition is grounded in, or justified by, a state of affairs that one can point to in reality. If the state of affairs is situated in the physical world, the corresponding ‘truth’ is commonly referred to as scientific truth. If the state of affairs is to be found in the world of ideas, we tend to refer to it as metaphysical truth. In either case, the truth of a proposition is determined by its *relationship* to the ‘object’ or ‘fact’ constituting the state of affairs, where all these—the proposition, its determinate relationship and the ‘object’ or ‘fact’ it relates to—exist independently of the individual uttering the proposition.

According to the *coherence* theory of truth, for a statement to be true, it requires a proper fit with all the elements of a whole system. An important tenet of coherence theories is that truth is, first of all, the property of a whole system of propositions. Consequently, individual propositions are true if they fit properly (coherently) within the whole. Very often this comprises
more than just simple logical consistency. Often this means that the propositions in a coherent system lend mutual inferential support to each other as well. A proposition is false if it is inconsistent with (contradicts) other propositions that are held to be true.

In this approach, the truth of a proposition is grounded in, or justified by, determinate relationships to an entire system of propositions that one can identify and to which one can point. One obvious difference between the correspondence and coherence theories is that, while in the correspondence theory we are talking about one determinate relationship between a proposition and a state of affairs, in the coherence theory, there are many such relationships. At the same time, one of the common elements in these two approaches to truth is their realism: in both cases, truth has a substantive grounding in an objectively identifiable entity.

In response to the realism of correspondence theories, antirealists are quick to point out that there are whole classes of propositions that do not have readily available and objectively identifiable things, facts or states of affairs that they could refer to with a determinate relationship. For example, in the case of propositions referring to past or future events, or to mental or emotional states of other people, there are no such entities that could guarantee the truth-value of these propositions. Therefore, it does not make sense to call such statements ‘true’. However, as Sara Ellenbogen points out, “what has gone unnoticed is that the antirealist view that it does not make sense [to call such statements true] is premised on the realist assumption that what makes it correct to call a statement ‘true’ is that it corresponds to how things are,” that is, “it will only seem to us that we cannot recognize the condition under which we should call a statement ‘true’ if we hold that those conditions are determined by its correspondence with how
things are.” In other words, as Ellenbogen notes, in one way or another, both realists and antirealists rely on correspondence.

In Wittgenstein’s contrasting approach, the truth of a proposition does not correspond to reality or cohere (by correspondence) with all our coherent beliefs; it is how things are. Hence, the truth of a proposition is not related to reality or to our belief system by one or many determinate relationships, but it is (identical with) ‘how things are’ (“p” is true = p).

Wittgenstein writes as follows:

The reason why the use of the expression “true or false” has something misleading about it is that it is like saying “it tallies with the facts or it doesn’t”, and the very thing that is in question is what “tallying” is here. Well, if everything speaks for an hypothesis and nothing against it—is it then certainly true? One may designate it as such.—But does it certainly agree with reality, with the facts?—With this question you are already going round in a circle.

Wittgenstein does not question or deny that a true proposition agrees with reality. He simply questions, and ultimately abandons, the concept of ‘agreement’ as a correspondence where a proposition is related by a determinate relationship to a thing out there that justifies it or makes it true. Instead, he considers a proposition a move in a language-game, an action that, by following a rule, grasps, and so, simply unveils or uncovers ‘how things are’. In such a dynamic understanding of propositions, the truth of a proposition is grounded in action. Therefore, the

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78 Ibid.


80 Ibid., §191.

81 The problem is with the nature of this determinate relationship, or “tallying” itself. How do we know that it is the correct relationship, that it orders the right proposition to the appropriate fact and that it certainly makes the proposition agree with reality, with the facts? In other words, it also needs justification, or as Wittgenstein puts it, with this question we already go in circles.
“tallying” or “not tallying,” the nature of which Wittgenstein is probing, is a human action, a ‘move’ in the language-game either complying or not complying with the other moves (and their rules) involving other constitutive facts that make up the language-game and corresponding form of life. For example, the child first learning the truth about his environment in the context of the language-game ‘Having Dinner at a Table’ will see the truth about the object referred to as ‘table’ because of his unhesitating imitation of his parents’ consistent actional reference to, and use of the object as ‘table’. Since his consistent use and handling of the table as a table does not conflict with his and his parents’ other moves and actions within the language-game and corresponding form of life (they do not put the plates and cutlery under the table, for example), the truth about the table will dawn on him, he will see things as they are.

In this actional approach to a proposition’s (‘p’s) agreement (being identical) with ‘things as they are’, the said ‘things as they are’ (facts, rules that constitute the language-game) function as truth conditions for proposition ‘p’. For the ‘move’ expressed by ‘p’ to be true, or to be the right move, it has to comply with the other aspects or truth conditions of the language-game. In other words, it cannot disrupt or go against the other rules and facts constituting the language-game.

These truth conditions, depending upon the criteria established by different language-games, can be varied. For example, propositions such as “2+2=4,” “Tomorrow is Sunday,” “I am

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82 Both the meaning and the truth of a proposition are determined by use [Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, §544; see also Duncan Richter, “Truth,” in Historical Dictionary of Wittgenstein’s Philosophy, Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements 54 (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 187].

83 In these comments, I am relying on Ellenbogen’s insights concerning Wittgenstein’s realism, and antirealism [Ellenbogen, Wittgenstein’s Account of Truth, 19-23].

84 While “complying with” bears some resemblance to “coherence” in the Coherence Theory of Truth, the two are also different. The first is a dynamic event and refers to what one could also call a harmonious interaction; the latter refers to a static, determinate relationship between a proposition and facts.
in pain” or “This is a duck” are moves in language-games established by very different criteria due to the different nature of the language-games. As such, the conditions with which these moves have to comply will also be very different. However, truth conditions can change even within the same language-game as the criteria change for establishing these conditions. For example, in the case of the language-game ‘Finding a City on the Map using Google Earth’, we can, when looking from a 500-kilometre altitude, point to a spot and say, “That is Toronto.” Given the available conditions and facts (for example, it is in North America, at a certain distance from such and such a lake), we can play the language-game and establish that the proposition is a ‘right move’, that it satisfies the conditions and does not disrupt the language-game. However, when we play the same language-game and formulate the same proposition while looking at the map from a 1000-metre altitude or at street level, the picture (the criterion) and the corresponding truth conditions will change; yet, the proposition (the move in the language-game) will remain the right move, and not disrupt the language-game. Consequently, it remains true.

The agreement or non-agreement of propositions or moves within a language-game with existing criteria is not a matter of a determinate correspondence to independently existing entities, but a matter of dynamic, interactive compliance or non-compliance with other actional criteria that characterize and express reality. The proposition “That is a duck” is true because the move in the language-game complies with the interactive criteria of encountering a duck. In a similar way, “He is in pain” is true (it is the right move in the language-game) because we know the criteria for pain behaviour and for the trustworthiness of the other person. Or, “Tomorrow is Sunday” is true because we trust that the rule-governed interaction within nature will continue and Saturday is going to be followed by Sunday. Finally, the proposition “That is Toronto” is the
right move in the language-game of pointing out Toronto using Google Earth from two different perspectives because, despite a change in criteria within the language-game, the language-game itself has remained the same.

In short, the truth of a proposition is grounded in it being the right move within a language-game (complying with all the other moves in the language-game). However, since as Wittgenstein puts it, “a language-game is only possible if one trusts something (I did not say ‘can trust something’),”85 making the right move in a language-game also assumes trust and certainty expressed in the action of making the right move itself. Distrust and doubt about the truth of the proposition (whether it is the right move in the language-game, after all) are the result of encountering and/or learning about actions that are in disagreement with one’s own.86

**Does Difference in Language-Games and Forms of Life Lead to Relativism?**

With the above inquiry into the truth, falsity and grounding of propositions as background, we can see that Wittgenstein’s statement that “it is what human beings say that is true and false” implies that the context of truth and falsity of a proposition is the world of human action, within a language-game and corresponding form of life, and not the world of facts and things to which the proposition is related by a determinate relationship. It is not things that are true or false but moves in the language-game (propositions), as articulated by people in word and action, and as these moves (propositions) grasp or do not grasp (uncover or do not uncover) things as they are, or accord or do not accord (comply or not comply) with the other moves and corresponding rules, constituting the language-game and form of life.

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86 In order further to explore and articulate the actional foundation of truth, and the centrality of trust in participating in a language-game and corresponding form of life, an investigation of the notion of truth in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, and its covenantal grounding, might fruitfully be undertaken. How are trust, certainty, faithfulness and stability—expressed in the actions of a life committed to, and lived according to, the precepts of the Covenant—relevant to the scriptural understanding of truth (*emeth*), and how does this understanding compare to Wittgenstein’s approach to truth? A sufficiently detailed discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.
I started this chapter by considering Jastrow’s duck-rabbit image, and how, in different language-games and corresponding forms of life, the same image is perceived either as a duck or as a rabbit. I asked the question whether, considering the conflicting truth claims or moves in respective language-games, agreement is possible. Or is it the case that, given the actional foundation of truth, Wittgenstein’s ‘groundless knowledge’, as discussed above, leads to epistemic relativism? In what follows, using Wittgenstein’s conceptual framework, I will explore some essential and pertinent aspects of relativism that will help to render a negative answer to this question.

The idea of ‘relativism’ has a long history and it takes different forms covering most, if not all, of the spectrum of human experience. There is no such thing as relativism *simpliciter*, and there is no single theory or argument that would establish every relativistic position that has been proposed. Despite this diversity, however, all forms of relativism have two main features in common: a) “They all assert that one thing (e.g., moral value, beauty, knowledge, taste, or meaning) is relative to some particular framework or standpoint (e.g., the individual subject, a culture, an era, a language, or a conceptual scheme)” and, b) “They all deny that any standpoint is uniquely privileged over all others.”

It is important to point out the categorical difference between these two features. The first feature is simply a statement of fact: things are different, or, there is diversity among things. The second feature is concerned with how we handle these differences (it is an actional reference). What turns common difference or diversity into relativism, then, is the second feature, indicating how these differences ought to be handled.

Given its complexity, a systematic presentation of the idea of relativism is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, in what follows, I will first briefly discuss what I believe to be at the

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root of relativism in human experience. Subsequently, I will show how Levinas’s concept of the ‘face of the other’ and Wittgenstein’s notions of ‘meaning is use’ and rule-following, far from occasioning them, help to address and dismiss the charges of relativism against Wittgenstein’s insight that agreement about the truth or falsity of a proposition is agreement in form of life. 

In the history of Western philosophy, there has been a long tradition of making the human subject (ego) and mind the locus and measure of human experience. For example, starting with Protagoras’s claim that “Man is the measure of all things,” through Descartes’s “I think therefore I am,” Berkley’s subjective idealism, Kant’s transcendental idealism and Hegel’s absolute idealism, there is a consistent tendency to construe reality in terms of the contents of the human mind. Moving away from the world of ideas, Lock, Hume and other empiricists held that all we can know about the world is sense data, received through the traditional five senses and imprinted on the mind (conceived of as a tabula rasa), where the human sensory experience and mind are the measure, locus and beginnings of knowledge, including philosophy. In a similar way, Husserl and the phenomenological tradition, along with Sartre and the existentialist tradition, uphold the Cartesian principal claim that the starting point of philosophy is the subjectivity of the individual.

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89 The full dictum reads as follows: “Man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not that they are not,” as quoted in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, *Greece and Rome* (1962-63; reprint of vols. 1-3 in one book, Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1985), 87. As Copleston points out, the word “Man” in this famous saying of Protagoras was interpreted by his peers (such as Plato) to mean the human person in the individualistic sense in regards to sense perception (Ibid., 88).


Common to all of these different approaches, but especially in Descartes and Kant, is a shift in focus from the ‘other’ to the ‘I’ (the thinking subject), a move that is usually referred to as the “turn to the Subject.” As Grube relates, while both Descartes and Kant agree that, in one way or another, the subject is at the centre and foundation of all philosophizing, Kant goes even further by saying that the transcendental subject constitutes the objects of cognition in accordance with the *a priori* forms and categories of the mind.

Therefore, a turn to the subject is, in effect, a turn to the mind of the thinking subject. In this approach the mind is considered private. It is in this privacy of the mind (in the ‘inner’) of the thinking subject that experiencing, thinking and apprehension of truth about reality takes place. Personal experiences, thoughts and feelings are private objects, accessible directly only to the thinking subject. Other people can have merely indirect knowledge of them by virtue of the ‘outer’ aspects of the thinking subject, such as public acts, speech and behaviour. In this approach, by its direct access to the private objects of its ‘inner’, the ‘I’ can think and feel (act) with little or no dependence on the ‘outer’. This limiting of the focus of the thinking subject to itself renders a privileged status for the ‘inner’ over against the ‘outer’. As a result, the ‘turn to

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93 Dirk-Martin Grube, “God or the Subject? Karl Barth’s Critique of the ‘Turn to the Subject’,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 49, no. 3 (July 2007): 314. While the Western philosophical tradition is primarily responsible for making the ‘turn to the subject’ into a formal theory, the phenomenon itself is not only not limited to philosophical inquiry, but is common to everyday human experience and, as such, it precedes its formalization in philosophical thought.

94 Ibid.

95 As Glock puts it, “The inner/outer picture informs not just Cartesian dualism, but the mainstream of modern philosophy, including rationalism, empiricism and Kantianism” (Glock, “Inner/Outer,” in *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*, 175).

96 For example, while Descartes settles on trusting his allegedly indubitable knowledge of his own existence and the content of his ideas, as the foundation of all of his knowledge, Augustine and Christian Platonism before him, and prior to this turn to the subject, trusted the ‘other’ (the “intelligible world” or “Divine Mind”) that can be “seen” by the mind without the mediation of the senses.
the subject’ implies a split between the ‘inner’ and the ‘outer,’ where the ‘outer’ (in an epistemological, not necessarily ontological, sense) is dependent on the ‘inner’.

The turn to the subject has significant consequences for the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic interaction and structure. As we have seen in the first chapter, in a dialogic interaction, the ‘other’ not only has the initiative, by appearing in the field of vision of the ‘I’, but it makes the ‘I’ who the ‘I’ is (the ‘face of the other’ that makes me ‘I’). This, of course, implies a dependence of the ‘I’ on the ‘other’. Therefore, if in the dialogic interaction the initiative has shifted from the ‘other’ to the ‘I’ (to the subject), the ‘I’ ceases to depend on the ‘other’ and, consequently, its response to the ‘other’ appearing in its field of vision will be weakened, or fail completely, by not giving the ‘other’ its due (justice). The ensuing split or disunity between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’, will in turn lead to a weakening or complete breakdown of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, and to an undermining of human existence itself (to not be in dialogue is not to be at all).

Keeping this in mind, let us consider once again the issues involving the duck-rabbit image. Person A looks at the image and says, “It is a duck,” while person B, looking at the same image, says, “It is a rabbit.” Given their respective evaluative outlooks, or language-games and forms of life, what they actually mean is: “To me (in my experience), this is a duck” and “To me (in my experience), this is a rabbit.” At this point, only differences in experience due to differences in corresponding evaluative outlooks or language-games and forms of life have been established, with little consequence. However, a question arises concerning what is to be done with these differences.

Each time persons A and B, acting in the ‘turn to the subject’ paradigm, look at the duck-rabbit image, they rely on their personal (‘inner’) experiences and conclude, “I know (to me, in my experience), it is a duck” or “I know (to me, in my experience), it is a rabbit,” respectively.
The focus is on their respective ‘inner’ experiences of the duck-rabbit image and not on the image (the ‘other’) itself. When persons A and B compare their ‘inner’ experiences of the duck-rabbit image, they gauge concepts and images (duck and rabbit) shaped by their respective evaluative outlooks (forms of life). Given the inaccessibility of their ‘inner’ experiences, and because they have differing evaluative outlooks, their respective, inevitable, and differing articulations of these experiences—“It is a duck,” “It is a rabbit”—seem to present irreconcilable truth claims.

One way to deal with this conflict is to adopt the above-mentioned relativist stance. By so doing, persons A and B in effect agree to disagree, and claim that neither of their opinions is more privileged or accurate than the other. However, as discussed above, this claim is false. By turning to itself, the ‘I’ makes itself independent of the ‘other’, including other subjects, and the claim of unassailability of its private or ‘inner’ experience by others in effect renders the standpoint of the ‘I’ unassailable as well, and as such privileged over all other standpoints: “To me this is a duck.” In a relativist approach, then, persons A and B preserve their differences by agreeing to disagree, by disallowing the ‘other’ to impose a demand on the ‘I’ and refusing to give the ‘other’ its justice. Such a weakening or suspending of dialogic interaction, results in separation and disunity. In short, the turn to the subject not only generates the relativist standpoint, but it contradicts its basic claim of not holding a privileged position, and cements disunity.

Wittgenstein’s conceptual framework of language-games, forms of life, and ‘meaning is use’—with its non-foundationalist, actional approach to knowledge, certainty and truth—attacks the idea of the turn to the subject, the ‘inner’-‘outer’ split and, consequently, relativism itself. It does so by presenting a turn to the ‘other’ approach in our understanding of reality, while
preserving one of the main insights of the Enlightenment, that is, the importance and centrality of human experience.

The basic insight of ‘meaning is use’ neither assumes, nor generates an ‘inner’-‘outer’ split. It simply states that the meaning of a particular aspect of reality (such as a word, proposition, object, or idea) is experienced through its use within the parameters of a given language-game and, as such, it does not have a claim to privacy and inaccessibility by others. It also stipulates that an ‘inner’-‘outer’ split has no foundation in reality for, as Wittgenstein points out, what goes on in the ‘inner’ is simply “another game” that we were trained to play by others (by the ‘outer’). To put it differently, the fact that the ‘I’ has an experience, as it participates in a language-game (or dialogic interaction), does not mean that this experience is divorced or secluded from any aspect of the ‘outer’. On the contrary, the subject’s experiencing

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97 In his ‘private language argument’ (Philosophical Investigations, §§243-315), Wittgenstein demonstrates that the understanding of the contents of the mind as private entities, and hence the mind as an inner theatre, is incoherent. Discussing two main texts relevant to this issue (Ibid., §§293, 304), Hao Tang provides a convincing presentation of Wittgenstein’s efforts to eliminate the false dilemma of the dualism of the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’, which consists in Wittgenstein rejecting both the idea of ‘privacy’ (the privileged status of the ‘inner’) and ‘behaviourism’ (reducing the inner to the ‘outer’). As Tang points out, Wittgenstein does this by demonstrating that the actual cause of this dualism is the false assumption that the only function of language is to convey thoughts or formulate one’s thoughts in words (übertragen), which idea may be called the intellectualist conception of language, and which construes the relationship between mental phenomena and mental terms on the model of material ‘object and designation’ or ‘object and reference’. In fact, says Wittgenstein, avowals as descriptions and expressions of the ‘inner’ (analogous to natural reactions, gestures, grimaces, etc.), are instances of a more fundamental use of language that precedes the intellectualist use, and does not generate a false, ‘inner’-‘outer’ split or dualism. According to Tang, Wittgenstein’s criticism of the conceptualist idea of language is already present in his criticism of the Augustinian concept of language (Philosophical Investigations, §3). Since a more detailed and systematic study of this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis, for a complete presentation of his ideas, see Hao Tang, Wittgenstein and the Dualism of the Inner and the Outer, Synthese 191, no. 14 (September 2014): 3173-94.

A different but similar discussion of Wittgenstein’s attack on the ‘inner’-‘outer’ split and dualism is also available in H. O. Mounce, “The Inner and the Outer,” Philosophical Investigations 25, no. 1 (January 2002): 67-78. In this article, Mounce makes the point that we are inclined to think about the mental in terms of ‘inner’ processes because we simply omit its surroundings, the whole language-game that involves also the ‘outer’ and the ‘other’.

98 Wittgenstein makes this remark in his refutation of the claim that a lack of direct access to another person’s thoughts and that person’s ability to make false (‘outer’) expressions of his or her (‘inner’) thoughts makes those thoughts ‘inner’ or ‘private’ [Ludwig Wittgenstein, Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, vol. 2, The Inner and the Outer, ed. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue (repr., Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 31].
(‘inner’) and its participation in a language-game or dialogic interaction (‘outer’) are united in action and, as such, they are two sides or two dimensions of the same reality or game.

Therefore, participation in language-games and, in particular, in dialogic interactions with their ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, has a unitive effect on the ‘I’-‘other’ relationship. By their very nature, language-games and dialogic interactions assume the presence of the ‘other’. Indeed, in the case of a dialogic interaction in practice, the ‘other’ is not only present, but it initiates the interaction by making a demand on the ‘I’. In its response to the demand of the ‘other’ (in giving the ‘other’ its justice), the ‘I’ acknowledges its dependence on the ‘other’.

In sum, the problem of relativism does not arise from differences in experiencing reality that are rooted in different language-games and forms of life, or in different evaluative outlooks. The existence of such differences, or diversity, is a given. The problem arises from what we do with these differences. It arises when the ‘I’, in its turning to itself, denies the ‘other’ its justice and makes participation in a publicly accessible language-game and dialogic interaction into a private affair. This, of course, implicitly means that the experience of the ‘I’ gains a privileged status, which contradicts the relativist’s claim of not considering his or her own experience more privileged than other people’s experiences. Furthermore, the resulting damage to the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure and interaction undermines not only our ability to arrive at truth but, given its ontological character (‘to be is to be in dialogue’), it undermines our ability to be in dialogue, that is, our human existence itself. Therefore, in order to prevent or eliminate relativism, one ought not to hang on to one’s experiences, in the supposed privacy of the self or the ‘I’, but to the one providing us with the experience, that is, the ‘other’, in the context of a language-game or dialogic interaction.
With these considerations in mind, the question of whether Wittgenstein’s ‘groundless knowledge’ leads to epistemic relativism has to be answered in the negative. It is the shifting of focus from the ‘other’ to the ‘I’ and the resultant weakening and disintegration of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure and interaction that leads to relativism. Inversely, relativism leads to the privileged status of the ‘inner’ experiences of the ‘I’ and the resulting disintegration of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogical structure. Since the disintegration of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogical structure implicitly means a disintegration of unity, we can also conclude that it is disunity that leads to relativism, and vice versa (relativism leads to disunity).

Beyond Relativism: Unity and Truth

Having discussed the inconsistencies and self-contradictions in the relativist’s position, and its epistemological, as opposed to actional, nature, we concluded that, in order to prevent or eliminate relativism, we ought not to hold on to our experiences (in the supposed privacy of the self), but to the one providing us with the experience (in the context of a language-game or dialogic interaction). Furthermore, we also determined that relativism and disunity mutually imply each other: relativism leads to disunity and disunity leads to relativism. In what follows, I will discuss how this insight helps us to address the dilemma initially presented in this chapter: Does dialogic interaction lead to truth, which then brings about unity? Or, is it dialogue—as a rule-governed interaction—that brings about unity, which, in turn, leads to the uncovering of truth (how things are)?

Suppose person A says of the duck-rabbit image, “It is a duck,” and person B says, “It is a rabbit,” each one presenting a component part of what appear to be irreconcilable differences concerning the image’s identity. Suppose, too, that instead of person B asking, “What do you mean by the word ‘duck’?” (an instance of falling back on the primacy and unassailability of
respective private personal experiences that, as we have seen above, lead to relativism and disunity), she inquires of person A, “What do you do when you experience a duck?” (an approach that allows person A to remain focused on the language-game that includes the ‘other’, that is, the duck-rabbit image itself). In his response, person A describes the language-game and corresponding form of life that allows him to recognize a duck in the duck-rabbit image.

Eventually, having heard and learned enough about birds with long, flattish beaks, swimming on water and waddling on land, person B will exclaim, “Yes, I get it, I can see it now, too!” Once person B has done the same with respect to her language-game and corresponding form of life involving long-eared, furry mammals called rabbits, person A will come to a similar insight. As a part of each one’s participation in his or her own publicly accessible language-game or dialogic interaction, each one has been able to remain focused on the ‘other’ present (the duck-rabbit image, as it is used by the other person), instead of on their own private experiences. Rather than comparing unassailable private experiences expressed in abstract concepts, persons A and B have compared instances of public rule-following and action.

Through their dialogic interaction, then, persons A and B learned enough about each other’s language-games that they could become engaged in them, and this yielded a new language-game involving a common ‘other’: the duck-rabbit image. In this new language-game, instead of trying to compare definitions of ducks and rabbits, or reconcile concepts such as feather and fur in an attempt to reach a negotiated conceptual agreement regarding their meaning, persons A and B compared and learned to imitate each other’s actions. Since meaning consists in use, they both learned, in the new language-game, the new meaning of the duck-rabbit image which incorporated not only ‘duck’ or ‘rabbit’, but also ‘duck-rabbit’.
It is worth pointing out that, in the new language-game, persons A and B remained focused on the (same) ‘other’ (the duck-rabbit image), and that their original language-games were not dismissed or forgotten. In their ‘turn to the other’, they accepted the demand of the ‘other’ and gave it its justice. By so doing, they made themselves dependent on the ‘other’ in its vulnerability, as it appeared in their field of vision. In their dependence on the ‘other’, they remained open to new, perhaps even surprising, demands of the ‘other’, and were willing to learn new language-games in order to do justice to these demands. It is this common dependence of persons A and B on the ‘other’ and their shared willingness to give the ‘other’ its justice that facilitated the formation of an alternative, common and united language-game and corresponding form of life. In this new-found unity-in-action in a united language-game, the fresh use of the duck-rabbit image uncovered its new meaning and truth as ‘duck and rabbit’ and/or ‘duck-rabbit’. 99

With this in mind, let us return to the question concerning whether an arrival at truth brings about unity, or unity leads to truth. As we have seen, according to Wittgenstein, disagreement about ‘how things are’ (truth) is a disagreement in forms of life, that is, a disagreement in what we do as we follow the rules of our respective rule-following activities. Therefore, one could expect that an agreement about ‘how things are’ would come about as a result of an agreement in following a rule or a set of rules: ‘this is what we do’ and ‘this is how we live’. Indeed, as we have seen above in the case of the duck-rabbit image, an acceptance of common practice or training while giving the image its due (its justice) results in unity of action (in persons A and B following the same rules) and this in turn leads to a common language-game.

99 In contrast, had they shifted their focus to the ‘I’ and their personal or ‘inner’ experiences, without a dependence on, and openness to, the ‘other’, they would have been like two ships meeting in open sea. Without a common reference, neither party would know who is moving and who is not, and any attempt to compare experiences of the ‘other’ (duck-rabbit image) would have lacked a sufficient grasp of reality.
and corresponding form of life. As a result, all those united by this common action will arrive at a level of (common) practice (or skill) that enables them to trust and see that ‘this is how things are’, that is, they uncover the truth. It is in and through a unity of action, then, that we can see ‘how things are’, that is, the truth of a given situation or state of affairs.

What happens, however, if disagreement or conflict is not the result of insufficient information about, or lack of familiarity with, another language-game and corresponding form of life, as in the example involving the duck-rabbit image? What if those who are quite familiar with another language-game still disagree with the actions making up that language-game? For example, persons in one culture might be quite familiar with, and have extensive knowledge of, the practice of honour killings of wives or daughters in some other, honour-based cultures, yet still disagree with it. In the language-games and corresponding forms of life of those in the honour-based culture, honour killing may be viewed as an admirable act, while, for those from the other culture who are knowledgeable about honour killing, it is instead viewed as a horrific crime. Who is right? Who has the truth about the status and role of women in society and family?

In an attempt to answer this question by means of dialogic interaction between cultures ‘X’ and ‘Y’, it would be easy to adopt a ‘turn to the subject’ paradigm, where the ‘subject’ is a whole culture. This approach, however, is marked for failure because those involved would focus on the ‘private’, and hence, privileged experience of their respective cultures. Just as in an ‘I’-centred dialogue, the interactive process in this case would consist in comparing concepts and


definitions, such as social standards, laws, traditions regarding the nature and status of women, most of which, given their contextually determined meaning, would be unconvincing or irrelevant to the opposing side, and only highlight the existing disunity. The solution to this predicament, as we have seen above, must have its basis in sufficient unity to begin with, which comes as the result of turning the interaction between ‘X’ and ‘Y’ into an ‘other’-centred dialogic interaction, with mutual dependence on the ‘other’ (the cause of their disagreement). The ‘other’, in this case of course, is the group the dialogue is about, namely, women.

With a common focus on the ‘other’ and with both parties making themselves open to its demands, ‘X’ and ‘Y’ also make themselves dependent upon the ‘other’. It is in this common openness and experience of dependence that a new dialogic interaction comes about, in which the ‘other’ is given its due or justice (which, by necessity, excludes the harming or killing of the ‘other’). In this dependent and implicitly humble common posture before the ‘other’, ‘X’ and ‘Y’ will not simply redefine that ‘other’ according to a commonly negotiated worldview. Rather, they will adjust and re-tune the criteria of their current actions in their respective language-games and corresponding forms of life to arrive at a better understanding of the ‘other’ and to give that ‘other’ its due (justice). In a dialogic interaction involving deep conflict (not merely a matter of inadequate information but conflicting action), a shift away from an ‘I-centred’ and towards an ‘other’-centred approach will reveal that one or both evaluative outlooks (language-games and forms of lives) may prove to be partially or completely wrong, simply because they fail to grasp

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102 In the first chapter of this thesis, I discussed the absolutely fundamental importance Levinas attaches to not killing the ‘other’ as it appears in its vulnerability in our field of vision.

103 In this, I am drawing on Sara Ellenbogen’s discussion of truth and relativism in Wittgenstein (Ellenbogen, *Wittgenstein’s Account of Truth*, 108-110).
the ‘other’ as the ‘other’ is. Evaluative outlooks—and propositions formulated in them—can be adjusted or tuned to a better and more accurate grasping of reality.\textsuperscript{104}

It is important to point out that a “turn to the ‘other’” paradigm and dependence on the ‘other’, is necessary for maintaining diversity within unity. In a ‘turn to the subject’ paradigm, any agreement between ‘X’ and ‘Y’ regarding the ‘other’ would consist mainly of a negotiated, uniform behaviour, which then would be imposed on what the disagreement is about, the ‘other’. For example, ‘X’ and ‘Y’ would arrive at a negotiated agreement (a common ground, or lowest common denominator) regarding the status and role of women, which may or may not give justice to women, but would still become a new standard for how women ought to behave and be treated. In contrast, in a “turn to the ‘other’” paradigm, ‘X’ and ‘Y’—in their dependence on, and rendering of justice to the ‘other’—adjust and re-tune their criteria of truth about the ‘other’. In this approach, most existing culture-specific features of society ‘X’ and society ‘Y’ will be maintained, but also adjusted in such a way that they can grasp and articulate the truth about the ‘other’, in this case, women. In other words, instead of making a uniform policy about the status and role of women, society (both ‘X’ and ‘Y’) should give women their justice (including not harming them) and, in turn, allow women to respond to the demands of the rest of society—their ‘other’—ensuring as well that the ‘face’ of their (women’s) ‘other’ is given the opportunity to make them who they are in the context of a dialogic interaction.

In sum, conflict is due to disagreement in forms of life. Such disagreement is primarily actional (involving what we do and how we do it), and not conceptual (involving differing

\textsuperscript{104} While one cannot draw, perhaps, a direct parallel between propositions or moves in a language-game and measuring tools used in the physical sciences, one can point out some similarities between the two. Indeed, one can claim that propositions or moves in a language-game have \textit{similar functions} to measuring tools in the physical sciences. Like measuring tools, propositions measure and grasp reality for its accurate articulation. However, while measuring tools are objects, propositions are actional realities or moves in a language-game. Just as there are more or less accurate measuring tools for the grasping and articulation of the nature of physical reality, there are also more or less accurate propositions (moves in a language-game) for the grasping of reality in general. A more thorough study of this idea is beyond the scope of this thesis.
concepts of reality). Consequently, this disagreement can be overcome either by learning each other’s language-games (as in the case of the duck-rabbit image), or by adjusting or re-tuning our moves in our respective language-games and corresponding forms of life (as in the case of the issue of honour killing). Both strategies are about arriving at sufficient unity in action in the process of giving the ‘other’ its justice and, consequently, uncovering the truth about the ‘other’, or seeing the ‘other’ as the ‘other’ is. In both of these cases, it is our acknowledgement of our common dependence on the “face of the ‘other’” that allows us to arrive at sufficient unity in action, while maintaining diversity, so to uncover the truth.

**Conclusion: Unity Leading to Truth**

At the beginning of this chapter, I set out to discuss the relationships among dialogic interaction, knowledge, certainty, and truth, and how these four elements are related to unity. I proposed that, with this discussion as foundation, I would show that it is not the case that dialogue leads to truth, which in turn brings about unity; rather, it is dialogue—as a rule-governed interaction—that brings about unity, which, in turn, leads to the uncovering of truth (of how things are).

Having discussed Wittgenstein’s understanding of meaning and rule-following, explored his approach to knowledge and certainty and, subsequently, considered his non-essentialist approach to truth, I demonstrated how the ‘turn to the subject’ makes existing differences into personal differences or conflicts, which then lead to disunity and relativism. Building on this, I showed how a “turn to the ‘other’” transforms conceptual differences, rooted in different evaluative outlooks, into differences in publicly accessible actions, which can be adjusted and re-tuned, so that they do not conflict with each other and also grasp the ‘other’ as the ‘other’ is. From this, I concluded that unity in action (which may include, but is not equivalent to
uniformity), resulting from a common dependence on the ‘other’, leads to the uncovering of truth about the ‘other’.

In the discussion of the actional foundation of certainty, knowledge, and truth, I repeatedly highlighted the centrality of trust. As we have seen in both the first and second chapters of this thesis, mutual trust and dependence play a central role in the uncovering of truth in the context of a dialogic interaction with an ‘other’. For a deeper comprehension of this mutual trust and dependence, I will explore in the next chapter their nature and role from a sociological point of view, how they are rooted in religious experience and, finally, their instrumentality in establishing unity.
Chapter III: The Vertical and Horizontal Organization of Society and Its Effect on Unity

In Chapter I, I demonstrated that dialogue, as a rule-governed human interaction, is in effect a language-game with an ‘I’-‘other’ structure and that, as such, it is a constitutive aspect of human existence (“to be is to be in dialogue” and “not to be in dialogue is not to be at all”). Furthermore, I showed that any study of dialogue (any dialogue about dialogue) ought to be concerned with identifying and removing those aspects of our ‘I’-‘other’ relationships that impede a right relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’. Consequently, a study of dialogue ought to focus on our striving for excellence in our practice of, or being in, dialogue, since such improvements lead to a better realization and understanding of how things are (the truth), and ‘the truth’, of course, is the common goal and desire in every dialogic interaction.

In Chapter II, I discussed the relationship among dialogic interaction as a rule-following activity, knowledge, certainty and truth, and how these are related to unity. In so doing, I argued that it is not the case that dialogue leads to a rational agreement about truth, which in turn brings about unity; rather, it is dialogue—as a rule-governed interaction— that brings about actional unity, which, in turn, leads to the uncovering of truth (how things are). Finally, I discussed the centrality of mutual trust and dependence in establishing and maintaining unity while preserving a possibility for diversity.

In this third chapter, I will further explore the nature and role of mutual trust and dependence in the pursuit of establishing unity for the uncovering of truth. I will do this by discussing the origins of mutual trust and dependence as basic human phenomena and social experiences, and how the two are related to the vertical (by frame) and horizontal (by attribute) organization of groups and society, an organizational pattern discussed by Chie Nakane in her
insightful book *Japanese Society*. Based on this exploration, I will investigate the importance of vertical organization in society for establishing unity while it preserves the possibility both of diversity and uniformity. As we shall see in the subsequent two chapters, an ability to discern group dynamics according to Nakane’s organizational principles provides an additional interpretive tool to facilitate a better understanding of dialogical events, such as the Council of Chalcedon, and their respective outcomes.

**Vertical and Horizontal Organization of Society: Organization by Frame and Attribute**

The Japanese anthropologist Chie Nakane, in her book *Japanese Society*, identifies two main principles by which a group or society is formed: frame (*ba*) and attribute (*shikaku*). While Nakane’s principal reason for discussing these concepts is to “offer a key” to a better understanding of Japanese society, she also admits that these principles are not specific or

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1 Chie Nakane, *Japanese Society*, rev. ed., Pelican Sociology, ed. R. E. Pahl (1973; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1979). Nakane is a well-published, internationally known social anthropologist and, currently, Professor Emerita of Social Anthropology at the University of Tokyo. Her distinguished career includes training at the London School of Economics, extensive fieldwork in India, a visiting professorship at the University of Chicago and a position as lecturer at the University of London. She became the first female professor at the University of Tokyo. Her book, *Japanese Society* (originally published in Japanese as *Tatehskai no Ningen kankei*, or *Human Relations in a Vertical Society*), has been translated into thirteen languages and has become an international bestseller.

2 Nakane makes it clear in the preface of her book, that her aim is not to provide a cultural or historical explanation, or to offer a “description of Japanese society or culture or the Japanese people” (Ibid., “Preface”). Instead, her aim is to “offer a key” for the making of such descriptions, and for the construction of a “structural image of Japanese society” (Ibid.). She also points out that, while her present book does not employ the customary scholarly apparatus of footnotes and references to results of fieldwork and other empirical data, its theoretical basis was established in her earlier study *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan* (London: Athlone Press, 1967), which heavily relies on such data.

Nakane’s book is generally seen as one of the best presentations, with “brilliant” insights into the workings of contemporary Japanese society, of how the values of “groupism” and “hierarchy” function in Japanese society. This is well illustrated also by the fact that the Japanese Foreign Ministry in the early 1970s gave many copies of the book as a gift to foreigners [Roger Goodman, “Making Majority Culture,” in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Japan*, ed. Jennifer Robertson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 61, 64]. The book also had its critics. Much of the criticism of the book has been centred around its apparent contribution to the so-called *nihonjinron* literature—popular in Japan after the Second World War and having the purpose of explaining the economic rise of postwar Japan—the charge being that it assumed and promoted a uniqueness, homogeneity and stability of Japanese society and culture, the existence of which some authors questioned. For a more detailed discussion of these criticisms, see Robert Goodman, “Making Majority Culture,” 64-70. However, at a closer read, these criticisms seem to be directed mostly at the political and ideological interpretations and implications of Nakane’s basic insights, and not at the validity of these insights themselves. For example, Hata and Smith, in their neo-Marxist approach to the book, argue
limited to Japanese society.\(^3\) In what follows, I will provide a description of Nakane’s main insights concerning these two organizing principles and, subsequently, offer a short discussion of how they are relevant to trust, dependence, unity and diversity in a group or society.

a) **Organization by frame** According to Nakane, a “frame\(^4\) may be a locality, an institution or a particular relationship which binds a set of individuals into one group: in all cases it indicates a criterion which sets a boundary and gives a common basis to a set of individuals who are located or involved in it.”\(^5\) For example, people belonging to the same village, household, or stem family, or having a pupil-teacher relationship with the same teacher, would be considered a group organized by frame. Members of a group organized by frame tend to identify themselves by the group and prefer to be known in their corporate identity: “I am a Ford Company employee,” “I am a Benedictine monk,” or “I am an Einstein pupil.” In this kind of group structure, the dominant relationships are between elder and younger and leader and subordinate and, as such, they are distinctly hierarchical and vertical.

When a group develops or organizes itself according to a situational basis of frame, the initial form of the group is simply a gathering of people without one or more common social values or social elements that could constitute a group, as in a rural or agricultural setting, when

\(^3\) Nakane, *Japanese Society*, 1-2, 4.

\(^4\) The term *frame* is an English translation of the Japanese word *ba*, which “means ‘location’, but the normal usage of the term connotes a special base on which something is placed according to a given purpose. The term *ba* is also used in physics for ‘field’ in English” (Ibid., 1).

\(^5\) Ibid.
a group of houses is built in the same area. In the beginning, people may or may not like one another, but they realize that their survival depends on collaboration, which presumes, and is born of, mutual trust and dependence.\textsuperscript{6} When there is a sufficient feeling of oneness or trust, internal structures of a settlement or village start to emerge. Within these structures, leadership roles surface, along with leaders to take on those roles: the higher the trust placed in a particular individual, the more the authority granted by the community to that person and the higher the rank achieved by that individual (trustee) within the group. Because of this, ranking is essential in groups organized by frame, and ranking is done based on seniority (of membership) and not on any particular personal attribute.

These vertical relationships are personal and, as such, they are expressions of, and sustained by, a strong sense of mutual loyalty and trust. This means an unequivocal support of the head or leader by the subordinate, and dedication to the care and protection of the subordinate or dependant by the leader.\textsuperscript{7} In such vertical or hierarchically organized groups, the organizational structure (the ranking of members)—and, as a result, the identity of the community—is clearly defined by rules and codes of conduct. In this setting, the individual is understood primarily in his or her \textit{corporate identity} in the context of his or her position within the community. The horizontal relationships among peers and colleagues (people of the same rank) are secondary or negligible.

Because the rules are constitutive of the identity of the group and of its members, they apply equally to all in their respective positions, and their primary concern is not with the personal qualities of the members of the group. This also implies that the personal qualities

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 9.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 73-74.
(attributes) of the leader are secondary to an effective leadership as long as the above-mentioned vertical personal relationship is carefully maintained. In other words, for example, the commander of an army does not need to be the most skilled and capable combatant, the head of a car company the best engineer, or the bishop of a diocese the best theologian, but he or she must be someone who can maintain the trust and loyalty of his or her subordinates\(^8\) and can deal with them in such a way that they feel supported and valued, and perform to the best of their respective abilities.

A second consequence is that such a group can tolerate significant diversity in personal attributes among its members, as long as the vertical relationships, characterized by rules and codes of loyalty and protection, are observed. To put it differently, since the relationships of primary importance are those between leader and subordinate, personal differences among peers simply will not gain strong enough prominence in day-to-day activities that they could become a cause of division or disunity. Therefore, the greatest crisis in this kind of group is not caused by conflict along horizontal lines among peers or colleagues, but by the removal of the leader or by a degeneration of the personal (vertical) relationships of trust and loyalty between leader and subordinate. With the disintegration or absence of the leader’s individual (vertical) relationship with members, and its unifying and balancing effect, the disparity of attributes (of members) and the heterogeneity of the group gains prominence, which, in turn, results in a weakening or disintegration of group cohesion, and eventually, of the group itself.\(^9\)

b) **Organization by attribute** A group formed according to the criterion of attribute is a set of individuals bound together by a common inborn or acquired attribute or qualification, such as occupation, kinship, physical features, gender, age, social position, and education. Depending

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\(^8\) Ibid., 40, 47, 68, 72.

\(^9\) Ibid., 10, 46-47.
on the nature and importance of a given attribute for the life of a society, the group organized by that attribute may have a stronger or weaker relevance for society’s function or well-being. For example, political and/or special-interest groups, different support groups, workers’ unions, professional and research associations, and sports clubs are actively involved in the day-to-day shaping of the fabric of society, but there are also groupings of people based on, for example, taste in fashion or artistic style perhaps, a common medical condition, or birth at a certain time of the year, which may have little or no impact on the everyday life of society. Because of the difference in the relative value attached to these attributes, the resulting groupings tend to generate social stratification within society, such as the working class, the upper class, the educated or the uneducated, rich and poor.

In groups organized by attribute, the uniqueness, individual aspect and independence of the person become foundational. For example, the primary consideration in assembling a national hockey team is to find and bring together the individuals who are the most skilled and have the best qualities as hockey players. When the players are selected, their individual attributes shape the profile of the team. In this case, unlike the group organized by frame, the individual’s identity is not defined by the group; rather, the identity or profile of the group is defined by the common attribute of its individual members. To continue with the hockey example, a person is not a hockey player merely because she belongs to a hockey team; she belongs to a hockey team (constitutes the team) because she is a hockey player. Therefore, the primary purpose of the rules and laws of these groups is not to determine their nature and identity, or the identity of these groups’ members (as in the case of organization by ‘frame’), but to protect, sustain and enhance the members in their (preferred) personal attributes. In the case of the hockey team, this means that the rules are there to sustain and enhance the skills and the
success of the individual players and the team. Because of this, the rules are flexible and subject to adjustment, in order better to facilitate the achievement of the stated goal. In these groups, the dominant relationships are horizontal, among peers or colleagues, and vertical relationships between leader and subordinate are secondary or negligible. Leaders merit their leadership roles by skill or dedication to the cause or attribute defining the group. The greatest danger for group cohesion in these groups occurs when a member does not have the desired attribute essential for the group’s identity, and becomes the ‘weak link’, jeopardizing the group’s purpose and performance.

Some Examples of Groups Organized by Frame and Attribute

To illustrate her insights regarding organization by frame and attribute in a group or society, Nakane names two examples as the most obvious representations of such organizational principles. One is the Japanese ie\textsuperscript{10} or household (frame), and the second, the Indian caste system (attribute). According to Nakane, the “primary unit of social organization in Japan is the household,” which is “normally formed by, or around, the nucleus of an elementary family, and may include relatives and non-relatives other than these immediate family members.”\textsuperscript{11} The organizational principle of the ie (organized by frame) is best articulated by its succession rules. First, the head of the ie has to be succeeded by the ‘son’; second, that ‘son’ should be succeeded

\textsuperscript{10} In Japanese, the noun ie can refer to ‘house’ or ‘residence’, but also to ‘household’, ‘family system’, or ‘lineage’. The character 家, denoting ie, is the same as that for the noun uchi, referring to ‘inside’, ‘within’, or ‘we’ or ‘our’ (as in ‘one’ s in-group’, i.e., company, family, etc.).

only by one son and never by two or more sons jointly. However, the ‘son’, while it is preferred, does not have to be a real son. If the head does not have a son, an “adopted son” (for example, a son-in-law, or someone else apt to lead the household) can become the head. The ‘one son’ (and not two or more) aspect of the succession rule implies that, with the oldest son becoming the head, all the other sons leave the household and start their own household or ie.

The fact that the ie is not based on kinship is well illustrated in this: that, while the daughter-in-law (the wife of the ‘son’, who himself may not be a kin) becomes a full and equal member of the household, the daughter leaving the household to marry loses membership in the household. Furthermore, maids and servants are also members of the household, along with deceased members. As the Japanese saying puts it, “One’s neighbour is of more importance than one’s relative.” From this, we can see that the Japanese ie is more like a corporation than a group based on, and organized by, kinship.

In contrast, the family and the caste system in Indian society are organized by kinship and occupational attributes. Here, and in most other societies organized by kinship (as one particular attribute), the importance of family (kin) relationships always overrides in-law or other non-kin relationships, regardless of geographical distances. In general, the individual in the Indian family is strongly tied also to other social networks reaching far beyond his or her family, but

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12 Nakane, Kinship, 4-5.

13 In other words, the uniqueness of the ie succession rule does not lie in the ‘head’-’son’ succession pattern. This patrilineal pattern is widespread in other societies. What is unique about it in this Japanese context is that it is not limited to kin.

14 Shimizu, “Ie and Dōzoku,” S86. A group not based on kinship is also well illustrated in the varied forms of ancestor worship or reverence in different cultures and religions, and, in the Christian tradition, by the concept of the communion of saints and the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ that includes both the living and the dead.

15 Nakane, Japanese Society, 7.

16 Ibid., 11-13.
these, too, are organized by attribute (occupational attributes, for example). Because of this, he or she enjoys greater autonomy, mobility and freedom of expression and behaviour, than his or her counterpart in a vertically organized society.\(^\text{17}\) For example, in an Indian family, arguments and speaking one’s mind are frequent and expected, while in a traditional Japanese household, members’ opinions are ideally held unanimously (all members accept the opinion of the head of the household and contradicting the head would be considered a disruption of harmony). However, it should also be pointed out that, in a Japanese household, the unanimity expressed by the head is achieved after lengthy consultation.

There are numerous other examples of groups organized predominantly by frame or by attribute. Those organized primarily by frame include religious traditions, Churches and religious orders, but also multinational corporations,\(^\text{18}\) educational institutions,\(^\text{19}\) the military, and countries and municipalities. In the Christian tradition, for example, entry into the group (Church) is marked by the acquiring of a new identity (including a name), characterized by complete dependence on an all-loving Creator God, and celebrated in a special rite of initiation. Membership and identity in this case are primarily defined by a vertical relationship regardless of personal attributes. As a result, in subsequent gatherings of the religious community (for worship, for example), this new identity overrides any other social or personal classification or attribute. A similar situation exists in religious orders of the Christian (especially Catholic and Orthodox) tradition. Prospective members or ‘novices’ are encouraged, or simply expected, to leave every ‘worldly’ attribute behind (including kinship attachments), and assume a new

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 13-14.

\(^{18}\) For example, multinationals involved with electronic communications (Google, Microsoft) and financial institutions, that increasingly permeate and organize all aspects of our daily lives, create an unavoidable dependence.

\(^{19}\) A teacher-pupil relationship has strong vertical characteristics. In general, anyone interested in learning can become a pupil and, by joining a teacher, pupils entrust the formation of their attributes to that person. This basic pupil-teacher trust is a constitutive aspect of learning.
identity as a member of the order they intend to enter. As a result, from then on, they typically refer to themselves in public, after having stated their names, in words such as “I am a monk of such and such monastery,” “I am a Sister of Charity,” “I am a Jesuit,” “I am a Franciscan,” without any reference to their education, profession or occupation. Even when it comes to their names, in some cases, upon entering, they take on new or “religious” names (a practice that has been abandoned in Catholic religious institutions since the Second Vatican Council, but may still exist in other Christian denominations). In these organizations, too, the dominant relationship is that between member and superior where the member pledges loyalty and support to the superior in his or her vow of obedience and, in return, the superior assumes the duty of supporting and looking after the physical and spiritual well-being of the member. The ‘frame’ of the organization, in the case of Churches, is usually the global denominational community, such as the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic or Lutheran Church, or the local parish or church community. In the case of religious orders, the ‘frame’ can be a physical place (the walls of a monastery), but can also be conceptual in character, expressed by the basic constitution or law of the order.

There are countless groups organized primarily by attribute. Some of the most obvious examples include political parties, sports clubs, and special-interest groups (for example, feminists, environmentalists and groups representing gender issues). In these cases, group membership and organization have a clearly identifiable purpose and, as such, are not situational. Typically, issues unrelated to the main organizing attribute are not discussed or dealt with in a substantive manner. Authority or leadership in these groups is synonymous with excellence in the group’s main organizing attribute and, as such, rarely goes beyond that parameter.
The distinction between the nature of leadership in groups organized by attribute and by frame is well illustrated by an exchange between two famous, now retired, NBA basketball players, Charles Barkley and Karl Malone. In one of his famous comments, the outspoken Barkley stated: “I’m not a role model... Just because I dunk a basketball [because I have this attribute] doesn't mean I should raise your kids,”\(^{20}\) to which, later, Malone responded: "Charles...I don't think it's your decision to make. We don't choose to be role models, we are chosen [for a relationship involving trust and dependence]. Our only choice is whether to be a good role model or a bad one.”\(^{21}\) This exchange indicates well how a member of a group organized by attribute is reluctant to step outside the role delineated by that organizing attribute, but also, how people desire to trust someone in ways that do go beyond these limitations.

**A Brief Comparison of Some Relevant Aspects of Groups Organized by Frame and Attribute**

As Nakane points out, there are some instances when groups are organized exclusively by frame and some other instances when they are organized exclusively by attribute, but in most cases, they overlap.\(^{22}\) In fact, I suggest that no group or society is permanently organized purely by frame or purely by attribute. In a purely and permanently frame-organized group or society, members would have only a corporate identity, while in a purely and permanently attribute-organized group or society, members’ identities would be reduced to one or a few attributes. Therefore, neither of these options is plausible in real-life experience on a permanent basis.


There might be instances in which groups—or perhaps even whole societies—function, based on either of these extreme organizational forms, for example, in cases of great emergency, or instances of professional or leisure activities, but these would be limited in time and scope.

Despite their obvious differences, organization by frame and attribute function as complementary parameters and not as a zero-sum game. In other words, the strength of vertical relationships in a group or society does not come about at the expense of the strength of horizontal relationships and neither do the latter inhibit the first. While we may and often do prefer one over the other or neglect one and not the other, that is by choice and not by necessity. For example, a strong sense of belonging to a church community does not necessarily mean weak or negligible horizontal relationships among church members. On the contrary, in the Christian community, such a sense of belonging to the Church as a whole is expected to be mirrored in horizontal relationships, characterized by sacrificial love. Nor does an active club membership automatically diminish a sense of belonging to a village or a family. In what follows, I will consider some of the advantages and disadvantages of groups organized mostly by frame or mostly by attribute.

a) Membership  Members of a mostly frame-organized group or society are valued primarily because of their loyal membership and not because of their skills or other attributes. Because of this, they feel accepted and supported first of all as human beings, and not for any other specific cause or reason which, with time, may lose its relevance or validity. The resulting

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23 For example, in instances of war or natural disasters, groups and societies as a whole tend to adopt organizational systems with clear vertical lines of authority or let organizations possessing such structures take control of communal life (state of emergency). In such situations, people tend to readily accept orders based on trust in a head or leader. Also, in such emergency or disaster situations, individual members of communities tend to be more willing to acknowledge their dependence on a higher power or personal God (as was the case, for example, in communities throughout the United States after the 9/11 Twin Tower attacks in New York).

24 Examples of this could include involvement in solving a major science problem as a member of a science team, or participation in a sequestered training camp as a sports team.
sense of security and intimacy is further magnified by a clear sense of ‘us’ against ‘them’, which generates a strong, often emotional, sense of corporate identity and belonging. This is well illustrated by a heightened sense of duty and readiness to put the interests of the whole group ahead of personal needs and desires.

In contrast, in a group organized by attribute, the individual’s value and sense of self-worth tends to depend on personal skills and attributes. Therefore, the members’ sense of loyalty and membership is subject to constant change. For example, adherents of political parties often fall out of favour with changes in the political direction of the party, sports teams constantly trade players, and companies fire workers, based on the usefulness of their skills or as the group’s (sports club’s, company’s) particular needs dictate. Because of this, relationships tend to be limited to the professional context, and this gives the individual the moral and emotional freedom to sever those relationships with the group when convenient or beneficial.

b) The authority and power of the head or leader As we have seen above, the head or leader within a group organized by frame emerges, and is sustained in his or her position, by the trust and loyalty of members. In other words, the executive powers of the leader are constituted by the combined constitutive powers of the members. Because of this, as Nakane points out, although the authority and power of the head or leader is often considered as exclusively his or her own, in reality, the ultimate integrating power belongs to the group. In the end, it is the group that regulates and restricts the members’ behaviour, including that of the leader.25

To put it differently, in a vertical group or society, the leadership powers of the leader are not his or her personal powers. Instead, they are powers entrusted to the leader or invested in that person by the members of the group or society. Consequently, a leadership based on these

principles cannot be conceived of as an autocracy (independent power or self-sustained power—from *autos*-self and *krátos*-power). Rather, it is to be considered in terms of *servant leadership*. This understanding of leadership has been attributed, in the Christian tradition, primarily to Jesus’ ministry and leadership, as depicted in the Gospels.\(^{26}\) If, however, this leadership or headship becomes perverted into an autocracy or dictatorship,\(^ {27}\) the vertical organizational principle is not based on trust but on power and coercion, which will eventually undermine the unity of the group and, sooner or later, lead to its disintegration.

Contrary to the situation in a group organized by frame, leadership in a group organized by attribute is a function of a person’s (outstanding) ability to fulfill the requirement of that attribute. Therefore, the authority or power of the head or leader in this group depends on (is constituted by) the personal capacities of the leader and, as such, it is exclusively his or her own. To illustrate this with a negative example, it is unlikely that a doctor with a questionable professional record and abilities is going to be chosen to lead a medical team. Consequently, one can stipulate that leadership in a group or society organized by attribute is more prone to autocracy than a group organized by frame.

c) **Dealing with disagreement** Disagreement within a group organized by frame does not happen frequently, and if it does, it is most likely to occur between a leader and a subordinate, or a senior and junior member of the group. This is mainly due to the fact that there is simply no (horizontal) relationship strong enough among peers to generate or sustain a lasting or divisive disagreement. The underlying sentiment in gatherings or meetings is: “After all we are in the

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\(^{26}\) While one would think that Jesus’ divine nature constitutes sufficient grounds for leadership, even in his case, faith and trust were required from his disciples for him to be accepted as the Messiah.

\(^{27}\) Even in a dictatorship, the leader’s power and authority is dependent on the loyalty of key power figures or a powerful subgroup within the group or society.
same boat, and we should live peacefully without leaving anyone behind.” Because of this, the desired solution in any contentious issue is unanimity, no matter how much time and energy it takes to realize it. The primary goal of the process of the discussion is not to arrive at a well-argued, “Who is wrong?” and “Who is right?” solution, with a winner and loser at the two sides of the adversarial debate, however friendly the discussion might be. The goal is to provide a chance for the leader presiding at the meeting to sum up and articulate the emerging consensus within the group. Therefore, to adopt a confrontational attitude, especially against the head or leader or a superior, would be considered rebellious, and an act of causing disharmony. Where no consensus exists, then, it is the role of the head or leader to prolong the meeting or the conversation, including adjournment of the meeting if necessary, until the desired (near) unanimity is achieved. If the level of consensus reaches or surpasses a two-thirds majority, those still in disagreement will likely abandon their position for the sake of unity, drawing satisfaction from having been heard and listened to, and knowing that they are still valued members of the group. As Nakane notes, Japanese society considers this the ideal or democratic process, namely, when everybody is heard and no one is left behind. This approach to handling disagreements or arriving at consensus within a group organized by frame is also well illustrated by the Catholic

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29 Ideally, by so doing, the ‘head’ makes his or her subordinates look good, and, in return, the subordinates strengthen and highlight the role and status of the head, in a context of mutual support (Ibid., 55). However, if the head does not provide optimal leadership, these meetings can be rather frustrating and futile, especially for subordinates with better qualifications than the leader (Ibid., 40-42). It is unlikely, though, that such leadership turns into despotism, because the leader is completely dependent on the intellectual and emotional support of his or her subordinates. If dissatisfaction on the part of these subordinates lasts for an inordinate amount of time, the leader may lose the support and trust of those subordinates, and with that, his or her power. Any significant loss of support would render a leader ineffective (Ibid., 67-69, 73).

30 Ibid., 13-4.

31 Ibid., 148-50.
Church’s synodal system and practice, and its process of papal elections (conclave). In both of these cases, the goal is arrival at near unanimity through unlimited, often private consultation.

In contrast, in a group organized by attribute, differences are handled through inherently adversarial debates, where being a member of the group is of less importance than deciding who is right or wrong. The role of the leader in these debates is relatively limited and, in the absence of a winner emerging from the debate, the final decision is typically arrived at by a simple majority vote. Either way, agreement is arrived at by the more skilled or powerful side overcoming the less skilled or powerful side, and this results in some being winners and others losers. This type of handling of disagreements is characteristic of the proceedings of the parliamentary and legal systems in Western democracies, for example.

d) Handling open conflict Open conflict is handled differently in groups organized by frame and attribute. As we have seen, in a group organized by frame, vertical relationships dominate and, as a result, there is significantly more communication taking place vertically than horizontally. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the head or the superior to manage conflicts, by showing adequate support to subordinates through ongoing consultation and, in return, by appealing to their loyalty and support in keeping harmony and unity within the group. If there is any unresolved conflict, it will materialize along these vertical lines, which may lead to a vertical sectionalism, segmentation, or fission within the group. If the head ultimately fails in his or her task as unifier, and one subordinate loses trust in that head, the subordinate moves out of the group with all of his or her respective subordinates (dependants) and starts a new group, resulting in a schism along vertical lines, which tends to persist for long periods of time. If sectionalism or segmentation leads to a schism, the healing or re-merging must happen by reuniting the

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32 Ibid., 50.
separated sections under a single legitimate leader or head acceptable to both or all separated sections. According to Nakane, this can happen either by one section absorbing or dominating the other, or by finding a new head acceptable to all.\textsuperscript{33} The reunification of the separated sections comes as a result of their acceptance of a new frame that organizes all their common respective attributes, and the recognition of their dependence on a common head or leader that they trust and to whom they pledge their loyalty, and who, in return, provides them care and support.

On the other hand, in a group organized by attribute, the fault lines in cases of conflict are most likely to appear between subgroups formed by certain attributes not shared by the entire group: for example, between peers or colleagues of the same profession and management (a group formed by another attribute), between a younger and an older generation, or the caste system in India, rich and poor, upper class and working class. This is due to the strong horizontal relationships and lines of communication within the subgroups, which cement the stratifications within the group as a whole. Consequently, the conflict in these groups will play itself out in some form of social or class struggle between subgroups, where the dominated or wronged subgroup, in one way or another, removes or eliminates the subgroup perceived as dominant and the wrongdoer. Marxist theory, for example, makes such conflict necessary for progress (progress or social evolution in society is a result of ongoing class struggle).\textsuperscript{34}

e) **Stability of the group** The stability of the group is a crucial aspect of groups organized by frame. In fact, the whole succession system in the Japanese ie or household (which, as we

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 56.

\textsuperscript{34} According to Marx, “[t]he history of all society up to now is the history of class struggles” [Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” (1848), in *Marx: Later Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Terrel Carver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1]. Later, in the same document he states, “[Communists] openly explain that their ends can only be attained through the forcible overthrow of all social order up to now. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains” (Ibid., 30).
have seen, is a good case in point for groups organized by frame), is geared primarily to the
preservation of the stability and continuity of the group.\textsuperscript{35} The Japanese imperial household,\textsuperscript{36} for
example, has a more than 2600-year history of continuous succession, and the ancient Christian
Churches (or Patriarchates) have a 2000-year-old unbroken lineage. Given the centrality of
dependence along vertical lines, any uncertainty about ‘headship’ or leadership within such a
group inevitably leads to a confusion of loyalties and, consequently, to the disintegration of the
system. Therefore, to avoid this, as Nakane observes, “when there is more than one faction
within a group one will dominate.”\textsuperscript{37} This means, however, that in a group organized by frame,
“stability always resides in imbalance between powers where one dominates the other.”\textsuperscript{38} It is
important to remember, however, that ideally, and in most cases, these imbalances in power are
primarily the result of trust and they are not imposed by coercive mechanisms (as in a
dictatorship).

In comparison, the stability of a group organized by attribute is based on equality in
power among its members. Since the group is defined by one or a few attributes, the equality of
power is understood in the context of this limited number of constitutive attributes. However,
because most human attributes are potentially subject to change, the stability of groups organized
by attribute is unpredictable and often short-lived. For example, individual political interests
change, as do party lines, and physical capacities of athletes deteriorate. It is normal for
individuals to drop out of the group, or for the group to dissolve itself. This observation


\textsuperscript{37} Nakane, \textit{Japanese Society}, 55.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
regarding the difference between the stability of groups organized by frame and attribute is well illustrated in history, for example, by contrasting the longevity of the above-mentioned Japanese imperial household and Churches, with that of political parties and special-interest groups.

**Are Frames Permanent or Subject to Change? What are the Consequences?**

Having discussed the nature of groups organized according to frame and attribute, we can next ask the question, How stable are these organizing principles? Are frames permanent or subject to change? Nakane thinks they are subject to change. In her discussion of the Japanese *ie* or household, she states that an adopted ‘son’ can become the head of an *ie* other than his *ie* of birth, and, in a similar way, a daughter who was a full member of her *ie* of birth can lose that status through marriage and become a member of another *ie* or household. As these examples illustrate, a person can change his or her frame (of reference), and become a member of another group.

The reason for the possibility of such change lies within the process of how a frame becomes a frame for an individual. In discussing how a company becomes a frame for an individual worker, Nakane puts it as follows: “Thus in most cases the company provides the whole social experience of a person, and has authority over all aspects of his life; he is deeply emotionally involved in the association.”39 This indicates that what makes a frame a frame is the individual’s decision to concede “authority over all aspects of … [that person’s] life” to the group to which he or she wants to belong. Just as the adopted ‘son’ and the daughter marrying into another household concede authority to the new, adoptive household, every individual decides on a preferred frame that will frame or ground all aspects of his or her life.

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39 Ibid., 3.
This foundational character of “frame”, in Nakane’s approach to group organization within a society, parallels Wittgenstein’s concept of hinge propositions in his discussion of language-games. Recall from Chapter II that, in the case of hinge propositions, any proposition can become a “hinge” when taken for granted through trust expressed in action. In the same way, any attribute or aspect of an individual’s existence can be given authority by that individual over all other attributes or aspects of his or her life, through trust and loyalty expressed in action. Or, applying Wittgenstein’s vocabulary to Nakane’s research field, any attribute or aspect of an individual’s life can become a groundless (actional) grounding (frame) to all other attributes and aspects constituting and characterizing that individual. As we have seen above, the adopted son-in-law and daughter-in-law entrust their lives to the new ie or household each joins, the newly baptized individual entrusts his or her life to God in a church community, and the new member of a religious order chooses it as the frame or ultimate organizer of all of his or her other attributes and aspects of life. In a similar way, individuals may choose their professions, a geographical location or physical or personal attributes, such as beauty or gender, to frame all other aspects of their lives. Such examples are countless.

The plasticity of frame does not stop there, however. Frames can also turn into attributes and become aspects of an individual’s life, or they can exist for a limited time, and afterwards, disappear. For example, when a daughter leaves a household and accepts the frame of another by marriage, her membership or identity in her household of birth will be reduced to kinship (an attribute). Or, again, although being a Canadian may function as a frame, this ‘I am Canadian’ identifier turns into an attribute when athletes gather at the Olympic Games and become ‘Olympians’: “I am a Canadian athlete.” Finally, a frame may be limited in space and time. For example, when passengers travel by airplane, they entrust their whole lives to plane and crew,
and this becomes the organizing principle of all aspects and attributes of their lives for the duration of the flight, with the captain as the head. When the flight is over, the frame simply ceases to exist.

From this we can see that it is not only the case that groups and societies are organized both by frame and attribute (to differing degrees), as suggested by Nakane and discussed above, but that individuals, by necessity, also allow a certain aspect or attribute of their lives to function as a frame, by letting it organize or frame all other aspects and attributes constituting their lives. The question, then, is not whether there is a frame, but what that frame is, to which a person entrusts all aspects and attributes of his or her life, and around which that life is organized. Is it a frame that is inclusive enough to incorporate all or most of these aspects and attributes, or is it a frame that excludes some or most of them? If, for example, an individual’s ultimate frame is a political party, or a certain professional or gender identity, that person’s scope of inclusiveness and openness to diversity will be limited compared to that of someone whose ultimate organizational frame is constituted by humanity’s vertical (dependent) relationship with God, a relationship that includes all possible human attributes.

Diversity and Uniformity, Equality and Sameness

What do Nakane’s main insights concerning group organization according to frame and attribute contribute to our understanding of unity and diversity within a group which, as we have seen in previous chapters, directly affect our ability to arrive at truth? Given the dominant status of vertical relationships within a group organized by frame, the membership of an individual in such a group is primarily the result of a strong personal relationship with the head of the group or that person’s superior. As such, this relationship (and membership) implies a sense of dependence, security, intimacy and stability, and it does not involve the member’s personal

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40 Ibid., 2.
attributes. Given, however, the significantly weaker nature of horizontal relationships within a group organized by frame, existing differences due to attributes among members of equal status (peers) cannot generate a strong enough friction to affect the unity and stability of the group. In other words, in a group organized by frame, diversity of attributes among members (insiders) is, in principle, unlimited. Consider, for example, the members of a village, Church or country. In each of these instances, anyone can join, regardless of personal attributes, and by so doing, gain a new identity determined by this membership.

At the same time, in a group organized by attribute, there is very little or no possibility of diversity. Take, for example, the case of a group organized by a particular profession or gender identity. A person with no corresponding employment or gender orientation, respectively, simply cannot be a member of that group. Along with this, group function for members (the mutual collaboration, camaraderie and help of members) is limited to the scope of the organizing attribute. A workers’ union is not going to provide marriage counselling, or a gender support group financial advice.

It is interesting that groups with a horizontal organization, while often thought of as more egalitarian, inclusive and tolerant than groups with a vertical structure, appear in fact to be structurally intolerant and exclusive. At the same time, groups with a vertical organization—often considered hierarchical, exclusivist and intolerant—seem in fact to be, by nature, inclusive and tolerant.

I suggest that the common misconceptions are caused by confusion about the use and meaning of the words *equality* and *sameness*. In a group organized by frame, equality means equality in dependence (subordinate on leader in terms of care and protection, and leader on subordinates in terms of loyalty and trust) and being equal under the law that articulates that
dependence (which might include levels of power). Members of the group equally depend on the ‘head’ or a senior member, regardless of their diverse attributes, and they are the same in terms of belonging to the same frame. Thus, they have the same corporate identity, even while they preserve their diversity in attributes and powers. In contrast, in a group organized by attribute, equality means equality in power in terms of the attribute that constitutes the group. Consequently, equality in a group organized by attribute means sameness in power and corresponding attributes.

Equality in a family (organized by frame), for example, means that children are equally dependent upon their parents, and younger siblings on older, and that everyone is an equally valued member of the family, regardless of whether they are a parent, an older or younger child, a doctor, a musician or a mentally disabled person. This does not mean, however, that they are the same in terms of status, role, and responsibility, or that they have the same corresponding powers, rights, and responsibilities within the family. If a parent, for example, adopts a childish behaviour and starts acting irresponsibly, for the sake of ‘equality’, his or her behaviour will lead to the collapse of the family. In contrast, within a political party (organized by attribute), in which all members uphold the same basic political principles and promote the same basic political values, equality means having the same rights, responsibilities and powers (one person, one vote). If and when members of a particular party begin acting according to other political parties’ principles, they lose their equality (or sameness) and are automatically expelled from the original party.

Remarks on Unity and Disunity

Every group or society is organized along vertical and horizontal lines of relationships, or by frame and attribute, and the mix or overlap of these two organizing principles varies from
group to group and from society to society. The overall unity or cohesion of a group, then, is shaped by the dynamics and balance of these two forms of relationships and organizational principles.

The frame—to which members concede authority to organize all attributes and aspects of their lives—not only frames or grounds these attributes and aspects of life in a common field (ba), but by so doing, also grounds or makes possible the unity of the group. The group’s unity, then, is brought about by trust and loyalty, and a corresponding dependence demonstrated in action by the group’s members towards the ‘head’ or leader of the group. This sense of trust and dependence is a common human experience that not only provides a corporate identity, but grounds (allows and encourages) the actions of the members of a group as they explore their environment according to their respective attributes (innate or acquired) in the context of horizontal relationships. This in turn facilitates a sense of individual identity and a corresponding unity according to attributes. While both vertical and horizontal relationships and organizational principles within a group or society seek unity, a breakdown of these relationships brings about disunity either in the form of segmentation and schism, or stratification and class struggle (revolution), as we have seen above.

In this section, rather than providing a comprehensive theory of how to organize a group or society to achieve unity, my intention has been to identify key organizational principles that facilitate such unity. As we have seen in the previous chapter, a discovery of truth requires this unity. The key principles (organization by frame and attribute), while distinct, usually overlap. For that reason, when disunity arises in a given group, it is crucial that these principles be properly identified and taken into consideration. A failure to do so leads to confusion and further disunity.
As we have already discussed, unity according to frame comes about as a result of a number of factors: dependence on a ‘head’ or leader, inequality in role, status, and power because of the hierarchical structure, equality under the law and in value as a member, and finally, the maintenance of diversity. At the same time, unity according to attributes is generated by collegiality in the context of the same attribute or aspect of life, by equality in status and power, and by value proportionate to fulfilling the requirement of the organizing attribute. An absence of the first principle (frame) inevitably leads to lack of tolerance for diversity and to an understanding of equality as sameness, while a want in the second (attribute) leads to a loss of collegiality and deficiency in freedom of thought and action. The ongoing interaction of these two organizational forms, present in every group, shapes the structure and internal dynamics of the group. Depending upon each group’s general reason for existence, and taking into consideration the above-mentioned plasticity of frame, the domination of either of these organizational principles will vary according to the group’s need for achieving its task or purpose. For example, the passengers of an airplane entrust their lives to the pilot and crew, and do not expect to be involved in collective decision making regarding the operation of the plane. During an in-flight emergency, it is inconceivable that passengers would decide by majority vote what the pilot’s next move ought to be. Neither is it in the best interests of the patient if, during surgery, a team of brain surgeons is expected to wait for decisions about the surgery from the director of the hospital, who happens to be a dermatologist. However, in a post-flight evaluation, the polling of passengers about their individual experiences of the flight might provide valuable information for the future operation of the company. In a similar way, the director of the hospital, based on overall information about surgeries, and the needs and status of the hospital, might make appropriate decisions about staffing, equipment, and future directions, for example.
We can say, then, that the organizational forms by frame and attribute are complementary and function as a dynamic whole. If there is conflict between them, it is due not to some innate dialectical opposition, but to confusion over their proper recognition, identification, and use.

**Dependence, Trust, Confidence, Faith, and Loyalty**

In the previous two chapters, I have referred repeatedly to dependence and trust when I have discussed the importance of maintaining the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of a dialogic interaction. These two concepts were also foundational in my exploration of the relationships among belief, certainty, and trust, and during my examination of the notion of hinge propositions as “groundless grounds” of language-games, including dialogue. Already in this chapter, I have indicated that dependence, trust and loyalty are important principles in the vertical and horizontal organizational modes of groups and societies. In what follows, I will explore in greater depth the centrality of these principles in these two organizational modes, as they bring about and shape the unity of groups and societies. First, I will highlight the foundational character of dependence in dialogic interactions. Then, I will discuss how trust, confidence, and faith articulate this dependence in vertical and horizontal relationships. Finally, I will discuss the role of loyalty when trust, faith, and confidence weaken and the individual contemplates an exit from the group.

a) **Dependence**  If we were to be asked to name the things in our lives that had not been given to us, we would likely come to the eventual conclusion that, in the final analysis, in one way or another, whatever we have, or whatever we say belongs to us, is a gift. It is not only our values and skills that we have learned from others, and hence, received, but also our capacity to learn and our desire to create and earn our possessions, as well as our ability to be generous and give them away. In other words, all these things and, ultimately, life itself, have been received from the generosity of an ‘other’. This complete dependence on the ‘other’ is succinctly summed
up in Levinas’s seminal insight that the ‘face of the other’ makes me ‘I’. However, this
dependence does not imply an end to freedom, or becoming part of a determinate system.
Paradoxically, it is the very dependence of the ‘I’ that provides the basis of its independence,
allowing it to become an ‘I’. This takes place in the context of a language-game of dialogic
interaction prompted by the ‘face of the other’, where this dependence on the ‘other-who-makes-
me-I’ becomes freely shown and articulated, through a certain series of actions or moves in the
language-game.

Given the great variety of possible language-games in which dependence is encountered,
it is not surprising that there have been many different approaches to, and understandings of, the
notion of dependence. For example, in many religious traditions, including the Jewish-Christian
tradition, dependence on a creator God (radical ‘Other’) is a foundational experience and it is
considered a positive phenomenon. In Western philosophy, references to varied notions of
dependence go all the way back to Aristotle’s “concept of ontological (in)dependence.” The
discussions of dependence in the modern era can be grouped under the headings of “existential
dependence,” “essential dependence,” “explanatory dependence,” and “ontological

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41 See the discussion above in Chapter I. Also, as Levinas puts it, “the face speaks to me and thereby invites
me to a relation” (Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 198); “In front of the face, I always demand more of myself; the
more I respond to it, the more the demands grow” [Emmanuel Levinas, “Signature,” in Difficult Freedom: Essays on

42 Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 104-105. For example, it is the biological, emotional, intellectual, and
spiritual dependence of a child on his parents that enables him to achieve autonomy and develop his self-identity;
the greater the autonomy and stronger the self-identity, the clearer the fact of dependence becomes.

43 Consider, for example, the use of a creator-creature or Father-son/daughter relationship as a model for
God’s relationship with humanity, or some of the theological articulations of it, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher’s
“feeling of absolute dependence,” Rudolf Otto’s “creature-feeling,” or Kierkegaard’s feeling of “ultimate
dependence on God to be selves” [Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, s.v. “Søren Kirkegaard (1813-1855),”

dependence.” In psychology, the role of dependence seems even more complex. For example, in developmental psychology, Erik Erikson considers dependence something to be overcome by autonomy both in infancy and old age. Other developmental psychologists, such as John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, explore dependence under the topics of “attachment theory” and “secure-base behaviour.” In Japan, Takeo Doi, also a developmental psychologist, discusses dependence as “amae theory.” Initially these two approaches (attachment theory and amae theory) were considered to be irreconcilably different, due to indigenous rootedness. Recent cross-cultural studies, however, have successfully challenged these views. Furthermore, while some, especially in Oriental cultures, perceive the individual human being primarily as dependent on nature and on group obligations, others, especially in Western cultures, tend to see a person primarily as an autonomous being that controls nature, and whose independence and

45 Ibid.


49 The Japanese word amae refers to a feeling of pleasurable dependence on another, or to actions showing vulnerability or dependence on another in the hope of eliciting love and care. For example, a child imposing on her mother by crawling into her lap, a girl indicating or allowing that the boy she loves will carry her bag to school, or a lover signalling (in a childlike manner) wishes or desires to a loved one. At times it is also referred to as passive love.

individual rights trump group obligations. There are those also who argue that both are important and coherent autonomy must always recognize interdependence within a group.\footnote{Zehavit Gross, “How Can We Overcome the Dichotomy that Western Culture Has Created between the Concepts of Independence and Dependence?” \textit{Educational Philosophy and Theory} 47, no. 11 (2015): 1160; and Joseph Devine, Laura Camfield, and Ian Gough, “Autonomy or Dependence—Or Both? Perspectives from Bangladesh,” \textit{Journal of Happiness Studies} 9, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 105-38.}

As we have seen in our earlier discussion of Levinas and Buber, it is always the case that the ‘other’ appears in the field of vision of the ‘I’ and maintains the initiative in the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic interaction as the ‘I’ engages its physical, biological, spiritual, and human environment (the ‘other’). By so doing, the ‘other’ makes the individual human being into an ‘I’. This ongoing becoming or enhancement of being in the context of dialogic interaction is described by Nikulin as, “to be is to be in dialogue” and not to be in dialogue is not to be at all, as we have seen. Dependence, then, is integral to all aspects of human existence (including the ontological), and, as such, it cannot be reduced to any particular feeling or action. As a fact of human life and existence, it results in, or leads to, certain feelings or behaviours, and not the other way around. The question, then, is not whether the ‘I’ can overcome, or emancipate itself from being dependent on the ‘other’, but whether the ‘I’ is able to respond appropriately to the promptings of the ‘other’ appearing in its field of vision and give it its due or justice, in the course of which the ‘I’ becomes (is made into) an ‘I’. The goal of autonomy is not to eliminate dependence, but to learn to play the language-game aptly, in which the fact of dependence and the autonomy of the ‘I’ are simultaneously affirmed. A complete elimination of dependence is simply impossible,\footnote{In reality, while we can make ourselves independent of certain things perhaps, those things from which we can claim to be independent will always be overwhelmingly outnumbered by those upon which we depend.} as it would mean a disintegration of all ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structures, a breakdown of all dialogic interaction and, ultimately, a loss of being. Therefore, autonomy is achieved not by an elimination or structural transformation of the intrinsically vertical and ‘unequal’ (to use
Nakane’s terminology) organization of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, but by a personal transformation, involving greater proficiency in playing the language-game of dialogic interaction and, simultaneously, in affirming the primacy of the ‘other’. When, however, this is practiced by all those involved in a dialogic interaction, it renders dependence ‘interdependence’ instead.

b) **Trust, confidence, and faith** Having considered the role and function of dependence, the pressing question becomes, What makes it possible for the ‘I’ to accept this dependence and respond to the promptings of the ‘face of the other’, as it appears in the field of vision of the ‘I’? The short answer to this question is: trust. However, the term ‘trust’, similar to dependence, also has a great variety of meanings in current everyday language and scholarly literature. The online Merriam-Webster dictionary, for example, listing ‘trust’ as a noun and as a verb, provides nineteen definitions for it. Also, different scholars explore the notion of trust from different perspectives. Some study it as an ontological security or commitment, others as a part of social capital, yet others, in the context of welfare and democracy. Some consider it as a rational process and a type of calculation, while others understand it as an affective attitude. The great multiplicity of ways in which the notion of trust is used and understood indicates that its meaning

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is determined by the language-games and corresponding forms of life within which it is employed and studied. The great variety of such language-games and corresponding forms of life, articulating the different instances of trust, suggests that it is impossible to provide a single set of necessary and sufficient conditions for it. We can identify family resemblances among these usages, but not a single definition. This insight is further highlighted by the fact that exploring the meaning of trust is in itself a language-game, and, as such, it already assumes a certain level of trust towards the object (as the ‘other’) of its exploration. In other words, trust is already presumed in the exploration of the meaning of trust. The emerging infinite regression, therefore, shows that we have no choice but to abandon our attempt to provide both necessary and sufficient conditions (a definition) for trust. Instead, we need to adopt a descriptive approach. By so doing, we can explore trust through its necessary condition, namely dependence, as it functions in vertical and horizontal human relationships.

As the ‘other’ appears in the field of vision of the ‘I’, in its vulnerability to, and dependence on, the ‘I’, the ‘I’, in its response, has the option to make itself vulnerable to, and dependent on, the ‘other’ as well, and to give the ‘other’ its due (justice) or, alternatively, to ignore and, consequently, harm (or “kill”) the other. The ‘I’ has the option to engage in a dialogic interaction with the ‘other’, or to pursue a monologue instead. The engagement in the language-game of dialogic interaction, then, is an actional display, or showing of trust. To put it differently, it is trust that makes the unfolding of the language-game possible. Just as hinge-propositions (or moves in a language-game) provide certainty—a groundless-ground or actional foundation to language-games—in the pursuit of the truth of a proposition, trust provides an

59 The ‘other’ is completely dependent on the ‘I’, as the ‘I’ is free to give or deny its due or justice.

60 See the discussion above in Chapter II.
actional foundation to the language-game of dialogic interaction, in which the ‘other’ is rendered its due or justice. Since there are countless dialogic interactions with corresponding ‘others’, the form or articulation of this grounding trust is also limitless.

Depending on whether the ‘other’ is perceived primarily in its totality within the context of predominantly vertical relationships (organization by frame), or in some of its attributes within predominantly horizontal relationships (organization by attributes), the trust shown by the ‘I’ will respond to the demand of the ‘face of the other’ accordingly. For example, an infant, looking at his mother, trusts her because of his complete (personal and intimate) dependence on her, and not because of a particular attribute the mother may possess.\textsuperscript{61} In fact, the child trusts his mother prior to being able to distinguish any of her attributes, let alone evaluate them, and he trusts, at times, despite some of his mother’s attributes. It is this vertical organizational frame, characterized by dependence and a corresponding trust, that grounds the child’s confidence in the mother’s yet-to-be-discovered-and-identified attributes.\textsuperscript{62}

In contrast, a patient will ask for a doctor’s diagnosis because she has confidence in the doctor’s professional attributes and in the system of horizontally organized relationships (according to attribute) of the medical establishment, guaranteeing the reliability of these attributes. However, after receiving the diagnosis, she will evaluate it, ask for a second opinion or, if necessary, change doctors. A further dissatisfaction might lead to a loss of confidence in

\textsuperscript{61} In terms of Attachment Theory, the proximity of the main attachment figure (especially, physical contact), for example, of the mother (in her totality and not in some of her attributes) provides the secure base which enables the child to go out (trust) and explore the attributes of his environment by play (confidence). When encountering difficulty or distress, the child returns to his secure base, to the physical proximity of his mother (trust) [John Bowlby, \textit{Attachment and Loss}, vol. 1, Attachment, International Psycho-Analytical Library (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1980), 326, 333-35]. In addition, see Winfried Kurth, “Attachment Theory and Psychohistory,” 14-38, and P. D. Harms, Yuntao Bai and Guohong Helen Han, “How Leader and Follower Attachment Styles are Mediated by Trust,” \textit{Human Relations} 69:9 (2016): 1853-1876.

\textsuperscript{62} This can lead, at times, to unrealistic confidence by the child in a parent’s attributes, such as, “My dad is the strongest!” or “My mom is the best!”
the system itself, which may lead to the patient turning for help to other systems and their representatives, such as homeopathy or faith healing.

The above distinction between trust and confidence is based on Adam Seligman’s understanding of the same two concepts. According to Seligman, confidence “is predicated on knowledge of what will be,” because the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ share some of their attributes, “certain codes of conduct, certain moral evaluations, certain ways of being and acting.” They are “alike, the same,” and hence, they can predict each other’s actions. Trust, on the other hand, is something very different. As Seligman puts it, “Trust is what must emerge if an interaction is to continue when we have no basis for confidence, when behaviour and outcomes cannot be predicted” either because “there is no system within which sanctions can be imposed,” or because “there is no underlying sense or terms of familiarity or sameness which would allow such prediction.” While I find Seligman’s distinction between trust and confidence helpful, I disagree with his understanding that trust emerges when a rationally considered basis for confidence ceases to exist. As I indicated, an infant trusts his mother before he is able to make rational or self-reflective considerations regarding similarities or sameness of attributes. In fact, later, he will continue to trust his mother despite some of her attributes. Trust, then, is preceded not by confidence, but by dependence, and, as such, it is an actional articulation of that dependence.

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63 In my use of “trust” and “confidence,” I am relying on Adam Seligman’s distinction between these two notions as discussed in his “The Problem of Trust” [Adam B. Seligman, The Problem of Trust (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 16-22, 25-26].


65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., 339.
The distinction between trust and confidence has an application to Nakane’s vertical and horizontal organization of groups and societies. Vertical relationships (in groups and societies organized by frame) are characterized predominantly by ‘trust’, and horizontal relationships (in groups organized by attributes), by ‘confidence’. A frame organizes and grounds people in their totality, regardless of their attributes and related functional capacities. Trust grounds, enables, and organizes confidence in the particular attributes and performance capacities of the ‘other’.

When the ‘other’ is considered in its totality and without any specific attention to a particular attribute, the response to the ‘face of the other’ by the ‘I’ is trust. When, however, the ‘other’ is regarded in its attributes and corresponding functions, the ‘I’ is confident in the outcomes of the actions of the ‘other’. In the context of personal relationships, these two viewpoints translate into trust in a personal ‘other’, who is more than its attributes and functions and cannot be reduced to these, and into confidence in an institution or system, constituted by the attributes and related—learned and regulated—constructs of behavioural patterns and actions, respectively. In short, in these relationships, trust refers to a person and confidence refers to an institution or system. Trust, in the first instance, has a complete (including intimate) and unquestioning character; in the latter instance, confidence is limited to certain attributes and subject to constant evaluation.

Earlier in this chapter, however, we discussed the plasticity of the organizational principles of frame and attribute. We stated that attributes can function as a frame and a frame can become an attribute. An individual can allow any ‘other’ to frame his or her whole life or existence, even if for a limited time. Regardless of the frame, the individual will still make him- or herself completely dependent upon it, as the ‘face of the other’ that makes the individual an ‘I’, and trust, articulating or showing this dependence, will sustain the confidence of the
individual ‘I’ in his or her horizontal relationships (organized by attribute). For example, in United States society, the Constitution is held in exceptionally high esteem and considered generally inviolable. As such, it frames (and grounds) the individual’s way of life in a predominantly horizontally organized society.

The above line of reasoning demonstrates how the vertical and horizontal organization of groups and societies affects human relationships in terms of trust and confidence. In the case of a predominantly vertical organization, there is a strong sense of trust in a personal ‘other’ (a head or a leader representing the group or society) that frames and grounds the diversity of confidences in institutions and systems. If, however, horizontal organization dominates, confidence in institutions and systems will take precedence over trust. In other words, it will not be the ‘face’ of the personal ‘other’ making the individual an ‘I’, but an impersonal system.

This situation—of the individual being formed into an ‘I’ by an impersonal system—will inevitably lead to an ‘I’ with impersonal characteristics corresponding to those of the impersonal system. It will lead to a depletion of the personal identity of the ‘I’, and weaken the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of the dialogic interaction. It will also undermine unity and the ability to arrive at truth, as discussed in previous chapters. Seligman illustrates well how confidence in an impersonal system can replace trust in a personal ‘other’ with an anecdote from his own life.67 He, as a smoker prior to the introduction of the no-smoking laws, always used to ask those around, prior to lighting up, whether they minded if he smoked. If anyone did mind, he would respect that person and not light a cigarette. However, after the no-smoking signs appeared in certain areas, he would light a cigarette when he was not in such an area, without even thinking about asking, simply because it was his right to do so. In other words, dependence on, and justice owed to, the

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personal ‘other’ (not to cause harm) was replaced by personal rights guaranteed by the system. With that, the ‘face of the other’ that could appeal to a change in the behaviour of the ‘I’ disappeared, and the ‘I’ felt less or no demand to behave as a personal ‘I’.

Once trust has been replaced by confidence, due, for example, to the predominantly horizontal organization of a group or society, a loss of confidence in the system or its institutions is likely to occur. The logical reaction to this is to fix the institution or the system and to pay no attention to the personal ‘other’ that operates the system. Since there is no change in the basic modus operandi of the operator of the system (the personal ‘other’), he or she is, given the opportunity, likely to find loopholes in the new system as well, which leads to further fixing, new rules and, inevitably, new opportunities to violate the rules. Since new rules mean new language-games that in turn imply new differences and potential conflicts, a further fragmentation of groups and society becomes more likely as well. This, of course, inevitably leads to an erosion of unity and the individual’s and community’s ability to uncover truth.

From this cursory and selective discussion of the notions of trust and confidence, we can see that a distinction between trust and confidence, as discussed by Seligman, is both helpful and essential. Correlating this distinction with Nakane’s insight about the vertical and horizontal organization of groups and society demonstrates an important interdependence between trust and confidence. Trust grounds confidence, and confident actions demonstrate a basic trust. A diminished, or lack of, confidence in certain aspects (attributes) of a system may reduce that system’s functionality, even drastically so, but that, in itself, does not necessarily lead to its complete disintegration. Such an event simply indicates that it does not function according to expectations. This situation can be fixed, however, and the system can become fully functional
again. In contrast, lack of trust simply disintegrates the system (the language-game involving the trusted ‘other’).

An additional notion mentioned by Seligman in relation to trust is faith. As we have seen, trust is a response to the ‘face of the other’ (including a personal ‘other’). The greater the unpredictability of the actions of the ‘other’ (freedom), and the corresponding dependence of the ‘I’, the greater is the corresponding trust. Since the personal ‘other’ possesses the greatest freedom, it elicits the greatest trust. Furthermore, since the personal ‘other’ still has some traits common with the ‘I’, the dependence will not be a radical dependence. If, however, the ‘other’ is a Radical ‘Other’, as in Divine-human relationships, the trust shown by the ‘I’ will be a radical trust, that Seligman refers to as faith. The difference between trust and faith is both in kind and degree, due to the radical otherness of the ‘Other’. In short, faith frames and grounds not only this or that language-game and corresponding form of life, but the language-game and corresponding form of life of the whole life of the ‘I’. In theological language, faith is shown by the actions of the ‘I’ in its response to its complete dependence on God.

c) Loyalty Thus far, we have discussed the actional nature of confidence, trust, and faith (as responses of the ‘I’ to the demands of the ‘face of the other’) that provides a non-essentialist ground to the language-game of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic interaction. We have also explored the correlation of these different responses to Nakane’s description of the vertical and horizontal organization of groups and society. In what follows, I will consider the role of loyalty when trust and confidence become threatened. In this, I will rely on some of the basic insights of Albert O. Hirschman, presented in his Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms,

\[68\] Ibid., 45-6.
While Hirschman, as the title suggests, is primarily concerned with the topic in the context of firms and organizations, his findings are easily applicable to any group or society.

When either trust or confidence disappears or weakens, the ‘I’ ceases to participate in the dialogic interaction and exits the ‘I’-‘other’ relational structure. The question, then, becomes, What can prevent the ‘I’ from exiting? In essence, the ‘I’ must believe that a change is possible as a result of speaking up and initiating such change. In a group with a predominantly vertical organization, this will translate into being listened to and heard by the head, and the head providing sufficient care and support. In a group with a mainly horizontal organization, this will manifest itself in sufficient recognition of constructive criticism regarding the group’s organizational attributes. In these situations, when the individual speaks up, he or she not only demonstrates, but also grows in, affection and loyalty toward the ‘other’. The stronger the affection and loyalty, the more likely it is that the individual will speak up and initiate improvement or change. If any or both of these cases obtain, it is unlikely that the individual will exit the group.

Loyalty, therefore, is not simply a response of trust or confidence by the ‘I’ to the demand of the ‘face of the other’. It is a well-reasoned and calculated action (or interaction) that involves both some loss and some gain. What is important to maintain loyalty is that, in the end, there is more gain than loss.

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70 Ibid., 77-78.

71 Ibid.
Conclusion

In our pursuit of establishing unity for the uncovering of truth, we have explored in this chapter some social and anthropological factors that shape the unity of a group or society. Discussing Nakane’s insights concerning organization by frame and attribute, we discovered that unity is formed along two sets of relationships, vertical and horizontal, both essential in forming any group or society. Organization by frame is dominated by vertical relationships, characterized by dependence, trust, and loyalty on the part of members towards a head or leader, and by care and support provided by the head or leader to members. At the same time, organization by attribute is made up predominantly of horizontal relationships characterized by mutual confidence, collegiality, and camaraderie. In discussing the differences between the two, we highlighted how vertical relationships (or organization by frame) provide space for a diversity of attributes and, as such, they are crucial for unity.

In the second part of this chapter, we considered how these two sets of relationships differ in their articulation of the universal human experience of dependence. Making use of Seligman’s distinction between trust and confidence, we argued that vertical relationships, predominant in groups or societies organized by frame, are characterized by trust, while horizontal relationships, predominant in groups or societies organized by attribute, are distinguished by confidence. Just as organization by frame, as suggested by its name, frames or grounds human relationships characterized by attributes, trust frames or grounds the different instances of confidence. Trust also involves the whole person in a relationship characterized by intimacy and vulnerability. At the same time, confidence limits personal intimacy and narrows the scope of vulnerability to just certain attributes and corresponding functions. It (confidence) is also tempered by rational consideration and evaluation as to how these functions satisfy
antecedent expectations. Furthermore, while trust within a group or society predominantly organized by frame involves a personal ‘other’ (elder, head or leader), confidence is directed at a system and its constituent rules, the context within which the personal ‘other’ functions.

To illustrate some of the consequences of these insights, let us consider two groups, for example, two Churches, both with predominantly vertical organizational structures. If these two Churches do not share a common frame and they do not have a corresponding common head or leader, due to the lack of personal intimacy with, and trust in, such a common leader, their division will persist. If, however, there are two Churches that are predominantly organized by horizontal relational structures according to differing constitutive attributes, their potential quest for unity will also be in peril. The incompatibility of their rationally configured systems (that preserve their respective attributes) will ensure that their disunity or differences will be retained. Furthermore, the relatively low level of personal intimacy and trust in their respective Churches makes them prone to further fragmentation, as new attributes become identified which demand accommodation from their respective systems. In short, both of these scenarios will result in persistent disunity and an inability to arrive at commonly recognized truth.

It is, therefore, important to realize that neither organizational structure (frame or attribute) nor its corresponding articulation of dependence (trust or confidence) is more important than the other. They are both needed to achieve unity. A question concerning which one of these ought to dominate is misguided. At times, if the need requires it, a group or society, (or in our case, a Church), may function as a predominantly vertical or a predominantly horizontal organization. Just as the ‘other’ calls the ‘I’ into being in all its attributes, a strong frame and corresponding trust will generate and accommodate strong and clear attributes. In turn, just as a proper response of the ‘I’ affirms the ‘other’ in its attributes, as that ‘other’ appears
in the field of vision of the ‘I’, a diversity of attributes will require or affirm a strong frame. If both of these organizational principles are functioning properly and to their capacity, the only thing that can cause disunity is a mistaking of one for the other, due to misunderstanding and confusion. If, in a given Church community, both trust and confidence function at their capacity, in their respective relational structures, the truth about reality will be uncovered and commonly accepted, because of the resulting unity.
Chapter IV: In Pursuit of Doctrinal Truth—Exploring Pertinent Community Dynamics in the Early Church

In previous chapters, in the course of exploring the thoughts of various authors, we arrived at a number of insights regarding dialogue, unity, and truth. We discussed the ontological character of dialogue, that is, that to be is to be in dialogue and not to be in dialogue is not to be at all. Examining the phenomenon of dialogic interaction, we established that the desired outcome of a dialogic event is the elimination of conflict that obscures unity (unity precedes disunity) to allow truth to be uncovered and recognized by all.

These insights invite the following question: What is it that we ought to do when we encounter disagreements in a dialogic setting that threaten our dialogic interaction? Our research thus far offers some pertinent responses. First, we need to maintain the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of the dialogic interaction, by giving the ‘other’ its justice. Second, we need to maintain a strong enough vertical organization with a wide enough frame that can sufficiently sustain a required diversity of attributes. Third, we need to discern whether the newly established unity—and the truth uncovered by it—leads to a capacity for greater unity or for disunity in subsequent dialogic interactions. These three points, while they do not provide a definition of dialogue, highlight certain behavioural patterns that are necessary for a dialogue suited to overcoming disagreements to continue.

Given that my primary interest in this thesis is the investigation of doctrinal (religious) dialogue, I will explore these insights and points in what follows in the context of historical instances of doctrinal dialogic interaction in the life of the Early Church. This exploration does not seek to uncover new data about the councils, but rather, to set some of what we already know about them into the dialogical framework I have outlined, and thereby better understand ecclesial
dialogue and its obstacles at work in an actual historical setting. My reliance on secondary sources, in this case especially Ramsay MacMullen, serves this more focused purpose.

The long-standing practice of local, regional and ecumenical synods and councils in the Christian tradition provides a unique example for such an inquiry.¹ Starting with the Council of Jerusalem (AD 49), representatives of the Christian community gathered as needed to consult one another on common problems of faith and discipline.² Subsequently, at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), it was decreed that synods and councils were “to be held … in every province twice a year.”³ Considering the average number of provinces in the Roman Empire,⁴ in the time span of AD 325-553 alone, the number of conciliar gatherings must have totalled at least 15,000, estimates Ramsay MacMullen.⁵ While these gatherings may have been attended by clergy of all ranks, full participation, including voting privileges, was reserved to bishops, and therefore, they were the main actors in the dialogic interaction unfolding in the context of conciliar events.

In order to gain a better understanding of the workings of these conciliar assemblies, I will rely on Ramsey MacMullen’s pioneering socio-cultural study of their dynamics. MacMullen

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¹ The tradition of conciliar gatherings seems to be not only unique, but also unparalleled in scope, duration, and frequency, in the history of the world’s religions. While in some other religions (for example, in Buddhism), there are examples of synodal or conciliar gatherings, their frequency and the range of topics covered in such events is significantly limited in comparison to conciliar gatherings in the Christian tradition [Tilman Frasch, “Buddhist Councils in a Time of Transition: Globalism, Modernity and the Preservation of Textual Traditions,” Contemporary Buddhism 14, no. 1 (2013): 38-51].


⁴ While the great majority of Christians and Christian Churches were situated within the Roman Empire, there were independent Christian Churches in Armenia, Persia and on the Arab Peninsula (today’s Yemen) that existed and thrived outside the Roman Empire.

sets out to investigate what motivated and shaped the average bishop’s thinking and actions in these gatherings. In so doing, he identifies four socio-religious elements—the democratic, cognitive, “supernaturalist,” and the violent—that he believes, shaped the bishops’ relationships, interactions and decision making as they deliberated on issues of doctrine and religious life. While MacMullen lists four such elements, it is unlikely that there were no other significant factors influencing the bishops’ thinking and actions, given the complex nature of these conciliar gatherings. For this reason, I will add a fifth factor: the socio-political element. In this chapter, I will examine how these five socio-religious elements affected the dialogic interactions as the bishops encountered differences in opinion in their conciliar gatherings.

The Democratic Element

In a group with a predominantly vertical organizational structure, it is important that both the leader and the members of the group are sufficiently heard, and not only the leader. Otherwise, the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogical structure along this (dominant) vertical relationship disintegrates, and dialogue breaks down. Given that the late antique Roman society was, as MacMullen puts it, an absolute monarchy with an “unmercifully vertical” structure, and an emperor as its absolute monarch,6 a concern for the democratic element seems justified. In response to such concerns, MacMullen points out that a vertical organization did not necessarily mean an absence of the democratic element.7

Just as in other vertical organizations, such as Japanese society as Nakane has described it, in post-Republic Roman society8 as well, the powers of the head or ruler and the powers of the

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6 MacMullen, Voting about God, 12.

7 Ibid.

members of the group were interdependent. The emperor had command of every aspect of executive power (*kráatos*), both military and political. The common people (*dēmos*), however, when gathered as a multitude in public places such as the circus, the race tracks, and other public settings, or in courts and councils, also demonstrated significant power. On these occasions, they regularly expressed their wishes: they voted\(^9\) on a wide range of issues by acclamations or, as MacMullen calls it, “lung power.”\(^10\) These issues, presented to the crowd by the emperor (or other high officials), included decisions such as the recall of exiled bishops, charges against high state officials, whether the emperor should pay homage to a pillar saint, and determining the truth of alleged misconduct by palace officials or common people. A well-known example of a ruler-solicited public vote by the *dēmos* about guilt or innocence is Jesus’ public trial by Pilate, when he was condemned by the lung power of the crowd.

However, this dialogic interaction between ruler and people was far from ideal. The benevolence of the head or ruler towards the members of the group, and the loyalty and trust of the members of the group towards the head, referred to by Nakane, were often replaced by malevolence, coercion and violence on the part of both parties. This is well illustrated, for example, by the motto for success of Emperor Septimus Severus (AD 193-211): ‘enrich the army and despise the rest’.\(^11\) The effects of this approach were well demonstrated by the forty years of ongoing civil wars after his death, during which there were twelve official emperors, none of

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\(^9\) From the Latin *vovere*, meaning to vow, promise, pledge, dedicate, consecrate oneself (to a god).

\(^10\) MacMullen, *Voting about God*, 12. It is worth keeping in mind that this “voting” was mainly a siding with, or pledging of allegiance or support to, one or the other side of an issue, or to a certain person representing this or that side, which may or may not have included a personal, articulate opinion by the individual regarding the issue itself.

whom died from natural causes.\textsuperscript{12} Other examples of the breakdown in the dialogic interaction between ruler and people, and of the formidable power of the latter, are the numerous riots that plagued Roman society.\textsuperscript{13}

It is worth pointing out that even such dark periods and events of an “unmercifully vertical” society only highlight the interdependence between ruler and people (or at least between ruler and a subgroup of society). In Severus’s case, for example, the ruler had to show benevolence at least in his relationship with the members of the army, to retain their trust and loyalty, and preserve authority and power. We can conclude, therefore, that despite the presence of this “unmercifully vertical” character, the democratic element always played an important role in the Roman society of the time.

It was in the context of this society that the Christian message (Christianity) was moulded and developed. Conciliar gatherings functioned as decision-making events or processes in the life of the Church and, as such, they mimicked the existing decision-making structures and processes of Roman society, of the local and regional councils, and the Roman Senate.\textsuperscript{14} It is not surprising, then, that despite the vertical organization of the Church, as indicated by the monarchical episcopacy from around the time of Ignatius of Antioch (d. AD 130), the minds and attitudes of the bishops, gathering in conciliar events, had been profoundly formed by this democratic element, to such a degree that they became or took on the role of ‘the people’. As

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13} A more detailed discussion of these and similar events is to be found in the section on the “violent” element.

participants of conciliar gatherings, and functioning as the *dēmos*, they (the rank and file of the episcopal order) were expected to practice their voting and “lung power.”

This form of exercising the democratic element was necessary to maintain the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure. For example, at the Council of Nicaea, Constantine the Great, acting as the ‘bishop of bishops’, went to great lengths to show care and benevolence towards the bishops, by inviting *every* bishop, offering them means of transportation by state agencies, and providing generous hospitality during their stay. In return, he expected and received loyalty and trust, expressed in a show of overwhelming unity. In contrast, at the Council of Ephesus, Cyril of Alexandria, presiding over the council (in the absence of Emperor Theodosius II who, unlike Constantine, took a more hands-off approach to the conciliar gathering), did not show much benevolence and care towards Nestorius and John of Antioch and the bishops accompanying them. Nor did he receive their trust and loyalty, which resulted in a bitterly divided council. Such disregard for the democratic element led to a weakening and elimination of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure which, in turn, resulted in disunity.


16 Despite the general invitation by Constantine for every bishop to attend, the vast majority of attendees were from eastern dioceses and no bishop attended from Italy, Africa, Germany or Britain.

17 Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 57.

18 For example, while waiting for the opening of the council, Nestorius and his bishops were barred by Cyril and his supporters from making use of the churches of Ephesus, which meant that they were excluded from that year’s celebration of the feast of Pentecost.

19 Drawing near to Ephesus, John of Antioch sent word to Cyril that, despite the severe hardships they had suffered on their more than forty-day-long journey (travelling through famine-stricken territories and losing many of their horses), they were only a few days away from arriving. Disregarding the message, or perhaps seizing the opportunity, Cyril announced two days later, on June twenty-first, that the council would open on the following day.
The practice of the democratic element also strengthened the vertical structure of conciliar gatherings and, by so doing, helped to increase unity in diversity. Had the bishops gathering at Nicaea not responded with a vote of confidence to Constantine’s summons,²⁰ his authority as ‘bishop of bishops’ would have been all but non-existent. It was due to this authority, constituted by the trust and loyalty of the bishops, that he could command (demand) unity. The fact that some diversity in the interpretation of the Nicene Creed persisted even after the council,²¹ indicates that Constantine, and the strong vertical organization maintained by him, tolerated some diversity within the framework of the achieved unity.²²

Finally, as the next ecumenical council, the Council of Constantinople (AD 381) was able to join itself to the unity achieved at Nicaea, and itself received the Nicene Creed (Nicaea’s outcome). The truth uncovered in Nicaea became the foundation of all subsequent unity within the Christian tradition. This example demonstrates that the democratic element that shaped the hearts and minds of the bishops participating in the dialogic interaction at Nicaea and other conciliar gatherings had a crucial role in achieving sufficient unity for the uncovering of doctrinal truth.

²⁰ They would have been more than justified, since many of the bishops, gathered in Constantine’s lush palaces, still showed the physical scars of torture and maiming inflicted in the recent persecutions by Constantine’s predecessors [James A. Kelhoffer, “The Search for Confessors at the Council of Nicaea,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 589-599].

²¹ For example, this is indicated by the differences in subsequent interpretations of the much-contested notion of *homoousios* by anti-Arians and semi-Arians, and by those who, for one or another reason, refused to allow differences in wording of doctrine to become a reason for division [Sozomen, *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen, Comprising a History of the Church from A.D. 324 to A.D. 440*, Book III, Ch. 13, trans. Edward Walford (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855)].

²² Authors such as MacMullen characterize the nature of unity achieved at Nicaea as coerced by the presence of Constantine, although he himself did not directly participate in the debate or decision making (MacMullen, *Voting about God*, 20). However, as we can see from the role of the democratic element and Constantine’s status as ‘bishop of bishops’, the vertical organizational character of the conciliar gathering at Nicaea implies a dialogic interaction between head and people, along the lines of Nakane’s insights, that is more complex than a mere coercive monologic event, as suggested by MacMullen.
The Cognitive Element

Cognition can take different forms. In what follows, I will discuss some of these by considering examples of Early Church doctrinal articulations of basic Christian mysteries. Based on this discussion, I will draw some conclusions as to how these forms affected unity.

Questions about, and a variety of possible answers regarding, the identity of Jesus and his relationship with God, whom he called ‘Father’, formed a constitutive part of Christian experience and discourse from the very beginning of Christianity. These differing formulations and at times contradictory opinions had led to Jesus’ condemnation and execution in the first place and, subsequently, they were further articulated, and attested to, in the different gospel accounts. Early authors, such as Paul and Ignatius of Antioch, recognizing the divisive effects possible as a result of such differing opinions, already warned against doctrinal factionalism.23

One of the earliest Christian theological or creedal statements we know of was articulated by Paul: “Jesus is Lord.”24 This insight seemed to have summed up well the first disciples’ experience of the person of Jesus and became a key expression of the basic Christian message. An acceptance of, and compliance with, this insight—“that Jesus is Lord”—proved to be a life-changing experience, and the resulting new form of life and behaviour became an actional explanation or articulation of the creedal statement.

This practical understanding of the creedal formulae is well described, for example, by Alexander of Lycopolis’s observation that the “philosophy of the Christians is very simple,…


24 See Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11.
[because it] devotes most of its efforts to ethical instructions.” Justin Martyr likewise asserted that those who claim to be Christians but are not living as Christ taught are not really Christians. The same idea of primacy of action in understanding who Jesus is, who God is and what the nature of their relationship is, was expressed by the Early Church practice of training baptismal candidates so that they would “conform to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ like wax to the mould.” Furthermore, it was also shown by the fact that the overwhelming majority of the canons of the Early Church councils, both local and ecumenical, were concerned with disciplinary and not doctrinal issues.

Given the different life situations and cultural contexts (forms of life) in which this first kerygma—that ‘Jesus is Lord’—was proclaimed, its reception or inculturation resulted in a variety of understandings and articulations of how Jesus’ lordship was to be understood. Among those less influenced by the Greek philosophical tradition (in the cultures of the Christian West, for example, where legal education was valued above philosophical, and political power over intellectual), doctrinal questions were more often considered as ethical and practical issues:


28 MacMullen, Voting about God, 28. While it is unquestionable that Roman law and Greek philosophy are two foundational elements of Western Civilization, it would be a gross generalization to simply identify these two disciplines with the Latin West and Greek East, respectively. The education system of the late antique Roman Empire was more uniform than that [See A. H. M. Jones, The Late Roman Empire 284-602: A Social and Administrative Survey, vol. 2 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 997-1003]. However, while law and philosophy were taught in major centres both in the West and the East, the preferred language of these two disciplines remained Latin and Greek, respectively. Furthermore, while Stoicism became the preferred philosophical school in the West, its approach was equally cognitive and practice oriented, and functioned along the lines of therapy [Sara Abbel-Rappe, “Philosophy in the Roman Empire,” in A Companion to the Roman Empire, ed. David S. Potter, Blackwell]
‘What is it that we need to do?’ This approach was well illustrated by the emphasis on Western bishops’ training in church law (often coinciding with state law), their less frequent gathering in councils, and also by Constantine’s perplexed but insightful reaction to the budding Arian controversy in Alexandria when he asked, “Is there any law that requires us to debate these ridiculous Arian and anti-Arian points of Doctrine?”29

At the same time, in the cultures of the East, more influenced by Greek philosophy, the answers to the “how” question concerning Jesus’ lordship appeared to take a more abstract and philosophical form. The questions themselves tended to pursue knowledge for knowledge’s sake (wisdom).30 This resulted in a proliferation of theological treatises or self-chosen opinions (haeresis), which quickly became community-dividing arguments.31 The constant search, in regularly held and specially convoked synods and councils, for a perfect formulation of faith (creed) which would eliminate such divisions became inevitable, and this produced a further multiplication of creeds.

The cultural context and the root causes of the difference between these two general approaches32 were succinctly articulated by Constantine in his letter to Alexander of Alexandria

Companions to the Ancient World (2006; repr., Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 530]. Musonius Rufus (teacher of Epictetus), for example, argues that work needs to be balanced with leisure for study and discussion, so that the teacher can set an example “by putting his principles into action and displaying virtue in his way of life” [G. Reydams-Schils, “Philosophy and Education in Stoicism of the Roman Imperial Era,” in Ideas of Education, Philosophy and Politics from Plato to Dewey, ed. Christopher Brooke and Elizabeth Frazer (London: Routledge, 2013), 45].


30 Aristotle, for example, considered there to be greater wisdom in the pursuit of the “arts” directed to “recreation” (knowledge for knowledge’s sake) than in “arts” directed to the “necessities of life” (knowledge that applies to everyday life) [Aristotle, “Metaphysics,” in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), Bk. 1, Ch. 1, 981b, 10-22].

31 MacMullen, Voting about God, 24.

32 For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to this in what follows as the “Western” and “Eastern” approach, respectively.
and Arius. In this letter, he first provides an analysis of what he thinks brought about the situation and, subsequently, suggests a solution:

When you, Alexander, inquired of your presbyters what each thought on a certain inexplicable passage of the written Word, rather on a subject improper for discussion; and you, Arius, rashly gave expression to a view of the matter such as ought either never to have been conceived, or when suggested to your mind, it became you to bury it in silence. This dispute having thus been excited among you, communion has been denied; and the most holy people being rent into two factions, have departed from the harmony of the common body…. [L]isten to the impartial exhortation of your fellow-servant…. It was neither prudent at first to agitate such a question, nor to reply to such a question when proposed: for the claim of no law demands the investigation of such subjects, but the idle useless talk of leisure occasions them. And even if they should exist for the sake of exercising our natural faculties, yet we ought to confine them to our own consideration, and not incautiously bring them forth in public assemblies, nor thoughtlessly confide them to the ears of everybody. 33

By inquiring about the legal necessity for such debate, Constantine demonstrated a good grasp of the difference between the Western and Eastern approaches, which he articulated by juxtaposing two forms of action: one borne from what the “law demands” and the other, from an “idle useless talk of leisure.”34 The first is firmly rooted in the Western (Roman) intellectual tradition where “theory and practice are inextricably intertwined, but with an emphasis on practice”35 and where Roman law was considered as a “nearly perfect realization of Greek Theory.”36 The latter, in contrast, built on the rich philosophical tradition of such authors as Plato37 and Aristotle, for


34 The Greek word for leisure is scholé (school), and it originally referred to ‘freedom from labour’.

35 G. Reydams-Schils, "Philosophy and Education," 47.

36 See Cicero, in his political dialogue De legibus (The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, repr., 1972), vol. 2, s.v. “Cicero, Marcus Tullius.”

whom leisure (freedom from the need to work) was necessary to achieve happiness and wisdom and a rise to the highest form of citizenship.\textsuperscript{38}

After his analysis, Constantine’s suggested solution as a Westerner and a military man,\textsuperscript{39} was to remind Alexander and Arius about the primacy of action (and the law governing it) over disputes “occasioned by leisure” (a pursuit of argument and knowledge for argument’s and knowledge’s sake only). The implied reason for such advice is that it is the following of the law by all (unity in action) that ensures the “harmony of the common body,” which is the suitable context for a proper (meaningful) discussion of deep and difficult topics, such as the one in question. This was not an attempt on Constantine’s part to dismiss or trivialize theoretical or abstract argumentation in the community’s pursuit of unity and truth. After all, he called the Councils of Rome (AD 313), Arles (AD 314) and Nicaea (AD 325), for exactly such an exercise. Rather, he suggests that it is the unity of the “common body” (a common form of life) that provides the proper and viable context for a successful arrival at theoretical agreement concerning truth, and for a successful preservation of the cognitive element.

Consequently, it is understandable that Constantine and other emperors, bishops and popes with a similar approach to doctrinal differences, believed that the right way to preserve doctrinal unity was to maintain a strong (vertical) organization by frame in society, through an appeal to law, discipline and obedience.\textsuperscript{40} In the East, in contrast, the effort to bring about unity

\textsuperscript{38} See Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics,” 10.7 (1177b, 4-6); and “Politics,” 3.5 (1278a, 20-21), 6.4 (1319a, 22-27), 7.9 (1328b, 33 – 1329a, 2), in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941). Aristotle puts it this way: “[I]n the state which is best governed … the citizens must not lead the life of mechanics or tradesmen, for such life is ignoble, and inimical to virtue” [“Politics,” 7.9 (1328b, 33-40)].

\textsuperscript{39} Although he grew up in the East and was fully conversant in Greek language and culture, Constantine seemed to have a clear appreciation of his Western heritage.

\textsuperscript{40} Pope Leo, deciding on the issue of the two natures of Christ (see further discussion in Chapter V), demonstrated this approach in his Tomus ad Flavianum (AD 449). Constantine’s interventions in the Donatist and
tended to manifest itself in successive collegial or synodal meetings and post-synodal disputes by written communication. In the first case (the Western approach), persuasion tended to take the form of an appeal to the law (rule-following)—‘This is what we do,’—while in the latter (the Eastern approach), it tended to focus on argumentation among equals.

It is important to highlight that, despite their overall differing approaches to the cognitive element, neither East nor West can be characterized by only one or the other. Both tendencies were present everywhere, but to differing degrees. They interacted and influenced each other, which at times yielded unique situations. For example, the city of Alexandria in Egypt, with its Hellenistic culture and a long tradition of philosophical inquiry, had a strong tradition of conciliar practice, especially among its somewhat loosely related (parish) churches. However, despite this, the bishops of Alexandria, starting with Alexander, Athanasius and Cyril, maintained a strong vertical organization in the Egyptian Church, demanded strong discipline from the one hundred or so Egyptian bishops, and could speak on their behalf. In mid fourth-century Gaul, too,—a Western province—regular conciliar gatherings took place, although only once a year instead of twice, as prescribed by the Council of Nicaea (canon 5).

We can conclude, therefore, that the cognitive element that shaped the hearts and minds of the bishops gathered in councils was a dynamic reality. It was formed by two approaches: one primarily actional (primacy of praxis) and the other primarily theoretical (primacy of abstract thought and argumentation), the combination of which provided a dynamic flexibility for the uncovering of truth in dialogic interactions and conciliar gatherings. This flexibility enabled Arian controversies, urging and demanding unity, and also downplaying disagreements in theology, also serve as an example.

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people with a wide variety of cognitive skills, such as the bishops of Late Antiquity, to participate in conciliar gatherings in a constructive manner. As neither of the above approaches, in an absolute sense, is better than the other, what becomes essential is an awareness of their respective differences, and their dynamic interdependence. While the primarily actional approach stresses the primacy of a strong frame in its attempt to uncover truth, along with unity in diversity characterized by trust and loyalty, the primarily theoretical approach stresses argumentation of equals. In their respective pursuits of truth, the first is in need of an adequate theoretical apparatus, and the second, a common frame or form of life (since, as we have seen earlier, disagreement is disagreement in forms of life). Both of these approaches to the cognitive element were present and operational in conciliar gatherings.

**The “Supernaturalist” Element**

Wherever there is a debate, the force of the majority inevitably plays a role in arriving at a certain agreement. While physical force or similar coercive methods might remain an option, a preponderance of minds has usually been preferred to achieve such a goal. Therefore, in common practice, what the majority has considered good has become *the* good, and what a greater majority has considered good, has been considered even better. This ancient democratic principle of “validation from numbers” governed many aspects of social life also in Late Antiquity, including the workings of the Roman senate and local civic councils. The late antique Christian Church adopted these procedural principles for the working of its conciliar gatherings as well.

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43 Ibid., 31-2.

44 Ibid., 41-42.
In such gatherings, as MacMullen points out,\(^\text{45}\) the will of the majority prevailed and council presidents often reminded reluctant minorities to heed the authority of the established majority, and accept a council’s decision. On other occasions, councils were claiming authority over other councils because of larger attendance numbers. This meant that decisions by local councils with fewer attendees could be confirmed or overridden by regional or ecumenical conciliar gatherings due to their larger number of attendees.\(^\text{46}\) While this seems to suggest that pronouncements concerning matters of faith were by simple majority decision, in reality they were more than that. Bishops of conciliar gatherings were convinced that the authority of the established majority reached beyond the purely numerical sense of “validation from numbers.” They believed that it was the presence of the Holy Spirit\(^\text{47}\) that assured preponderance, and

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 42.

\(^{46}\) Ibid.

\(^{47}\) The presence and actions of the Holy Spirit in the events of the Council of Chalcedon, as well as in the events preceding and following the Council, are widely attested to in a variety of terms by the *Acts of the Council*. For example, it is said that the Holy Spirit “confirms concord” (vol. 1, p. 97), “instructs” (vol. 1, p. 99) and “sits” with bishops and “decrees” what they decreed (I, §145, 148). [Hereafter, references in the body of the text or in the footnotes, such as (I, §83-5), designate session and paragraph numbers, respectively, to be found in *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vols. 1-3. Where numbers follow a volume number in Arabic numerals, these continue to indicate page references.] Also, in other examples, the Holy Spirit “prompts” and “inspires” (I, §342), “operates” (I, §884 (13)), “voices” and “dictates” (I, §884, (18)), “expounds” (I, §918), “lays down the faith” (I, §943), provides and “dictates” definitions of faith and decrees of councils (I, §948; IV, §9, (28); V, §12; ), assembles councils (I, §1022) and “assists” assembled bishops (I, §1063).

In the experience of bishops gathered in councils, however, divine interventions in councils by no means were limited to that of the Holy Spirit. In the *Acts of the Council* there are a great number of references to the interventions, promptings, inspirations and help of the “Divine” in general, of Christ, of God, as well as, of “grace from above.” For example, according to Pope Leo, the unity of the Church at Chalcedon was “divinely restored” by the great gathering of priests (“Pope Leo to Marcian (22 May, 452)” in *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 3, 143), Dioscorus had been “stripped of the grace of the priesthood by the Lord God” (“Public Notice against Dioscorus,” in *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 2, 114), and the “rules of the fathers … were drawn up under the direction of God’s Spirit at the council of Nicaea” (“Pope Leo to Marcian (22 May, 452),” 144). Furthermore, there are reports of “divine inspiration” (I, §468), of “inspiration of grace from above” (VI, §6), of “inspiration of God” (“Second Edict Confirming Chalcedon,” vol. 3, 131; “Marcian to Pope Leo (18 December 451),” vol. 3, 136-7], as well as reports of the “help of Christ” (“Pope Leo to Marcian (26 June 451),” vol. 1, 101], the “help of God” (“First Letter of Marcian to the Council (September 451),” vol. 1, 107), “help from above” against the “demon who is the originator of evil” (I, §111), and the “help of the Holy Spirit” (I, §956). Also, see further discussion and references in MacMullen, *Voting about God*, pp. 42f, 54, 92 and corresponding notes.

It is important to note that, in the remainder of this chapter, as well as in Chapter V (especially pp. 230, 232 and 235), references such as Divine (Holy Spirit) “inspiration,” “intervention,” and “prompting,” are meant to articulate late antique personal and communal experiences of contemporary historical events. They ought not to be
divine power that ultimately constituted the majority and validated their efforts to achieve agreement with the corresponding numerical majority. Consensus by majority or unanimity, therefore, was not merely a matter of mathematics, where a numerically larger group overwhelmed a smaller, but a result and sign of divine assistance or inspiration where God prevailed in the majority, and by so doing, established unity.⁴⁸

In Late Antiquity, such reliance on divine intervention and assistance in the context of conciliar deliberations was not considered unusual. Divine interventions were countless and they were seen not only behind religious events, but also behind natural and political occurrences. Earthquakes and lost battles were experienced as signs of God’s punishment, and rich crops and peace among peoples were considered signs of God’s blessings. Arius’s death in a public latrine, as described in terrible detail by contemporary (church) historians, was considered a punishment fitting a heresiarch, while Constantine’s long and peaceful reign, a sign of God’s favour for him.⁴⁹ In what follows in this section, I will explore some of the relevant aspects of the origin and nature of these “supernaturalist” tendencies (as MacMullen calls them), as they applied to conciliar settings. I will discuss how divine intervention was seen to turn a majority in numbers into unity, especially a unity with God, and how this could lead to a greater understanding and to truth.

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⁴⁹ MacMullen, Voting about God, 44 and 133n13.
MacMullen, using A. H. M. Jones’s observations, describes this world as a place where all, “pagans, Jews and Christians alike, believed, and it would seem believed intensely in supernatural powers, benevolent and malign, who intervened actively in human affairs.”\textsuperscript{50} Furthermore, by accepting Jones’s understanding of the “natural” as the “whole realm of experience untouched by superhuman beings—the realm within which science operates,” he designates “supernaturalist” as “the tendency to reach beyond nature—beyond the material world—in any attempt to explain our experiences.”\textsuperscript{51}

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, all spirits, demons, and angels were seen as creatures of the same loving God, and part of the same created order.\textsuperscript{52} As such, they were not evil in themselves, in their being. They became evil through a free decision to refuse to act rationally, according to the mind of God, acting irrationally instead, according to uncontrolled passions. As a result, they had fallen away from their initial unity (stability) with God.\textsuperscript{53} Evil was considered a privation of good. The greater the separation from God’s goodness, the less good (and more evil) they (their actions) became.\textsuperscript{54} Out of jealousy, the evil spirits (the devil) tried to separate human

\textsuperscript{50} A. H. M. Jones, \textit{The Later Roman Empire}, vol. 2, 957, as quoted in MacMullen, \textit{Voting about God}, 45.

\textsuperscript{51} MacMullen, \textit{Voting about God}, 46.

\textsuperscript{52} For most of the ancients, incorporeal entities, such as demons and spirits, were not immaterial. They were different only in that they were made of extremely rarefied matter [David Brakke, “The Making of Monastic Demonology: Three Ascetic Teachers on Withdrawal and Resistance,” \textit{Church History} 70, no. 1 (March 2001): 27].

\textsuperscript{53} See Origen, \textit{On First Principles}, trans. G. W. Butterworth [New York: Harper & Row (Harper Torchbooks), 1966], 1.8.1; 2.1.1-4. See also Brakke, \textit{Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 17. It is worth pointing out that this insight constitutes an important distinction between the Christian worldview and the dualism of other religions of the time, such as Manichaeism.

\textsuperscript{54} Authors such as Origen, Evagrius Ponticus and Gregory of Nyssa argued that evil is not a polar opposite of good, but a lack of union with God, an absence of being, where ultimate evil consists in complete absence of being (God), in non-being [Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, s.v. “Origen of Alexandria (185-254 CE),” accessed August 13, 2017, http://www.iep.utm.edu/origen-of-alexandria].
beings from God, by creating confusion and disunity, resulting in an absence of truth and stability.

Salvation, then, for the monk, bishop, and Christians in general, consisted in the recapitulation or restoration (*apokatastasis*) of the lost unity with God. This was to be achieved through reintegration (re-establishing of equilibrium or stability) of body, mind, and spirit with the Divine Mind, through the practice (*áskēsis*) of prayer, fasting, and acts of charity.55

Inevitably, therefore, unity within the Christian community (in terms of union with God) became a central issue, especially in Church councils, but also for emperors.56 The greatest obstacle to this was, of course, the divisive promptings of the evil spirits. As un-embodied beings, their actions were articulated or embodied by the actions of individuals57 sowing discord and confusion, resulting in an absence of unity and truth. Bishops, therefore, gathered in councils to deal with existing divisions and disunity, and they knew that in order to restore unity to the Church,58 they had to reintegrate and to recapitulate their unity with one another and with the Divine Mind (Christ). The achievement of such unity meant thinking and acting with God’s (Christ’s) mind, an implicit elimination of disunity, and an arrival at truth.

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57 Brakke, discussing Antony of Egypt, writes, “Succumbing to demonic suggestion, then, emerges as a process of negative externalization. Demons, because they share the same spiritual essence as human beings, are ‘hidden’ and ‘not visible bodily’, but they become ‘revealed bodily’ through the monk’s actualizing of their sinful potential, by creating embodied deed from spiritual thought. The result is that ‘we are their [the demon’s] bodies’” (Brakke, “The Making of Monastic Demonology,” 28).

58 Antony of Egypt, in his letters, refers to the Church as the “house of truth” through which God restores the divided and alienated creatures to unity in and through his “Only-begotten, who is the very mind and image of the Father” (Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony,* 203-204).
However, despite an appeal to the supernatural and hope for an effective intervention of the Holy Spirit in conciliar events, an established numerical majority did not always guarantee lasting or adequate unity. For example, soon after the near unanimity achieved at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), there was dissent among those who were earlier in agreement. The Council of Ephesus I (AD 431) dissolved into two competing councils at its outset, and the outcomes of the Council of Ephesus II (AD 449) were overturned by the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451). This indicates that participants at councils, while establishing a numerical majority, did not always respond properly to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, that is, they did not conform their thoughts and actions to the Divine Mind adequately.

To demonstrate a council’s authority, the presence of, and proper compliance with, the promptings of the Holy Spirit in council proceedings had to be emphasized and shown. According to a practice that can be traced back to the mid-third century, at the beginning of each council, a copy of the scriptures was brought in, in solemn procession, and it was regarded “almost as a person.” Bishops put their hands on it when they testified, used it in debates for quotation from scriptures, and, in general, indicated their unity with the Divine Word and with the first disciples. Next to the special attention given to the scriptures, they read out relevant documents from previous councils, along with universally accepted writings of prominent bishops or theologians. By so doing, they established the basic paradigm of their current deliberations and, at the same time, showed unity and continuity with all those who had gone before.

59 Following the Council of Nicaea’s definition that Christ was *homoousios* (of the same substance) with the Father, the Synod of Sirmium (AD 357) condemned both *homoousios* and *homoiousios* (Christ was “like” the Father) as non-scriptural terminology. The Synod of Ancyr (AD 358) upheld *homoiousios*. During the same period, Neo-Arianism (Radical Arianism), led by Aetius of Antioch and Eunomius of Cyzicus was reintroduced.

60 The first gathered on AD June 22, 431, under the presidency of Cyril of Alexandria; the second, a few days later, under John of Antioch.

61 MacMullen, *Voting about God*, 42-44.
before. Finally, for councils’ deliberations to be accepted as the work of the Holy Spirit, they had to be received by subsequent councils of equal or higher authority. Therefore, unity established by the Holy Spirit went far beyond the numerical majority of a particular council: it included unity beyond space and time, a unity with Christ and the whole Church. If, however, the unity of the numerical majority was deemed not to have been established by the Holy Spirit, then it was seen as the work of the Devil.

Another indication that numerical majority in itself did not necessarily guarantee conformity with God’s mind and will was demonstrated by the prophetic tradition in Jewish and Christian religious experience. In instances of this long tradition, one person, or a numerically insignificant group (Jesus’ first disciples, for example) stood up to overwhelming majorities and powers. Because of their conformity with the Divine Mind (God), they were able to witness to, or reveal, the Divine Wisdom to others. In so doing, their relationship (union) with God reconstituted existing social structures and relationships (existing numerical majorities) into a majority based on union with the Divine Mind, capable of letting Divine Wisdom shine through. Such reconstitution of social structures and relationships inevitably involved breaking up some old ones, causing division, even pain and suffering.62 However, an individual’s simple claim to speak for God—to be a prophet—did not, by itself, command acceptance by others. The authority of prophetic witness was not rooted in the prophet’s claim for union with the Divine, but in the free and unsolicited recognition of that union in his or her actions by those receiving the message.63

62 For example, this was the case in Jesus’ ministry. For a more detailed discussion of Jesus’ references to bringing “division” and a “sword” instead of “unity” and “peace” (Mt 10:34-6; Lk 12:51-3), see David C. Sim, “The Sword Motif in Matthew 10:34,” HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 56, no. 1 (December 2000): 84-104.

63 This is well articulated, for example, in the Didache (or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles), when the reader is provided with specific attributes that help discern between a true and a false prophet. See: “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,” in The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325,
From this we can see that a reliance on the “supernatural” (on God, the Divine and the Holy Spirit) did not mean a separation from the “natural.” While there was a strong reliance on the “supernatural” (on the promptings of the Holy Spirit), human effort, arguments, and “lung-power”—in short, the “natural”—remained critical to create a suitable numerical majority for the reception and appropriation of the content of the divine interventions. It was this “natural” element (the numerical majority of the group, and the everyday actions of the prophet) that provided the medium for the divine message to shine through, to become accessible to all. In a similar way, reference to interventions by evil spirits, demons or the Devil, also depended on human cooperation, on a willingness to engage in a pattern of behaviour that reflected a degraded, diminished existence, and an absence of the Divine.

On this account, any reference to “supernaturalist” tendencies in late antique conciliar gatherings implicitly affirms “naturalist” tendencies as well. This dynamic and constantly interpenetrating, yet distinct, coexistence of the “natural” and “supernatural,” is markedly different from later understandings of “natural” and “supernatural,” such as that of the Enlightenment, where the “natural” limits the “supernatural” and is “untouched” by superhuman beings. The first is characterized by dependence and trust (or dependence in distrust/fear, in case of intervention by evil spirits and demons); the second, by independence/separation and suspicion. A failure to recognize these differences leads to confusion about what constituted “rational” and “irrational” behaviour and a “supernaturalist tendency” among bishops in Late Antiquity, as they gathered in councils. Would an “intensely religious” attitude, for example,

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have implied a “superstitious” and “irrational”\textsuperscript{64} mindset, or would it have referred to an individual sincerely striving through exercise (άσκησις) to integrate the cognitive, spiritual/psychological and physical aspects of his or her life with the loving Divine Essence?

To answer this question, I would like to highlight a similarity between the late antique paradigm of spiritual beings and powers (good and evil), and Wittgenstein’s model of language-games and corresponding forms of life.\textsuperscript{65} As we have seen in this section thus far, the ancients believed that, behind all natural events and human behaviour, there were outside forces (spiritual beings, good and evil). By relying on this, one could argue, they implicitly denied an inner-outer distinction in human beings, and suggested that human beings engaged reality by participating in behavioural patterns that these spiritual beings (good or evil) represented. Behavioural patterns that reflected the Divine Mind, how God acted in human form (in Christ), invited a reaching beyond to a greater unity with God, a greater understanding (rationality) of all there is. Alternatively, the evil spiritual beings, because they chose to behave irrationally (not according to God’s mind), prompted human beings to engage reality through behavioural patterns that were irrational, contrary to how God acted in human form. The first approach brings about unity in existing diversity and sees reality as God sees it (truth). The latter approach cannot reach beyond diversity without the unifying presence of the Divine and, therefore, highlights disunity, division, and conflict, with no chance to experience reality as it is (falsity).

In a similar way, Wittgenstein’s model of language-games and corresponding forms of life also denies the inner-outer distinction and states that agreement and disagreement consist in agreement and disagreement in language-games and corresponding forms of life (patterns of behaviour and life). For example, in the case of the duck-rabbit image, agreement and

\textsuperscript{64} MacMullen, \textit{Voting about God}, 50.

\textsuperscript{65} See the discussion of Wittgenstein’s critique of the “inner”-“outer” distinction in Chapter II, above.
disagreement is due to an engagement or non-engagement in differing behavioural patterns and forms of life involving ducks and rabbits. The truth of the duck-rabbit image, therefore, is not going to be apprehended by focusing on the differences, or even by focusing on the image itself, the lowest common denominator between the two language-games and corresponding forms of life. The truth about the duck-rabbit image is going to be seen by reaching beyond, to a language-game and form of life that provides a common frame, a common raison d'être transcending the existing, differing ones. This new frame and form of life, in its unifying complexity, provides the common frame for agreement.

As we can see, therefore, the late antique bishops’ “intensely religious” effort in conciliar gatherings to reach to the Divine, was not “irrational” or “superstitious.” On the contrary, it was a behaviour that made rationality and factuality possible by conforming to the Divine Mind and, by so doing, eliminating the cause of disagreement, namely, disagreement in forms of life. This was the desire and the intent, at least. To what extent they succeeded in doing this is subject to further evaluation. In other words, while their “supernaturalist” tendencies were justified, it was not always clear whether their respective patterns of behaviour were, in fact, successful in achieving a unifying apprehension of reality as it was, and to what extent their apprehensions of reality remained enclosed in their limited language-games and corresponding forms of life.

In conclusion, we can say that the “supernaturalist” element clearly played an important role in shaping and forming the hearts and minds of bishops gathering in councils. As such, it indicates a constant and interpenetrating interaction between the human being (bishops, the “natural”) and the Divine (spiritual beings, the “supernatural”). In this interpenetrating interaction, the ‘I’-’other’ dialogic structure was constantly maintained and strengthened. This constant interaction was also characterized by dependence (of the “natural” on the
“supernatural”), and trust (in relationship to God and benevolent spirits), which meant maintaining a strong vertical organization of the community, or organization by frame, and resulted in the constant possibility for diversity and unity. Finally, the ongoing interaction between the “natural” and “supernatural” was not only based on unity, but its quality was judged by whether it led to increased unity.66

The Violent Element

Violence (in its many forms) indicates the injurious use of power, including physical force, in human relationships (individual or group).67 As such, violence or the violent element in any society plays an important role in the shaping of human relationships and interactions, as well as the fabric, of that society. Consequently, it would be an omission not to investigate the role of violence in the society of the Late Antiquity, especially religious violence. As MacMullen puts it, such an investigation will “help in understanding the conduct of councils through understanding the ideas and assumptions [about violence], the sense of the usual and permissible—in short, the mental baggage—brought to their work by the participants.”68

MacMullen, in his relatively short survey of the nature and scope of religious violence (the violent element) in the Late Antiquity, first sets aside the North African disputes surrounding rebaptism and ordination as “having nothing to do with ‘voting about God’,” and then states that the religious disputes among the, by then, overwhelmingly Christian population in all other regions of the empire were “strictly theological,” and that violence erupting in the

66 For example, a divine prompting or action that brought about unity within a larger and more universal council was commonly considered and accepted as more authoritative than in the case of Divine-human interaction in a smaller conciliar gathering.

67 MacMullen, in his discussion of the “violent element,” limits the notion of “violence” to physical harm causing physical injury or death.

68 MacMullen, Voting about God, 58.
context of these disputes was also always theological, or related to “voting about God.” He points out that there is disproportionate evidence for such violence in the five largest centres—Alexandria, Constantinople, Antioch, Rome and Ephesus—when compared to the smaller towns, though these were not exempt from it either. In his “rough estimate,” the two-and-a-quarter centuries following Nicaea produced “no less than twenty-five thousand deaths” due to “creedal differences.” The list of references to, and descriptions of, known violent acts, compiled by MacMullen, provides a graphic sample of human ingenuity in inflicting cruelty. While the victims included clergy and bishops, the majority were laity. In what follows, I will first examine MacMullen’s assumptions and claims about the origin and nature of religious violence and, subsequently, explore the kind of impact the violent element might have had on the work and outcome of conciliar gatherings.

That there were many instances of violence involving religious sentiments and contexts is clear. However, whether this violence was caused strictly by theological or doctrinal factors, as MacMullen suggests, is less clear. Was it that theological questions or convictions turned people against one another? Or, was it the case that differing religious sentiments were used to highlight and augment existing non-religious divisions within society? In what follows, I will argue for the latter.

Prior to addressing this question directly, I would like to note one particular methodological consideration that will help give a more accurate reading and interpretation of historical texts and data that report violence to posterity. As Martin Zimmermann notes, said

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69 Ibid., 56.
70 Ibid., 56-57.
71 Ibid., 57 and 137n1.
“texts and images … follow the rules and conventions of their own time.” As such, they are based both on the socio-political standards, ideologies, and other interests shaping the life of the community of the source, and on the conventions of storytelling and literary representation commonly used in that community. In other words, texts and images depicting violence are meant to do more than simply transmit data or facts. They are designed to arouse emotions, and provide an experience that motivates the reader/hearer to a desired response or action. This is why, as Timothy Barnes indicates, authors such as the anti-Christian Zosimus and the Christian Eusebius feel free and justified to give completely antithetical information about the same events.

Considering the implications of this methodological insight, it seems reasonable to ask whether MacMullen’s standard of reading the sources depicting religious violence “in the usual way, discounting round numbers a bit and treating adjectives rather conservatively,” is adequate. My aim is not to propose a correction for his estimation of twenty-five thousand fatalities of violence involving religious sentiments in the two-and-a-half centuries following the Council of Nicaea (AD 325). Rather, my intention is to point out that, in an attempt to understand the “violent element” in the Church of the Late Antiquity, one has to look beyond the reported numbers and gruesome details, and consider them in the context of the author’s intention involving relevant cultural, socio-political and economic factors.

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73 For example, the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* recommends students of rhetoric to use either “exceptional beauty (*egregia pulcritudo*) or singular hideousness (*unica turpitudo*) to create images with the strongest impact (*imagines agentes*)” (Ibid., 345).


75 MacMullen, *Voting about God*, 56.
One such factor to take into consideration is the level and pervasiveness of state-sanctioned or tolerated violence in the everyday life of late antique Roman society. A second factor that cannot be overlooked is a distinction between religious or doctrinal disagreement or conflict, and how to go about resolving such disagreement or conflict.

a) Examples and pervasiveness of violence in late antique Roman society  Arguably, one of the most violent elements in late antique Roman society was the institution of slavery. As a legally accepted and regulated form of cruelty and violence, it was one of the fundamental building blocks of the Roman state and civilization. As some sources suggest, as much as one-third of the population of Roman Italy was made up of slaves, who could not marry or have legitimate children or property, and could be sold or subjected to torture and death.

A second form of state-sanctioned and perpetrated violence was the practice of engaging in numerous and ongoing military campaigns and civil wars. As Zimmermann observes, the Roman Empire—its prosperity and the pax romana—was based largely on its military power with which it subjugated its own population (if necessary), and other peoples the Romans considered barbarians. It did so with relentless cruelty and gruesome orgies of violence which were then often depicted in graphic detail in paintings presented to the people at public celebrations of the legions’ victories in Rome.

A third well-known form of violence that was not only state sanctioned and sponsored, but also culturally cherished, was the violent spectacle of circus and amphitheatre events. These

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77 Zimmermann, “Violence in Late Antiquity Reconsidered,” 346-7.
included chariot races, gladiator and wild-animal fights and public punishment including executions.  

Another form of frequently encountered violence was the civil (non-religious) riot. Public events that involved gatherings of large crowds, including circus and theatre events, frequently became the occasion of public riots. The sheer size of the crowds—for example, up to a hundred and fifty thousand at the Circus in Rome and a hundred thousand at the Hippodrome in Constantinople—presented a constant source and opportunity for mob-like, violent expression of often unfavourable popular (political) opinions.  

Added to this, the ongoing rivalries—often exploited by the political and civic issues of the day—between the factions of Blues and Greens, and their respective partisans that made up the crowd, further raised the likelihood of violent conflict.  

As Jill Harries states, “riots had been for centuries a legitimate expression of popular opinion. The religious riot, therefore, is best understood in the context of Roman views of riots in general.” This is also demonstrated by the fact that riots were considered “a form of dialogue between rulers and ruled,” and, when exercised within limits, they were not considered against the law, as “there is virtually nothing in the criminal section of the Theodosian Code, Book 9, on riots.” Perhaps it is because riots were frequent and common that only the larger riots have

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80 Ibid., 196-201.


82 Ibid., 89. Also, as Alan Cameron, in his *Circus Factions*, points out, riots had a centuries-old tradition, they were frequent, violent, and widespread. They played a crucial role in the everyday life not only of Southern
been documented in detail. Some of the more momentous and violent riots include the so-called Pantomime Riots of AD 14 and 15,\textsuperscript{83} the anti-Jewish riots of Alexandria in AD 38, the riot of Antioch in AD 387,\textsuperscript{84} the AD 390 riot of Thessalonica,\textsuperscript{85} and the great Nika Riot in AD 532.\textsuperscript{86} The death toll of the latter two events alone is estimated at around 37,000-42,000 people, and these events were by no means the exceptions, only prominent instances in an ongoing series of similar violent events, as Geoffrey Greatrex notes.\textsuperscript{87}

A further indicator of how deeply the violent nature of factionalism permeated late antique Roman society is that it was not limited to the Blues and Greens, or to the common people on the street or in the Hippodrome. As Dallas DeForest explains, the same basic social mechanisms of factionalism governed student life in the schools of Late Antiquity Athens—the
life of the future educated elite—as governed society in general, however, they were not referred to as Blues and Greens. The different factions were formed according to schools of thought or teachers, and they engaged in much more than their studies. Libanius, the sophist teacher of rhetoric, talks about wars being fought among the schools with cudgels, knives and stones, among other things, to raise the prestige of their respective teachers, and also about students “raiding the houses of the poor in Athens’ rougher neighbourhoods at night.” Violence, however, was not only part of the extracurricular activities of students. As Janet B. Davis reports, even speech compositions in the famous schools of rhetoric included topics such as: “A man, legally, kills his son in the presence of the mother, inadvertently causing her death,” and, “Ten young men have broken ranks and deserted. The mother of one kills him and the other nine return to service.”

An additional source of state-sanctioned violence in the everyday life of Late Antiquity Roman society was the legal stigma of infamia or disrepute. The condition of infamia could be mediate (resulting from legal convictions, among other offences, for fraud, theft, violence against individuals with a good reputation, or abuses in partnership or tutelage), or immediate (ipso iure attached to certain trades, such as prostitutes, musicians, theatrical workers, gladiators, and funeral workers). Other than ineligibility for public office, the status of infamia carried a number of legal disabilities. Infames did not have full legal standing in the courts (could not

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88 Dallas DeForest, “Between Mysteries and Factions: Initiation Rituals, Student Groups, and Violence in the Schools of Late Antique Athens,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 315-342.

89 Ibid., 335. The entire section (pp. 334-341) provides more detail.


bring accusations or provide testimonies, for example), had fewer means to acquire capital, could be forcibly moved to other provinces (exiled) and, most importantly, were physically at risk both in public and in the courts. This meant that “infames and slaves shared a commonality in that neither could guard their body from assault or being violated.” 92 They could be physically abused or violated without any legal consequences whatsoever.

b) Disagreement and conflict versus conflict resolution From the above, we can conclude that violence in late antique Roman society was a commonly accepted tool to settle disagreements and conflicts and, as such, it was legally sanctioned, supported, and widely used by individuals and the state. As Peter Brown puts it, it was “power and not persuasion” that remained “the most striking characteristic of the Later Roman Empire in all its regions.” 93 The great diversity (mostly not religious) of disagreements, which served as an occasion for violence, indicates that violence was not conflict specific. It could arise in any life or social situation, but interestingly enough, it did not. It is a common human experience that the majority of disagreements and conflicts (including religious ones) did not result in violent behaviour. In other words, just as today, in Late Antiquity as well, there was no necessary cause-effect relationship between any particular disagreement (including religious or doctrinal ones) and violence. Consequently, violence, as a form of behaviour, was not concerned with what the nature of the disagreement was, but how it was to be resolved.

This lack of a cause-effect relationship in the case of religious violence is well illustrated, for example, by the fact that, prior to AD 313, although there were doctrinal disagreements among Christians, there is very little evidence of intra-Christian religious violence. Furthermore,

92 Ibid., 8.

even in MacMullen’s list of instances of post-Nicaean intra-Christian violence (discussed above), a disproportionate number of such recorded events took place in areas of the empire where Hellenic cultural influence was dominant: Alexandria (not the rest of Egypt) and the eastern provinces and diocese. In the West, where, for example, Arian and semi-Arian sentiments were also strong, there was very little or no religious violence recorded.\textsuperscript{94} Religious disagreement, therefore, in itself, did not provide a necessary, only a sufficient cause for a possible violent solution. The choice between a violent or non-violent solution was the result of a separate decision that was subject to other determinants, in this case, to cultural and socio-political factors, as well as to changes in church-state relationships.\textsuperscript{95}

According to Bond, one particularly significant change in the church-state relationship can be traced back to Diocletian’s widening of the infamia rules to include “religious deviants,” in his attempt to renew the traditional religion of Rome.\textsuperscript{96} By so doing, Diocletian attached the stigma of disrepute to Manichaeans and Christians in order to disable and disband them. This later resulted in the full-fledged persecution of Christians in AD 303.

Subsequently, following Diocletian’s example, even Christian emperors moved to expand the applicability of infamia to include heretics, pagans, and apostates, by which the members of these groups were rendered open to abuse, violence, and exile. These emperors were compelled to do this because of their patronage of the Church (and the Christian faith) as the unifying force

\textsuperscript{94} See, for example, Frend’s discussion of how the Nicene-Arian tensions were handled by Emperors Valentinian I and Gratian, along with Ambrose of Milan in the West (Frend, The Rise of Christianity, 617-26).

\textsuperscript{95} In the Christian tradition, the example of Jesus and the witness of the martyrs indicate that not even the most violent circumstances, such as a direct attack on one’s life, provided a necessary cause for a violent resolution of a disagreement or conflict.

\textsuperscript{96} Bond, “Altering Infamy,” 10.
within the empire, and by the resulting and inevitable criminalization of heresy as the enemy of unity both within the church and the empire. Constantine, by his AD 312 and subsequent legislation, granted special privileges to Christian clergy and transformed the social and political status of bishops from little-known leaders of relatively small religious communities at the margins of society to high-ranking public figures and officers of the state with quasi-judicial powers such as those which judges and envoys enjoyed. In addition, he gave legal status to church councils, creating a new layer of state-bureaucracy with considerable administrative and coercive powers.

There was no clear separation of church and state. While there was a distinction between the authority (auctoritas) of the bishop and the power (potestas) of the emperor (and civil authorities), their respective spheres of influence often overlapped. The state was a deeply religious institution and Constantine was considered a “bishop appointed by God” of those “outside” the Church, and a “universal bishop” of bishops, supporting the Church in its pursuit of unity, an issue in which Constantine had a significant vested interest, as he considered

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it an essential element of his reign. At the same time, the Church acquired significant power structures and corresponding functions that mimicked the state. Furthermore, in exercising their respective roles, not only could the state use its coercive tools against bishops, but bishops, too, could at times present formidable opposition to emperors.

This resulted in an ongoing mixing of influences within the Roman society of the period: of religion or religious sentiments, on the one hand, and state and everyday social and political interests and their corresponding power structures, on the other. In the combination of the two, the socio-political and cultural reality provided the mould (the “natural” element) in which the religious (or “supernatural”) element received its form. Consequently, a surfacing of theological or doctrinal disagreements could only be settled with the available tools, provided by society (the “natural” mould).

Even so, considering the overtly violent characteristics that some religious disagreements and conflicts elicited, the question still could and needs to be asked, How could this happen? Why was the reality and accessibility of the ‘Christ-like’ (Christian), non-violent form of life, revealed by Jesus and witnessed to by the first disciples, so easily forgotten when it came to a choice of how to resolve a religious or doctrinal disagreement or conflict? How could those

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103 For example, Ambrose of Milan forced Theodosius the Great to perform a public act of contrition, for ordering the massacre of innocent civilians at Thessalonica (AD 390).

104 Gregory of Nazianzus emphatically states, “But there is nothing to bind those people who had been torn apart, not by orthodoxy (bitter anger invented this for it is an accomplished liar), but by the dispute over the bishop’s throne” [Gregory of Nazianzus, “Concerning His Own Life,” in *Autobiographical Poems*, trans. and ed. Caroline White (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), lines 1563-1565]; and “They shouted, gathered together their allies, made accusations and were themselves accused, handed things out and leaped about, grabbing whomever they could get to first, in a frenzy of desire for power, for sole power” (Ibid., lines 1552-1556).

105 This question also puzzled contemporaries, such as Gregory of Nazianzus, who, dismayed by the participating bishops’ unchristian behaviour at the Council of Constantinople (AD 381), resigned its presidency [Gregory of Nazianzus, “Oration 42,” §§20-25; and Gregory of Nazianzus, “Concerning His Own Life,” lines 1766-1825].
responsible for proclaiming the Christian message of sacrificial love be so unchristian?\textsuperscript{106}

Answers to these poignant questions may include references to inapt appropriation of the Christian message (of the life, death and resurrection of Christ), a lack of capacity or resolve to implement it, or simple human sinfulness.\textsuperscript{107} Regardless of the causes, however, and whether they are justifiable or not,\textsuperscript{108} such questions only highlight the fact that, in the Christian tradition, the preferred or desirable solution to religious and doctrinal disagreements and conflicts was expected to be a non-violent one, and that the Christian form of life as such does not necessarily cause religious violence. Any attempt, then, to eliminate violent forms of conflict resolution when disagreements and conflict arise should not focus on the (nature of) the Christian message, but on its better appropriation that has thus far been hindered by anthropological, socio-political, cultural and personal factors (that the Christian message has not yet sufficiently transformed). In short, it is not the \textit{presence}, but the \textit{absence} (privation) of the Christian message, from the said social and personal factors (“natural” mould), that leads to violence.

Given that the essence of the Christian message is God’s sacrificial love for humanity, with justice as its minimal measure,\textsuperscript{109} it is the \textit{absence} (privation) of this justice and sacrificial

\textsuperscript{106} An interesting illustration of this dilemma can be found in Gregory of Nazianzus’ “Concerning His Own Life.” In this autobiographical poem, he describes two possible reactions to the situation ensuing his taking control of the Church of the Apostles in Constantinople: to act with force, provocation, and violence to please who “are now in power,” the “miserable crowd of young people,” (who usually made up the rioting mob), in order “greedily [to] exploit both the opportunity and power,” or to act with restraint and gentleness and “heal with the medicine of salvation.” Gregory decided for the latter (Gregory of Nazianzus, “Concerning His Own Life,” lines 1408-1419).

\textsuperscript{107} Gregory of Nazianzus aptly describes this attitude as follows: “For the leaders and the teachers of the people, the bestowers of the spirit, from whose high thrones the word of salvation is poured forth, they who always proclaim peace to all in ringing voices from the midst of their churches, these men were raging against each other with great bitterness” (Ibid., 1546-1551).

\textsuperscript{108} A discussion of questions concerning possible merits of justifiable violence, for example, in self defence (such as ‘just war’), is a wide-ranging one and, as such, beyond the scope of this thesis. However, even if some acts of violence are deemed justifiable, for example, as the lesser of two evils, this does not mean that these acts in themselves are virtuous and an authentic representation of the Christian ideal.

\textsuperscript{109} See, for example, Kenneth Himes, \textit{Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations} (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 345-6; Benedict XVI, \textit{Caritas in Veritate}:...
love—an absence that can take many forms—that leads to a denial of what is due the ‘face of the other’ (that is, not to be harmed), as it appears in the field of vision of the ‘I’. Consequently, as the ‘face of the other’ is denied its justice, the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure weakens or disintegrates, and dialogue breaks down. Since, as we pointed out earlier, to be is to be in dialogue, this leads to a degradation or outright destruction of human existence, by the many forms of violence both in the Church and in society.

In sum, the pervasive presence of the violent element in late antique Roman society, as a form of behaviour that denied the ‘other’ its justice, had a significant role in shaping the hearts and minds of the bishops as they deliberated on doctrinal and related issues in conciliar gatherings. Just as in the secular context, when a breakdown in the vertical organizational structure of society (normally sustained by benevolence, loyalty and trust between the ruler and the people) resulted in riots and violence, a weakening of the vertical organizational structure in the Church and conciliar gatherings resulted in factionalism (fragmentation of the community), conflict, and, in some cases, in violence.

It is a fact that religious division and violence was present in the Christian Church of Late Antiquity. That it became a scandal, however, in a society otherwise permeated by conflict and violence, as the late antique Roman society was, only highlights that injustice, division and violence were contrary to the Christian message. Consequently, as such, it damaged the unity and the credibility of the Christian community in general and that of conciliar gatherings in particular.

The Socio-Political Element

In the previous section on the violent element, I indicated how the legal and political intertwining of church and state provided the mould (the “natural” element) in which the religious (or “supernatural”) element received its form. It seems reasonable, then, that the socio-political element is to be considered not only in understanding violence, especially religious violence, but also among the influences that shaped doctrinal disagreements and the work of conciliar gatherings to eliminate such disagreements. As Raymond Van Dam observes, since the role of bishops—and, correspondingly, the Church’s organization—developed and was regulated by imperial law within the context of the traditional Late Antique society, the Church’s organization inevitably resembled the structure of the imperial administration.\(^\text{110}\) Not only did the Church have an impact on civil society but, for better or for worse, civil society also influenced the Church. It was inevitable, then, that regional and inter-city political and economic rivalries crept into intra-Church and inter-diocesan relationships as well.

For example, the foundation of Constantinople (AD 342) as the ‘New Rome’ represented a direct challenge to the political and economic prestige of ancient and influential metropolitan sees—affirmed as such at the Council of Nicaea—such as Antioch, Jerusalem, and the powerful and wealthy sees of Alexandria and Rome. As a result, the Council of Constantinople (AD 381) elevated the previously obscure Church of Byzantium—the old name for Constantinople, and a suffragan of Heraclea—to the status of a patriarchate and gave it a place second in honour only to Rome. By so doing, and in order to accommodate the newly created territory and status of Constantinople, the council limited the authority of the bishops of both Antioch and Alexandria. This dramatic shift in the socio-political and religious equilibrium of the empire introduced new

\(^{110}\) Van Dam, “Bishops and Society,” 350.
and long-lasting regional, political and ecclesiastical rivalries. The ensuing new, socio-political mould inevitably affected the assessment of the doctrinal orthodoxy of leaders of these communities by their respective opponents. More importantly, the mixing of socio-political and doctrinal motivations, and the lack of clarity which followed, resulted in a conflictual entanglement with little or no hope of a constructive resolution.

Another example of how the socio-political element affected unity was the rise of Arianism. When Arius, a relatively obscure but charismatic Alexandrian cleric, accused Bishop Alexander of Sabellianism, the subsequent theological disagreement quickly spilled beyond the Egyptian Church due to Arius’s appeal for support to bishops from outside of Egypt, from the East. In an environment of ongoing rivalry between Alexandria and the eastern metropolises, such as Nicomedia, Antioch and eventually Constantinople, a localized and relatively small theological disagreement became an empire- and church-dividing archetypal heresy that generated numerous (violent) conflicts and lasted for centuries. While theological disagreement was undeniably present, it could not in itself necessitate this outcome (it was not a


112 This is well illustrated in the repeated attempts by bishops of Alexandria to reassert their status. Prior to Constantinople I, Bishop Peter of Alexandria attempted to install his own candidate as the bishop of the capital (Ibid.), and, later, Cyril of Alexandria at the Council of Ephesus I distributed over a thousand pounds of gold and other gifts to the members of the Imperial household in the hope of political and doctrinal support (Van Dam, “Bishops and Society,” 354).

113 In his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, Arius writes, “Eusebius, your brother of Caesarea, Theodotus, Paulinus, Athanasius, Gregory, Aëtius and all the bishops of the East, have been made anathema because they say that God has existence without beginning prior to the Son” [J. Stevenson, A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337, rev. W. H. C. Frend (London: S.P.C.K., 1987), 325].

114 See some of the causes of these rivalries discussed in Christopher A. Beeley, The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 107-8.

115 Ibid.
necessary condition) simply because of the significant and multifaceted theological differences among the so-called Arians themselves who, despite these, still managed to forge an alliance against Alexandria.\textsuperscript{116}

In contrast, the Arian heresy among fifth-century Gothic Christians in the West was viewed and treated very differently. In an environment where no significant political gains were at stake, the heretical teachings were simply attributed to badly translated scriptures.\textsuperscript{117} As the Nicaean Christian writer Salvian puts it, the Arian heretics “err, but with the best intentions, not through hatred but through love of God;” as such, they were “heretics, but unknowingly,” and how they would be judged for their “false opinion on the day of judgment, none can know but the Judge.”\textsuperscript{118} As a result, Catholics learned to live in relative peace, side by side with Arians, under Arian kings. In other words, while dealing with the same heresy that caused divisions and upheavals in other parts of the empire, there is no evidence of society- and kingdom-dividing conflict, let alone violence, in the fifth-century West.\textsuperscript{119} It is also worth pointing out that, in this

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} These differences have been highlighted and discussed by a number of authors. Rowan Williams points out differences among the “Lucianists” (Williams, \textit{Arius}, 63, 90) and among the “Arians” in general (Ibid., 171, 178). Frances Young and Andrew Teal highlight disagreements between Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea on Arius [Frances M. Young and Andrew Teal, \textit{From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background}, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 16]. Barnes and Parvis show that, although neither side of the conflict “shared [within their respective groups] identical theological views or perspectives, they nevertheless cooperated with other members of their group” in acting against their opponents [Timothy Barnes, \textit{Constantine: Dynasty, Power and Religion}, 141; see also Sara Parvis, \textit{Marcellus of Ancyra and the Lost Years of the Arian Controversy} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 96-133].
\item \textsuperscript{117} Maurice Wiles, \textit{Archetypal Heresy: Arianism through the Centuries} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 46-7.
\item \textsuperscript{119} While it is true that Arian Goths, for example, brought much violence and conflict to the Western Empire (such as the A.D. 410 sack of Rome), their actions were motivated primarily by geopolitical interests, and not by their Arian-Christian bent [M. R. Godden, “The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths: Rewriting the Sack of Rome,” \textit{Anglo-Saxon England} 31 (December 2002): 47-48].
\end{itemize}
relatively non-conflictual and outright tolerant environment, all these Arian Christians eventually accepted the orthodox homoousian creed.

It seems reasonable, then, to say that bishops arriving at conciliar gatherings brought with them their respective socio-political interests and convictions and that these influenced their sense of unity and doctrinal deliberations. If, however, there was a strong enough common frame—as was the case at the Council of Nicaea, due to Constantine’s presence and demand for unity—a common agreement on truth was possible. If, on the other hand, such a frame was not established—as was the case at the Council of Ephesus (AD 431), when Cyril of Alexandria took the reins in the absence of Emperor Theodosius II—unity suffered and there was no possibility for a commonly arrived at truth.

**Conclusion**

Having discussed the five socio-religious elements and provided a measure of critique of MacMullen’s work, I return now to the question formulated at the beginning of this chapter, concerning how to proceed when encountering disagreement in a situation of dialogic interaction. As we have seen, the goal in dialogic interaction is to maintain an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure and a strong enough vertical organization and corresponding frame that space for diversity is accommodated. In addition, the goal is also to discern whether any newly established unity—and the truth uncovered by it—will lead to a capacity for greater unity in subsequent dialogic interactions, or for disunity.

Our explorations have shown that the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure is fundamentally affected by all five elements. The democratic element in a vertical group or society is based on trust, loyalty, and care, and, as such, it fundamentally affirms the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure.

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120 Cyril of Alexandria, refusing to wait for the arrival of John of Antioch, on AD June 21, 431 opened the council and excommunicated Nestorius of Constantinople. Four days later, at his arrival, John of Antioch opened a counter council, and mutual excommunications between John and Cyril followed.
The cognitive element, in both of its approaches, provides an opportunity for a strong affirmation of the ‘other’ by the ‘I’, and for the participation of individuals possessing a variety of cognitive skills. The “supernaturalist” element implies an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure not only in a relationship between the human being and God, but also among human beings, as the promptings of the Divine Spirit become revealed in the actions of the ‘other’. We have seen, too, that not giving the ‘other’ its due (justice), in itself constitutes the violent element. In other words, while religious disagreements may provide an opportunity for such injustice and violence (sufficient cause), they are not a necessary cause for violence to occur. Finally, socio-political factors are often the necessary cause and, as such, they can undermine the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure.

We have seen, too, that maintaining a strong enough vertical structure (organization by frame) in a conciliar gathering is also greatly affected by the five socio-religious elements. The democratic element, where ‘people power’ constitutes executive powers, is a foundational aspect of a group organized along vertical relationships characterized by trust, loyalty, and care. It is the general sense of belonging to the group (conciliar gathering) that takes priority over the individual bishop’s attributes (opinions). Diversity of opinion can be maintained as long as the vertical relationships are strong enough to preserve a frame that can contain an ongoing dialogic interaction for the elimination of disagreements. The dynamic interaction of the two aspects of the cognitive element is essential for the sustaining of such a frame. Furthermore, for bishops gathered in a conciliar setting, the ultimate and most important frame or vertical structure is dependence on God (the “supernaturalist” element). Finally, the vertical structure is always threatened by violence (by which the ‘other’ does not receive its justice), when trust, loyalty, and promises of care are broken, due, for example, to socio-political interests.
Finally, an affirmative response can also be given to the question, whether the five socio-religious elements affect unity and lead to greater unity. Trust, loyalty, and care, underlying the democratic element in a vertically organized group (conciliar gathering), are basic building blocks of unity. The actional approach to the cognitive element assumes unity, while the collegial or argumentative approach aims to create one. The “supernaturalist” element seeks unity with the Divine and the ‘other’ through relying on Divine intervention and guidance, often articulated in the actions of the ‘other’. Further, an absence of injustice and violence in encountering the ‘face of the other’ simply means a preservation of the unity achieved in the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic interaction.

In sum, the five socio-religious elements discussed in this chapter are important factors in maintaining a dialogic interaction that could facilitate a conciliar unity sufficient for truth to be uncovered and recognized by all. The factors influencing such efforts, however, cannot be limited to these five. Depending on specific circumstances, other factors will play a role as well. What is important is that all relevant factors are identified and taken into consideration in the proceedings of such gatherings. In the next and final chapter, I will explore how these five, and perhaps other factors, shaped the hearts and minds of the bishops gathered at the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451).
Chapter V: Exploring the Council of Chalcedon as an Exercise in Dialogue To Arrive at Unity and Truth

Introduction

In previous chapters, I laid a multidisciplinary (philosophical, social anthropological, and historical) foundation for the exploration of the Council of Chalcedon as a dialogic event in its historical context. The insights and conclusions that I formulated in these chapters include the following:

Dialogue or dialogic interaction, in its countless forms, is a rule-governed human activity or language-game with a corresponding form of life and an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, within which human life unfolds: “to be is to be in dialogue.” By maintaining the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, the unfolding, and ongoing practice, of dialogue strengthens trust in the ‘other’ and enhances unity, which enables the participants in the dialogic interaction to uncover and grasp truth—to see and use things as they are—with increasing accuracy.

The distinction and dynamic interaction between vertical (according to frame) and horizontal (according to attribute) relationships, and corresponding organizational principles in a group or society, are essential for maintaining the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure and being (remaining) in dialogue. A strong enough vertical organization and frame—characterized by trust (faith), loyalty and care—makes diversity and, consequently, unity possible, and provides a secure base for an exploration, and negotiations, of differences—possible obstacles to unity—along horizontal organizational structures.

The five socio-religious elements (democratic, cognitive, “supernaturalist,” violent and socio-political) refer to social and religious realities of late antique Roman society that shaped

1 The five socio-religious elements discussed here refer to the social and religious context of Late Antiquity Rome and, as such, their number is meant to be indicative and not definitive.
and formed the hearts and minds of bishops gathering in a council. Because of this, these elements directly affected the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure of these conciliar gatherings and their unfolding as dialogic events.

Building on, and making use of, these insights, I will turn, in what follows, to the systematic investigation of the first six sessions of the Council of Chalcedon, with the aim of uncovering what we can learn from this momentous event in the Christian tradition about theological and doctrinal dialogue. I will first identify and briefly explore the historical antecedents and context of the doctrinal disagreement that occasioned the council. Subsequently, I will discuss the historical circumstances and proceedings of the conciliar gathering and how they helped or hindered the act of establishing a sufficient level of unity for an arrival at a commonly recognized truth. In so doing, I will make use of the five socio-religious elements to determine how, and to what extent, the ‘I’-‘other’ structure of the dialogic interaction of the council was influenced, and how these influences were managed and dealt with. Relying on primary sources, such as the Acts of the council and related correspondence, I will identify and discuss major turning points in the dynamic of the council that facilitated its unfolding, and draw pertinent conclusions. Relevant theological content will be discussed and referred to in function of these primary goals of this chapter.

Setting the Scene—The Theological Disagreement

If the Council of Nicaea was about who the Son, incarnate in Jesus the Christ, was in relation to God the Father, then the Council of Chalcedon gathered to discuss the contentious question of who Christ was in relation to humanity. The long debated and finally agreed on answer to the first question was that Christ was one in being (homoousion) or, of one substance

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2 I will use the term ‘Christ’ as an inclusive term for the Son of God, both pre-existent and incarnate.
(unius substantiae) with the Father. This was a clear rejection of any understanding of Christ as the mean between God and humanity, as was suggested, for example, by Arius. Christ was fully God, Nicæa had stated, but what, then, was his relationship to humanity or, more exactly, how were divinity and humanity united in Christ? If the arrival at the answer regarding Christ’s divinity was long and difficult, the formulation of the answer to the question regarding how his divinity was integrated with his humanity proved to be just as long and problematic.

Nestorius, a monk from the monastery of Eupropios near Antioch was consecrated the bishop of Constantinople in April of AD 428. Together with his friends Theodoret of Cyrus and Andrew of Samosata, Nestorius represented the great Syrian theological tradition, often referred to as the Antiochene School of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Shortly after his consecration, Nestorius was asked to settle a theological dispute between two factions in the capital city. The concern was whether an orthodox veneration of Mary was reflected by the title Mary Mother of God (Theotokos) or Mary Mother of the Man (Anthropotokos). At issue was how humanity and divinity were united in Christ. Did Mary give birth to the Word-become-man, or to the man assumed by the Word? The former aligned more with Alexandrian Christological principles; the latter, with old Antiochene theological thought. Nestorius attempted a compromise. He admitted that both standpoints could be interpreted in an orthodox manner, but he also argued that both could be misinterpreted and lead to heresy. In the end, he vetoed both

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6 For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 27.
usages, and suggested reconciliation in the biblical notion of Mary Mother of Christ 
(*Christotokos*).⁷

Some of the monks of Constantinople took issue with Nestorius’s solution and, mocking his style, they formulated the syllogism: “If Mary is not, strictly speaking, the Mother of God, then her son is not, strictly speaking, God.”⁸ In response to Nestorius’s sermons of early AD 428 on the subject, the monks expressed their concern to Cyril the Bishop of Alexandria. Cyril was known as a friend and defender of the monks and also an exceptional theologian and great spokesperson of the Alexandrian theological tradition and its biblical exegesis, in the line of such remarkable figures as Clement, Origen, Didymus the Blind, and Athanasius.⁹ Cyril, also an acute political strategist, and never shy to attempt to exercise influence over the Church of Constantinople, responded promptly. This eventually led to a flurry of correspondence not only between Nestorius and Cyril, but with Celestine of Rome and John of Antioch also. As a result, theological positions solidified and conflict seemed inevitable. In August of 430, Celestine held a synod in Rome that condemned Nestorius and demanded that he recant his errors.¹⁰ Cyril secured a similar decision by a synod of Egyptian bishops in November of the same year.¹¹ Having been made executor of the Roman synod’s decision by Celestine, and armed with his home synod’s decision, Cyril sent his *Third Letter* to Nestorius, and his infamous *Twelve Anathemas* (or *Chapters*) to Constantinople in December of 430.¹² Nestorius remained firm in his position and

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⁷ Ibid., 27-8.

⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁹ Ibid., 1-3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 42-3; Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 148.


responded with twelve anathemas of his own. John of Antioch, first advising Nestorius to compromise, was angered by Cyril’s incautiously worded Twelve Anathemas, and he and some of his fellow oriental bishops responded with counter attacks.\footnote{Donald Fairbairn, “Allies or Merely Friends? John of Antioch and Nestorius in the Christological Controversy,” Journal of Ecclesiastical History 58, no. 3 (July 2007): 384.} Meanwhile, the emperor, at the promptings of Nestorius (who believed a general council would vindicate him), called a council at Ephesus for the following year to settle the issue.

The seemingly simple initial question, whether Mary can be addressed as Mother of God (Theotokos), had uncovered some far-reaching theological differences regarding who Christ was and how Christ saved. The classic ‘word-human being’ (logos-anthropos) and ‘word-flesh’ (logos-sarx) distinction, to describe these differences, as Brian Daley points out, is an oversimplification that can be positively misleading.\footnote{For example, Diodore at times uses the expression “the logos and his flesh” (sarx) without questioning Jesus’ full humanity, and Cyril consistently claims in his correspondence with Nestorius that the “flesh” (sarx) he speaks of includes a complete rational human soul [Brian E. Daley, “Antioch and Alexandria: Christology as Reflection on God’s Presence in History,” in The Oxford Handbook of Christology, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 122]. The ‘word-human being’ and ‘word-flesh’ distinction has been proposed by authors such as Aloys Grillmeier, in his Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 1, From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451), 2nd ed., trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), and critiqued by others, such as McGuckin, in his St. Cyril of Alexandria, 205.} Such a clear-cut distinction is problematic not only because no ancient author clearly aligned with either category, but also because, despite the seemingly clear dissimilarity, the two approaches had more in common than they had differences.

Both Cyril and Nestorius agreed that the fully divine Word, as understood by Nicene orthodoxy, was present in the person of Christ; that, at the same time, Christ, the Jesus of Nazareth, was fully and integrally human; and that neither the full divinity nor the full and integral humanity were ever compromised in the incarnation.\footnote{For Cyril, see, for example, his “Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius” and “Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius” (including the “Twelve Chapters”), in Tanner, Decrees, 40-44 and 50-61, respectively; “Scholia on the
word and the assumed human being (‘flesh enlivened by rational soul’, in Cyril’s terminology) were fully united.\(^\text{16}\)

When, however, they articulated how the divine and the human were present and united in the person of Christ (how the incarnation happened), there was both agreement and disagreement. They agreed that the articulation of how this union happened required paradoxical and mystical language and imagery.\(^\text{17}\) Their disagreement could be summed up as follows:

Nestorius argued that the Word (divine nature) assumed a full human being (human nature), and

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\(^{\text{16}}\) Cyril talks about “natural union” where humanity and divinity are not juxtaposed (“Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius,” in Tanner, Decrees, 52), and where the two natures are united into one incarnate nature (\textit{mia physis}) [“First Letter to Succensus,” in \textit{Cyril of Alexandria: Selected Letters}, ed. and trans. Lionel R. Wickham, Oxford Early Christian Texts, ed. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 75, §§5-6]. Nestorius, on the other hand, refers to “high and divine conjunction, so that the divine nature accepts what belongs to the body as its own” (“Second Letter of Nestorius to Cyril,” in Tanner, Decrees, 48-9), and to prosopic union [Nestorius, \textit{The Bazaar of Heracleides}, trans. and ed. G. I. Driver and Leonard Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 370].

\(^{\text{17}}\) Nestorius, in essence, asserts that two concrete, irreconcilably distinct, and uncompromised existences (\textit{hypostases}), with their corresponding \textit{prosopa}, equal one distinct existence (\textit{hypostasis}) and its corresponding \textit{prosopon} (Nestorius, \textit{The Bazaar}, 207; Young and Teal, \textit{From Nicaea to Chalcedon}, 294; and Grillmeier, \textit{Christ in Christian Tradition}, 457-9). In a similar way, Cyril states that two irreconcilably distinct and uncompromised natures (\textit{physis}) equal one (incarnate) nature (\textit{mia physis}), for example, in the “Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius,” in Tanner, Decrees, 41, and that Christ “suffered impassibly” (“Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten,” in McGuckin, \textit{St. Cyril of Alexandria}, 332, §35). Also, both Cyril and Nestorius frequently use (for example, in their correspondence with one another) expressions such as “unspeakable, inconceivable” union (“Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius,” in Tanner, Decrees, 41), and “high and divine conjunction” (“Second Letter of Nestorius to Cyril,” in Tanner, Decrees, 49).
that the two became one person in Christ in a “high and divine conjunction.” At the same time, Cyril claimed that the Word became human through his birth from Mary, by ineffably (in an unspeakable and inconceivable manner) or hypostatically uniting to himself flesh or sarx (a complete human nature, including rational soul). The first is a static conjunction of two concrete, equally important but ontologically unequal entities or hypostases (dual subjects); the second is a dynamic unfolding of the Word-becoming-human (without compromising his divinity) in an unmediated union, in one hypostasis (single subject).

These theological differences (as any difference in opinion, discussed in previous chapters), were due to disagreements in forms of life. As McGuckin and others point out, Nestorius’s starting point (or hinge proposition, grounding his language-game and corresponding form of life), in the articulation of his religious experience (of salvation), is the otherness of the divine nature with respect to finite, mutable and passible creatures. In contrast, Cyril’s basic presupposition (or hinge proposition) is the experience of the intimate and loving involvement of God the only begotten Son in the unfolding process of salvation. The first is rooted in the wider context of an understanding of salvation as the human being’s free collaboration with the initial promptings of the divine presence (grace), and experienced as growth in freedom and virtue, that leads to deeper intimacy and union with God. The second is rooted in the understanding of salvation as the initial divine action whereby the Word assumed a full human nature, which was

19 “Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius,” in Tanner, Decrees, 41.
experienced as unity and intimacy, and which prompted growth in freedom and virtue.\textsuperscript{21} These differences were even further contextualized by the use of theological language and the reading and interpretation of scripture.\textsuperscript{22} Finally, these dissimilarities in forms of faith life became further amplified by existing differences in forms of political life stemming from the political and economic status, and regional aspirations, of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome. In other words, it was a \textit{partial disagreement} regarding the unity of Christ’s divinity and humanity that served as the sufficient cause of the ensuing controversy and conflict. The necessary cause that moulded and amplified this initial partial disagreement into a full-fledged controversy and conflict—that resulted in millennia-long divisions—was provided by the respective forms of political life of those involved.\textsuperscript{23}


\textsuperscript{22} As Daley points out, theological language in Antioch was used primarily as a precise and technically sophisticated tool to avoid heresy while, by Cyril, it was used as an evocative, deliberately paradoxical means to elicit reverence, wonder and a liturgical atmosphere. In biblical interpretation, the Antiochenes tended to rely on hermeneutical sophistication based on Greek philosophy while, for Cyril, it was important to preserve the shocking originality of the biblical message (Daley, “Antioch and Alexandria,” 134-5).

\textsuperscript{23} For example, Elizabeth Iskander, in her book \textit{Sectarian Conflict in Egypt: Coptic Media, Identity and Representation}, argues convincingly that the political underpinnings of the ongoing Constantinople-Alexandria conflict were rooted in the emerging Coptic nationalism in Egypt, that gained a clear momentum after the Council of Constantinople (AD 381), which designated Constantinople second in primacy after Rome. Iskander sums up her argument as follows: “It does seem certain that both the longstanding rivalry between Alexandria and Constantinople and the growth of Coptic nationalism contributed to the outcome of the Council of Chalcedon” [Elizabeth Iskander, \textit{Sectarian Conflict in Egypt: Coptic Media, Identity and Representation} (London: Routledge, 2012), 14].

This Coptic national awakening and what it meant for the political and inter-church relationship between Alexandria and Constantinople at the time is well summarized by a quote attributed to Dioscorus the Archbishop of Alexandria: “This Country ‘Egypt’ belongs to me more than to the emperors and I request sovereignty over it” [Jacques Tagher, \textit{Christians in Muslim Egypt: An Historical Study of the Relations between Copts and Muslims from 640-1922} (Altenberge: Oros Verlag, 1998), 3]. Regarding how this influenced church life, Tagher suggests that, while the Christological dispute culminating at Chalcedon appeared to be doctrinal, in reality it had much more to do with the power politics of the time (Ibid.).
The Councils of Ephesus

The council to settle the differences between viewpoints was convoked by Emperor Theodosius II, together with his Western co-Emperor Valentinian III, and with the agreement of Pope Celestine I. It was to take place in Ephesus with a starting date of AD June 7, 431, the feast of Pentecost. However, despite the proper (according to protocol) and careful preparations, the council ended in bitter division instead of settling the differences peacefully, as urged both by pope and emperor. What went wrong? Why did this promising dialogic event end in failure?

One main reason for the failure was that the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure of this event of dialogue was not maintained. Cyril arrived at the council with two local synods’ condemnations of Nestorius in hand, and prepared, as the pope’s representative, to execute these excommunications unless Nestorius recanted. Prior to the council, while waiting for the arrival of John of Antioch, Nestorius and Cyril avoided each other. Four days before John’s arrival, Cyril opened the council and assumed presidency. Nestorius refused to attend to answer charges against him despite the three summonses, a refusal which already guaranteed his condemnation. He would attend when all the bishops arrived, he replied to the second summons, but he would not appear in a court where only his opponents were present and his accuser was to be his judge. The council, after examining Nestorius’s Second Letter to Cyril and comparing it with Cyril’s Second and Third Letters (including the Twelve Chapters) to Nestorius, found it


25 Cyril’s opening of the Council prior to the arrival of John of Antioch became the source of significant controversy. For a more detailed discussion of the issues involved see Davis, The First Seven Ecumenical Councils, 153-54; McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria, 59-70, and Russell, Cyril of Alexandria, 47.

26 Davis, The First Seven Ecumenical Councils, 154-55; McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria, 77.
heretical and excommunicated him (Nestorius) in absentia. John of Antioch, upon his arrival, was angered by the actions of Cyril, and convoked a counter-council which excommunicated Cyril and his main supporter, Memnon of Ephesus. They responded in kind. Both councils reported on their actions to Theodosius II. The emperor accepted the excommunication of Nestorius, Cyril and Memnon, but not of John. Despite the emperor’s subsequent efforts for reconciliation, we can see how both parties, speaking generally, failed to engage the other side’s form of life and view of reality (of how things are). Therefore, each party remained limited to its respective language-game and form of life. In other words, and to invoke the paradigm of the duck-rabbit image, each group was only able to see the duck or the rabbit aspect of the duck-rabbit image, but never the more complex reality (things as they are), of the ‘duck-rabbit’ image as a whole.

Perhaps the most important reason for such a fragmentation of the Council of Ephesus (and of the Christian Church) was the absence of a strong common frame, with a correspondingly strong vertical structure. This is a broad generalization, but it seems obvious in retrospect. Unlike Constantine at the Council of Nicaea, Theodosius II did not invite every bishop, provide safe transportation, show personal care, or attend the council in person. Therefore, there was no commonly accepted leader at the council, enjoying the loyalty and trust of all, and providing care and support to all. The lack of a common frame meant a lack of space for diversity, which allowed only uniformity and not unity in diversity. Segmentation and division persisted and deepened along the existing vertical organizational structures of the

27 The opening and the proceedings of the first session of the Council were vigorously protested in writing by sixty-eight bishops, under the leadership of Theodoret of Cyrus. Cyril, however, claiming canonical adherence, disregarded the protest, opened the Council, and in its first session deposed and excommunicated Nestorius (McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria, 77-88; Davis, The First Seven Ecumenical Councils, 155-56).

28 McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria, 94-7.

29 Ibid., 102.
Patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch, with Cyril and John as their leaders. In this ‘us against them’ setting, unity within each group was further solidified, and their respective comprehensions of the unity of the person of Christ (of his divinity and humanity) also, facilitated by the contexts of their particular language-games and forms of life.

After receiving the conflicting reports of the divided council, Theodosius II showed more hands-on leadership and became actively involved in the search for unity. In the vertically organized common frame thus established, both Cyril and the Antiochenes showed support for the emperor’s efforts and actively sought his backing and approval by demonstrating openness for dialogue. Cyril’s and Memnon’s excommunications were lifted, but not Nestorius’s. In the ensuing dialogic process, the two parties agreed on a common premise, the orthodox legacy of the teachings of Athanasius of Alexandria. Eventually, as a result of the ongoing negotiations, John of Antioch, after accepting Nestorius’s condemnation, proposed a solution in the form of the profession of faith that was drawn up at the counter-council in Ephesus under his presidency. Cyril approved of the formula and its two-nature (*dyophysitai*) language with minor changes, and it became known as the Formula of Reunion, of AD 433. The resulting reconciliation and peace between the Churches, however, was only temporary. On both sides, some remained suspicious, and not without reason. The Formula of Reunion was a negotiated accord about a mutually acceptable common ground (lowest common denominator), and not an agreement in forms of life that provided a broad enough frame for both existing forms of life. As such, it became acceptable

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because both sides could interpret it according to their respective forms of life, without having to consider the validity of the other’s form of life.\footnote{As Wessel points out, both parties made concessions and neither side came fully to terms with the others’ views (Ibid., 274-8). See also Karl-Heinz Uthemann, “History of Christology to the Seventh Century,” in The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. 2, Constantine to c. 600, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 485-7.}

It was only a question of time before the delicately balanced rational construct of the Formula became disturbed, and it eventually did, when the highly influential Archimandrite Eutyches,\footnote{He was spiritual advisor to the emperor and godfather to the powerful Grand Chamberlain Chrysaphius and was referred to by some as “bishop of bishops” [R. V. Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey (1953; repr., London: S.P.C.K., 1961), 57, 57n1; The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, session I, §25; and Encyclopaedia of the Early Church, 1992 ed., s.v. “Eutyches”].} superior of a large monastery in Constantinople, publicly rejected the two-nature language of the Formula of Reunion. He stated that he could agree that Christ was from two natures (\textit{ek dyo physeôn}) prior to the incarnation but that he was in one nature (\textit{en mia physis}) after.\footnote{\textit{The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon}, vol. 1, 222.} Eutyches’ subsequent condemnation by a Home Synod of Constantinople in 448, under the presidency of Flavian of Constantinople, triggered old partisan reflexes. Dioscorus of Alexandria, the successor of Cyril, rushed to the help of the monks of Constantinople as his predecessor once had. Setting aside the Formula of Reunion, he resurrected old Cyrillian arguments (including the highly confrontational language of the \textit{Twelve Chapters}) and regionalist sentiments, resulting in renewed division and conflict. Theodosius II, by now in full support of Alexandria, called yet another council for AD August 1, 449, once again at Ephesus, to review the condemnation of Eutyches by the Constantinople Home Synod. This time, he maintained a much stronger control and corresponding frame and vertical structure, but once again, failed to secure a \textit{common} frame, because of his blatant partiality.
Theodosius II put Dioscorus, an obvious partisan, in charge of the council. Theodoret of Cyrus, the only remaining significant Antiochene theologian, was forbidden to attend by an imperial edict. 34 Forty-two bishops, including Flavian, who participated in the Constantinople Home Synod that condemned Eutyches the previous year, were denied the right of active participation. 35 Pope Leo and his Letter to Flavian 36 (in support of Flavian’s position), became excluded—and with that, the whole Western Church’s doctrinal input 37—when the letter was not allowed to be read at the council (I, §§83-5). 38 Domnus of Antioch was invited but, as a weak leader and theologian, he presented no challenge to Dioscorus. 39 The fifteen bishops he was allowed to bring were not only a numerically disproportionate representation of his diocese, but were handpicked by the imperial court “in order to isolate their patriarch Domnus.” 40 In short, Ephesus II of AD 449 was never meant to consider doctrinal questions, but to “eradicate the remnants of Nestorian heresy.” 41 As such, it was destined to fail as a dialogic event, because the ‘other’ of the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure was either rejected or ignored in this conciliar gathering, and so, denied its justice. Such injustice resulted in further violence that erupted

34 Ibid., 30-31.

35 Davis, The First Seven Ecumenical Councils, 177.

36 The “Letter of Pope Leo to Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, about Eutyches” (hereafter, the Tome or Letter to Flavian), dated June 23, 449, condemned the doctrines of Eutyches; hence, Dioscorus refused to allow it to be read, despite the strenuous objections of the papal legates. See Tanner, Decrees, 77-82.


38 Hereafter, references in the body of the text or in the footnotes, such as (I, §§83-5), designate session and paragraph numbers, respectively, to be found in The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vols. 1-3.

39 Wessel, Leo the Great, 30.

40 Davis, First Seven Ecumenical Councils, 177.

during the first session, after Dioscorus declared Flavian deposed and called in the imperial troops to ensure uniformity. Three days later, Flavian died of the injuries he suffered during this incident, and the papal legates, fearing for their safety, left in haste. In subsequent sessions, a number of prominent bishops, such as Theodoret of Cyrus and Domnus of Antioch, Ibas of Edessa and other opponents of Dioscorus, were deposed, and Dioscorus “established a sort of Alexandrian dictatorship over the entire East.”

42 Pope Leo, after receiving reports from his legates about the events of the council, refused to accept its outcome, calling it a *latrocinium* or “den of thieves.”

43 Valentine III, the western emperor, also refused to accept. With a schism at hand, and due to unexpected events, Dioscorus’s impressive victory proved to be fragile and short lived.

**The Council of Chalcedon**

Theodosius II died after falling from his horse on AD July 26, 450. His death led to a swift and dramatic turn of events. His older sister Augusta Pulcheria immediately assumed power, announced her marriage to the elderly Thracian general Marcian and, in the same year, arranged for his acclamation as the new emperor. She ordered the execution of the Grand Chamberlain Chrysaphius, who had previously convinced Theodosius II to banish her from the court, and together with Marcian, she set out to revisit and, if necessary, reverse some key ecclesial policies implemented by Theodosius II. Reeling from the recent experiences of Ephesus II, Pope Leo was not initially in favour of a new council. However, the imperial couple,

44 Pulcheria and Marcian acted on ecclesial issues as equal partners, and it is difficult to discern who the initiator was of particular actions. Therefore, any further reference to either Marcian or Pulcheria implies the involvement of both.

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43 For example, see his July 20, 451 Letter “Pope Leo to Pulcheria” in *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 106).
satisfying the pope’s concerns about purpose and location, announced in a May 23, 451 sacra by Marcian, a new council to be held at Nicaea at the beginning of September of the same year.

Marcian, like Constantine, was primarily a military man, constantly facing life and death decisions involving thousands under his command and bearing responsibility for the well-being of a whole empire. As such, he was experienced in the pragmatic and productive operation of vertical organizational structures, where negotiations resulted in conclusive decisions for common action. He was keenly aware of his complete dependence on the trust, support and united effort of his underlings and he also understood the crucial role and nature of unity. Like his predecessors, he realized that unity and peace in the empire greatly depended on unity and peace within the Church. This, of course, implied an elimination of every doctrinal disagreement, so that “the true faith may be recognized more clearly for all time.”

In what follows, I will discuss this new council (the Council of Chalcedon) as a historical event of dialogic interaction leading to unity and a common recognition of truth. I will first examine how the five socio-religious elements I outlined in the previous chapter were present in this particular conciliar gathering, shaped and influenced the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure and the vertical organizational structure and corresponding frame necessary for achieving unity in diversity, and, subsequently, whether the unity thus achieved facilitated a common recognition of how things are (truth).

a) Democratic element The first precondition for the bishops (in the role of the people or dēmos) to exercise their power (krátos) in a conciliar gathering is that they are all present, or, in the least, the voices who ought to be there are effectively represented. To this end, Marcian (like Constantine in preparation for Nicaea and unlike Theodosius II in the case of Ephesus I and II),

invited *all* bishops—and *anyone* they deemed important—to attend.\(^{46}\) He wanted every voice and view, including dissenting ones, to be present (or represented) at the council. This is well demonstrated, for example, by the fact that he also invited all the previously deposed bishops, including Theodoret of Cyrus and the deposed and exiled heresiarch, Nestorius.\(^{47}\) Another example of Marcian’s desire for, and practice of, inclusiveness was when, after receiving a written complaint from a group of Constantinopolitan archimandrites regarding the treatment of the supporters of Eutyches (IV, §76), he did not interfere but instead forwarded their complaint to the council, where it was heard and duly dealt with.

A second requirement for the democratic element to unfold in a conciliar setting is that all those present (as *dēmos*) are able to exercise their power (*kráfos*), by expressing their vote or opinion in the context of the rule-governed activity—language-game and form of life—of that conciliar gathering. In other words, the democratic element is effective when every participant, as the ‘other’ in the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, can formulate and present his or her demand on those gathered and, by so doing, demand his or her due, or justice.

Maintaining peace and proper order during the council became a high priority. To this end, Pulcheria instructed the governor of Bithynia to expel from the city and its districts any cleric, monk or lay person who had no business being there or who had not been invited by his bishop to attend the council.\(^{48}\) The imperial couple was determined to prevent a repetition of the disruptive and violent behaviour of non-participating monks and armed adherents unjustly

\(^{46}\) The letter or *sacra* was addressed to the metropolitans, but the invitation was to everyone—all bishops, lower clergy and presumably even laity—whom the metropolitan bishop considered “to be trustworthy and equipped for the teaching of orthodox religion” (Ibid.).


influencing the work of the council at Ephesus I and II. The gravity of this issue is well indicated by the fact that, shortly before the opening of the council in the city of Nicaea, Marcian asked (in effect, ordered) the bishops to relocate from Nicaea to Chalcedon, just across from the imperial palaces on the other side of the Bosporus,\(^49\) so that he could follow the proceedings more closely.

After securing the council from unjust outside influences, and to guarantee that rules would be properly followed and justice rendered to all within the council, Marcian entrusted the presidency (to act as chair and moderator) of the council’s sessions\(^50\) to a committee of nineteen prestigious laymen, referred to in the *Acts* as “officials” and the “senate.” They were high-ranking state officials, many of them with extraordinary credentials and extensive experience in high-stakes and high-level negotiations.\(^51\) Furthermore, a number of the officials also had significant involvement with one or the other side of the unfolding doctrinal crisis between Alexandria, and Antioch and Constantinople.\(^52\) This further highlighted Marcian’s commitment to make every voice and opinion represented and heard, not only among participants but among the officials of the senate as well.


\(^{50}\) The one exception was for the third session, concerned with the trial of Dioscorus, which was presided over by the papal legate Paschasinus.

\(^{51}\) Seven of them were *archontes* or holders of major offices with judicial powers (capacity to make legally binding, precedent-setting, decisions). In Latin they were referred to as *iudices*, hence the reference to them in some sources as *judges*. In the *Acts* of the council, they are always listed as follows: 1. Anatolius (the head of the commissionaires) was *magister militum*; 2. Palladius, prefect of the sacred praetorians; 3. Tatian, prefect of the city of Constantinople; 4. Vincomalus, master of the divine offices; 5. Martialis, *magister*; 6. Sporacius, count of the hallowed *domestici*; 7. Genethlius, count of the divine *privata*. The first three positions were the most powerful positions in the empire. The other twelve were high-ranking senators, mostly former *magistri*, prefects, consuls and praepositi [De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, 287; *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, (I, §§2-3)].

\(^{52}\) De Ste. Croix considers, for example, Anatolius, Tatian, Vincomalus and Sporacius sympathetic to Theodoret and Pope Leo; and Martialis, Florentius, Nomus and Romanus (the latter three appearing as number 8, 10 and 15 on the list of commissionaires) as known opponents of Theodoret (De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, 292-4).
The members of the senate maintained a strict hierarchical order and corresponding structure, as indicated also by their names being listed in the same order whenever they appear in the Acts. As is proper to any group with a vertical organizational structure, all members contributed, and were duly consulted by the head Anatolius, who spoke for the entire senate with one voice. Anatolius, therefore, assumed a crucial role at the council. Although not a theologian, but an orthodox Christian, he had exceptional qualities for his position. As *magister militum praesentalis*, one of the two commanders of the central imperial armies, and probably second in rank only to the great Aspar, he was strictly a military man. Under Theodosius II, he had served with impressive competence as chief negotiator in key treaty settlements, among others, with the Persian King (AD 441) and Attila the Hun (AD 447 and 450), and gained even Attila’s respect for his integrity as a negotiator.

As the representative of the emperor, Anatolius took his task seriously as a negotiator and facilitator, who consistently adhered to procedural rules in pursuit of justice. A telling example of this was when, at the beginning of the first session, the papal legate Paschasinus made a peremptory demand in the name of Pope Leo for Dioscorus to be removed from the council (I, §§5-10). Instead of obliging, Anatolius asked for sufficient cause (I, §11). Since Paschasinus

53 Although never mentioned by name, Anatolius was the only one who spoke for the senate as a whole at the council. His single voice, speaking in the name of all members of the senate, is indicated by the consistent introduction in the Acts: “The most glorious officials and the exalted senate said: ….” Therefore, in what follows, any reference to Anatolius will imply the whole senate.

54 Aspar was an Alan (barbarian) and an Arian Christian; therefore, he would not have been accepted by the bishops to preside over the council.

55 His remarkable skill as an expert negotiator of complex and difficult situations is attested to by the eyewitness account of Priscus, who accompanied him on one of his missions to Attila [B. Croke, “Anatolius and Nomus: Envoy to Attila,” in *Christian Chronicles and Byzantine History 5th-6th Centuries*, Collected Studies Series CS386 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), Ch. XIII, 159-170, especially 169; and “The Context and Date of Priscus Fragment 6,” Ibid., Ch. XIV, 301-2, 308].

56 Croke, “Anatolius and Nomus,” Ch. XIII, 166.
failed to articulate an acceptable cause, Anatolius refused, and Dioscorus was permitted to stay. However, as Anatolius argued, since Dioscorus had been accused, he could not at the same time both plead his case and act as a judge in his own case (I, §13). Therefore, he was to move to the centre of the church, the customary place for those awaiting trial or rehabilitation in a council. In a similar way, Anatolius rejected the Egyptian bishops’ objection to admitting Theodoret of Cyrus to the council. He was to be seated in the centre as well, since he appeared as an accuser, and his presence, Anatolius argued, “will be prejudicial to no one, since … full right of speech is assured” to everyone, and there is “particular and oral witness to his orthodoxy in the most devout bishop of the great city of Antioch” (I, §§35-6). 57

Another defining intervention by Anatolius was when, at the beginning of the first session, he gave procedural priority to justice and unity over matters of faith and doctrine in the council’s search for doctrinal truth. This took place when Eusebius of Dorylaeum, in his plea to be rehabilitated, accused Dioscorus of having deposed him and other bishops unjustly, and having done “terrible things” to them, at Ephesus II (I, §16). In order to establish who was right, and speaking in his own defence, Dioscorus demanded that “matters of faith be examined first” (I, §21). Anatolius refused and insisted that Dioscorus first answer the accusations of misconduct (I, §22). By so doing, Anatolius established a procedural pattern for subsequent proceedings, in which giving the ‘other’ his or her due or justice—and bringing about right relationships and unity—was taken as a prerequisite for an arrival at doctrinal truth.

Once these ground rules had been laid, the search for justice in dialogic interactions of past conciliar and synodal proceedings took the form of an extensive rereading of relevant parts

57 After having been deposed at Ephesus II by Dioscorus, Theodoret of Cyrus attended the first session as a plaintiff (I, §§194, 196), sitting in the centre of the church. Although he was allowed to participate fully in the proceedings, he was restored to his old see only later, in the eighth session.
of the acts of the councils of Ephesus I and II, and of the Home Synod of Constantinople of 448,\textsuperscript{58} that documented the alleged injustice and misconduct by Dioscorus. This took up the whole first session. Despite the many attempts by attendees to veer into doctrinal arguments, Anatolius, in his forty-five interventions, firmly and consistently kept the bishops focused on matters of justice (as, for example, in I, §§531-3). At the end of the session, which was characterized by heated interactions (I, §§26-46),\textsuperscript{59} dramatic changes of sides (I, §§284-98), admissions of guilt (I, §§268-9) and pleas for forgiveness (I, §§181-4) by participating bishops, Anatolius announced the verdict of the senate that can be summed up in three points: On the “question of the orthodox and catholic faith,” there was a need for “more exact examination;”\textsuperscript{60} Flavian and Eusebius of Dorylaeum were unjustly deposed at Ephesus II\textsuperscript{61}; and, finally, the bishops overseeing the process resulting in these injustices at Ephesus II, were to be “excluded from the episcopal dignity in accordance with the canons” (I, §1068). These parties included Dioscorus of Alexandria, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Thalassius of Caesarea and Cappadocia, Eusebius of Ancyra, Eustathius of Berytus and Basil of Seleucia and Isauria.

The verdict about the six bishops, however, was pending ratification by the emperor. Until such time as this was received, then, they were, technically speaking, only suspended and not officially deposed. Dioscorus was eventually deposed in a formal trial during the third

\textsuperscript{58} Out of the 1072 interventions of the first session at Chalcedon, 281 were from Ephesus II, 504 from the Home Synod of Constantinople, 41 from Ephesus I, and 246 from Chalcedon itself.

\textsuperscript{59} One of the more furious exchanges concerned Theodoret of Cyrus’s admission into the council, after he had been barred from attending Ephesus II by imperial decree, and deposed in absentia by Dioscorus.

\textsuperscript{60} The responsibility for the refusal to allow Pope Leo’s \textit{Tome to Flavian} to be read at Ephesus II was discussed at length, but no one was prepared to take full responsibility for it.

\textsuperscript{61} The death of Flavian a few days after Ephesus II, resulting from the injuries he had suffered in a violent intervention by Dioscorus’s armed supporters at the council, was not specifically mentioned in the verdict, but it was discussed during the session.
session, at which he refused to appear after three summonses. The five other bishops, however, were eventually readmitted. At the beginning of the fourth session, after the unanimous acceptance of the *Tome* of Leo, and before the start of the doctrinal debate, the bishops asked for the five to be granted re-entry to the council (IV, §11). The emperor, responding to an inquiry via messenger from Anatolius representing the council, entrusted the decision to the bishops of the council, who decided for the readmission of the five and, with that, against their deposition (IV, §§12-17). Once again, Marcian’s desire for justice, unity and inclusion prevailed. Anatolius and the rest of the presiding officials managed to implement the emperor’s policies almost flawlessly. By valuing repentance (personal change) and reconciliation over coercive measures of the state, such as deposition and exclusion, the council deposed only Dioscorus in the end, and, even in his case, exclusion occurred for disciplinary and not for doctrinal reasons (V, §14).

It is worth noting that Anatolius’s presidential style was highly conducive to a free exchange of opinion among participants, including those standing accused. When Paschasinus expressed his scepticism about Flavian having as much chance to speak at Ephesus II as

62 Not to appear after three summonses, in itself, did not mean an automatic deposition. It was *failing to answer serious charges* by not appearing that led to such a result. The charges against Dioscorus included (Eutychean) heresy, pressuring bishops to sign blank sheets and causing violence at Ephesus II (that led to the death of Flavian), unjust deposition of bishops (III, §§5, 91), suppression of Leo’s *Tome* (III, §§94, 103), breaking communion with Pope Leo (V, §14), and additional charges of misconduct brought by three Egyptian clerics and a lay person (III, §§47, 51, 57, 64). The bishops were not in agreement on the guilt of Dioscorus with respect to some specific charges. Regardless, none of these charges could be definitively proven or disproven due to Dioscorus’s repeated refusal to appear in person to face them. The deposition, therefore, strictly speaking, was due to his disregard for the canons in “refusing to comply when canonically summoned a third time” (III, §§95; V, §14).

63 This was another display of the democratic element, as the bishops expressed their views and request by ‘lung power’.

64 The fact that there was a formal trial of Dioscorus suggests that the emperor did not ratify Anatolius’s verdict at the end of the first session. The emperor’s reluctance to ratify any exclusion from the council only further highlights his commitment to inclusion and unity. Also, it is worth noting that the third session was the only one not presided over by a lay official but by a bishop (Paschasinus). This seems to suggest that, while Marcian wanted a thorough examination of the facts (to strengthen unity), he also wanted to retain his impartiality and not make a decision about the fate of a bishop of Dioscorus’s stature. Furthermore, it seems also to confirm that Marcian was hoping for reconciliation. The latter seems to be supported by Anatolius’s apparent rebuke of the bishops, that they had deposed Dioscorus without the knowledge of the emperor and the members of the senate (IV, §12).
Dioscorus had at Chalcedon (I, §336), Anatolius replied, “But now the council is proceeding in accordance with justice” (I, §337). To this, Lucentius, another papal legate, responded, saying, “The council is just. Let both parties enjoy the right to speak” (I, §338). As Meyendorff points out, this approach of letting participants freely debate and express their opinions was clearly inspired by the procedural rules of the Roman judiciary. As such, it was unprecedented in the history of ecumenical councils. Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) did not even produce and publish formal minutes of their proceedings, and Ephesus I and II were entirely under the arbitrary command of the then bishop of Alexandria, “with no real opposition allowed.”65

The fact that more than two-thirds of the contributions during the first session consisted of re-evaluations of previous councils’ events, as far back as Ephesus I (431), serves as an example that the seeking of justice and unity in pursuit of truth in a conciliar setting transcends the limitations of a community in a particular space and time. As such, it is sought not by facilitating unity primarily among individuals or groups in the present, but, more importantly, by re-establishing unity with those gone before, from times prior to the current division (pursuing a common frame). Unity in this case was sought by reaching back to the Formula of Union of 433, accepted both by Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch, and what brought it about (I, §246).66

In conclusion, we can say that the democratic element—strongly oriented by, and integrated with, the power of a vital “vertical frame”—became a key decisive factor in the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon from the very beginning of the first session. This meant, first, that all were invited, and second, that, in a group with a decidedly vertical organization, all were given the opportunity to contribute. Although the council had gathered as a

65 Meyendorff, Imperial Unity, 168.

66 The Formula was contained in Cyril’s Letter of 433 to John of Antioch, and it was a slightly modified version of the creed of John of Antioch, drawn up at the counter-council at Ephesus I.
group with deep doctrinal divisions, no one, in the end, was excluded from it because of doctrinal disagreement. The head, personified in Anatolius, provided equal support for all, and gained the trust and loyalty of all. The ‘face of the other’ was given its justice, and unity prevailed. This led to a sufficient level of unity that could facilitate a successful uncovering of truth, and, subsequently, to doctrinal agreement.

b) **Cognitive element** When, in his letter of AD September, 450 to Pope Leo, Marcian announced his intention to convocate a council to remove “every impious error,” and to establish “perfect peace … among all the bishops,” the pope was not at first in support. He was concerned that the certainties of faith received from the apostles would be inquired into by “illiterate and impious questions” as if those certainties were uncertain, hypothetical opinions in need of deliberation by “warfare of sinful disputes.” In his mind, every question regarding the faith had been answered fully and clearly by his *Tome to Flavian*. In his view, therefore, even if there were to be a new council, its only role would be to confirm the faith of Nicaea and its exposition in the *Tome*. Leo felt supported in this assumption by the fact that, by November of 451, Archbishop Anatolius of Constantinople (and all his bishops), along with Maximus of Antioch, both protégés and appointees of Dioscorus after Ephesus II, had accepted and signed his *Tome*.70

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In Pope Leo’s reactions, we can recognize similarities between his and Emperor
Constantine’s approaches (discussed in Chapter IV) to settling doctrinal differences. They both
displayed the characteristics of what we referred to as the ‘Western approach’, where the leader
or head, after sufficient consultation, makes a pronouncement that everyone follows: ‘this is
what we do’. Marcian, in his Third Letter to the council, indicated a similar approach to
Constantine’s and Pope Leo’s, when he instructed the bishops to “come to the city of Chalcedon
for the confirmation of the previous definitions of our holy fathers concerning the holy and
orthodox faith” (‘this is what we do’). At the beginning of the second session, however, an
important change occurred when, in the name of the senate, Anatolius made the following
intervention:

The question that is now to be investigated, judged and studied is how
to confirm the true faith; it is particularly because of the faith that the council has assembled.
You know that each one of you will give an account to God on behalf both of his
own soul and of all of us, who long both to be taught the truths of religion
correctly and to see every dispute resolved through the concord and agreement,
harmonious exposition and teaching, of all the sacred fathers. Therefore apply
yourselves without fear, favour or enmity to produce a pure exposition of the
faith, so that even those who appear not to share the views of all may be restored
to harmony by acknowledging the truth (II, §2).

If Anatolius’s intervention, placing justice and unity procedurally ahead of doctrine and truth,
was crucial at the beginning of the first session, this statement at the beginning of the second
session was equally as momentous, or even more so. Not only did it have a profound impact on
the work of the Council of Chalcedon, but, as we shall see, on all future such gatherings as well.

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71 As Wessel points out, Leo’s ‘definitive solution’ to the Christological controversy of the time, his Tome
to Flavian, heavily relied on the Western theological tradition. In other words, Leo widely consulted his relevant
constituency on the matter, before he pronounced his decision (Wessel, Leo the Great, 211).

72 See Marcian, Emperor, “Third Letter of Marcian to the Council (22 September 451),” in The Acts of the

73 As this was the opening statement of the second session, Anatolius must have formulated it with care and
foresight.
At first reading, the statement does seem to indicate a shift from Marcian’s earlier description of the task of the council as “confirmation of previous definitions” to producing a “pure exposition of faith,” as indicated in the third sentence of the quote. This is how the bishops understood it as well and, citing Canon 7 of Ephesus I, that forbade anyone to “write or compose another creed beside the one laid down … at Nicaea” (I, §943), they vigorously refused (II, §§3-5). Upon closer examination, however, the statement does not call for “another” (héteros) creed “beside” the Nicene Creed. It asks for a studied determination of how the confirmation of the faith of the apostles and the fathers, articulated at Nicaea, was to be achieved by the current council. The task at hand was not to replace or even to write “another” creed that could be put “beside” the Creed of Nicaea, but to decide how the bishops gathered in this council could produce a pure exposition of the faith of Nicaea that would dispel any disharmony and ignorance towards its truth.

The only two available examples at the time for how to proceed with such a confirmation of the faith in a conciliar setting had been provided by Ephesus I and II. Both of these presented a dual approach, consisting of receiving (canonizing) certain existing and widely accepted documents (such as Cyril’s letters to Nestorius and John of Antioch), and of condemning certain individuals (for example, Nestorius). It is significant that this dual approach was implemented in councils that were presided over by an Alexandrian bishop, Cyril and Dioscorus, respectively. Considering the earlier-mentioned, strong vertical organizational structure of the Egyptian Church, headed by the bishop of Alexandria, it should not come as a surprise that each of the component parts of the dual approach was based primarily on an appeal to the authority of the

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75 The firm and candid reaction of the bishops, as they freely and spontaneously expressed their opinions, is yet another example of the democratic element at work at the council.
law and of the head or leader articulating that law (‘this is what we do’). Leo the Great and the Roman legates, by presenting Leo’s *Tome to Flavian* to the council as an authoritative solution to the existing doctrinal disagreements, also shared this methodology of confirmation of the faith.

Anatolius’s suggestion for a free debate among bishops came as a clear alternative to this approach. The bishops were asked not only to accept or reject a certain authoritative statement or exposition of the faith of Nicaea by a leader, but, as a united group, to produce such an authoritative statement or exposition themselves. By so doing, Anatolius suggested a debate not along vertical relationships characterized by dynamics of loyalty, dependence, and support, but along horizontal relationships characterized by equality and collegiality. He induced this approach by two important steps: first, by instructing the senior bishop of each secular diocese\(^76\) to select one or two bishops and form a small working group (II, §6);\(^77\) and, second, by reminding all the bishops that their only accountability and loyalty was to God and, on that account, they should apply themselves in their work “without fear, favour or enmity” (II, §2).

When Anatolius saw that the bishops mistook his instruction to determine how to confirm the faith for a request for a new creed, he asked the Creed of Nicaea to be read, instead of arguing with them (II, §10). Predictably, the bishops unanimously acclaimed it as the faith of the fathers. Next, Anatolius asked for the exposition of the Council of Constantinople (AD 381) to be read (II, §13). It was similarly received. This was followed by the readings of Cyril’s *Second Letter* to Nestorius and his *Letter* to John of Antioch, which were also accepted by unanimous

\(^{76}\) ‘Secular diocese’ refers to a territorial unit of civil administration. In the early Roman Empire, the diocese was a part of a province. Diocletian, in the late third century, made it into a larger area than a province, but smaller than the prefecture of the Pretorian Prefect.

\(^{77}\) Most likely there were about eight secular dioceses represented at the council (Asiana, Oriens, Aegyptus, Macedonia, Thracia, Dacia, Illyricum and Pontica). Therefore, if all followed Anatolius’s instructions, there could have been anywhere between 16 and 24 bishops making up the working group, which met at Bishop Anatolius of Constantinople’s residence between the second and fourth sessions.
acclamation (II, §20). Subsequently, Leo’s *Tome to Flavian* was read. The general response was, once again, positive: “We believe accordingly,” “Peter uttered this through Leo,” “Leo and Cyril taught the same,” “Why was this not read at Ephesus?” (II, §23). There were, however, some objections as well. Some of the Illyrian and Palestinian bishops (Dioscorus’s strongest supporters) perceived three points of the letter (II, §§24-26) as contradictory to the faith of Cyril. All three objections were answered by quotes from some of Cyril’s writings. When there were no more objections, Atticus of Nicopolis, a supporter of ‘radical’ Cyrillian one-nature Christology, asked for Cyril’s *Third Letter* to Nestorius to be read (and approved) as well, including the controversial *Twelve Chapters*. Other bishops responded that, if this request were to be granted, the six bishops suspended at the end of the first session should be part of the examination of that letter as well (II, §§30, 34). The session ended with a heated exchange involving mutual accusations of heresy.

By this exercise, Anatolius achieved two important things. Instead of arguing with the bishops about the need for a common re-reception and confirmation of the faith of the fathers, he demonstrated the main reasons why it was required. There were a variety of creeds already available and in use that were different from, and later in origin than, the Nicene Creed. Therefore, the applicability of Canon 7 of Ephesus I had been limited from the outset.\(^{78}\) Also, if the Nicene Creed had been enough in itself, why was there a need for any additional expositions such as Cyril’s letters, and Leo’s *Tome*? Furthermore, how was it possible that, with the Nicene Creed and Cyril’s writings in hand, there was still a need for Ephesus II, and that it ended so

\(^{78}\) Some modern authors question the status of Canon 7 altogether. As Meyendorff points out, for example, it was “the Church of Alexandria that defined Orthodoxy as strict adherence to Nicaea,” and the Ephesian resolution “was only an *ad hoc* statement” (Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, 172). This latter point seems to be suggested by the fact that, since Canon 7 “does not appear in all extant manuscripts of the Acts of Ephesus,” it is likely that there was no vote taken on it at the council of 431 (Ibid., 171n7).
acrimoniously? Finally, the emerging disagreement even at the Council of Chalcedon, concerning Leo’s Tome and Cyril’s other writings, indicated that there was still insufficient unity and consensus regarding how to confirm the faith of Nicaea.

The bishops eventually complied, and the working group met during the five days between sessions two and four of the council at the residence of Archbishop Anatolius of Constantinople. No participants’ names were preserved and no minutes were taken. The participants, handpicked by their metropolitans, were most likely theologically astute. This meant that they were interacting as colleagues. Also, together with all the bishops, they were enjoined by Anatolius and the senate to make themselves accountable only to God, free themselves from all outside constraints and loyalties and all other personal and political expectations that might cause or imply “fear, favor and enmity,” and apply themselves to the immediate task at hand. The combined effect of these factors yielded some significant changes in the organizational structure of the working group, compared to that of the council.

The working group, while it retained a primarily vertical structure with a corresponding strong frame and collective dependence on a common leader or head, shifted its headship or leadership from human office holders (patriarch, emperor or their representatives)\(^{79}\) to God, and with that, temporarily, to a new frame and a new, common form of life. Because of a sense of common deference and attention to the higher divine reality that somehow relativized human vertical claims, factionalism and conflicting loyalties were minimized or virtually absent, and a higher level of unity in diversity was achieved. At the same time, however, the working group also acquired vibrant horizontal relationships according to personal attributes determined by their common purpose of attending to a specific task. Its smaller size and these changes in its

\(^{79}\) While Archbishop Anatolius of Constantinople likely chaired the meetings, he did not have any jurisdictional power or moral authority over the members of the working group.
organizational structure could not but yield some important adjustments in its inner dynamics as well, compared to that of the council.

These combined changes in the organizational structure and inner dynamics of the working group enabled the bishops to shift from an approach of obedience to basic rules (hinge propositions) of the language-game of Christian faith (‘this is what we do’), to an evaluative exploration (theory) of particular experiences and articulations of the common faith with the aim of eliminating conflict (‘why do our actions disagree?’). In short, the change in the organizational structure and inner dynamics introduced a shift from what we referred to earlier as a “Western” approach to doctrinal disagreement and its appeal to law and authority, to an “Eastern” approach with its appeal to collegiality and argumentation among equals.\(^{80}\) The interdependence of these two approaches is highlighted by the fact that, once the draft resolution of the working group had been formulated, it was reintroduced to the council in the fifth session, for approval and confirmation of the faith: ‘this is what we do’.

Meanwhile, the fourth session prepared the council for the hearing (in the fifth session) of the draft resolution of the working group. The council’s Acts specifically mention that the council gathered “with the holy and undefiled gospel-book in the centre” (IV, §2). While this was common conciliar practice,\(^{81}\) the fact that it was highlighted this late, and in the Acts of this particular session and not of others, seems to indicate a special emphasis on, and recognition of,

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\(^{80}\) See Chapter IV, pp. 161-2.

\(^{81}\) The practice of placing the Gospel-Book in the place of honour (in the middle) at the beginning of each session of a conciliar gathering, as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the council, has been implied since the Synods of Carthage in the mid-third century, and regularly attested to from Ephesus I (MacMullen, *Voting about God*, 42-4).
God’s (the Holy Spirit’s) presence and headship at the council. This matched well with Anatolius’s earlier admonition that all bishops make themselves accountable to God alone, and free themselves from every other demand or influence in their actions and deliberations. Furthermore, after all objections raised in the second session regarding Leo’s Tome were sufficiently clarified, it was unanimously accepted as an authentic expression of the faith of the fathers (IV, §9). Having such a unanimous agreement in place on accepted (received) articulations of the faith of the fathers (‘this is what we do’), Anatolius and the members of the senate likely thought that the council was now sufficiently prepared to hear and receive the working group’s report and confirm the faith of the fathers by eliminating any disagreement about how to follow the one faith (‘this is what we do’).

At the beginning of the fifth session, the draft definition of the working group was read. While the majority of the bishops responded enthusiastically, John of Germanicia objected that it was not sufficiently “precise” (V, §4), and the papal legates threatened to withdraw from the council because they thought the definition was not in agreement with Leo’s Tome (V, §9). Amidst the subsequent heated and frank debate, Anatolius proposed the formation of a second working group that would convene in a side-chapel and clear all ambiguities. The majority of bishops opposed this, perhaps because of concerns about facing the uncertainties of being presented with yet another definition when this one was so close to agreement among all present. In an attempt to argue his point, Anatolius asked, “Do you accept the letter of Archbishop Leo?”

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82 This, in turn, may demonstrate that the action needed some time to become a more meaningful—even transformative—liturgical event, after it had perhaps been performed mostly ritualistically at the beginning of the previous sessions.

83 The Illyrian and Palestinian bishops, who objected to some points of the Tome, assured the council in writing that their initial reservations had been satisfactorily answered by the pope’s legates (IV, §9, comments 98 and 114).

The bishops responded, “Yes, we have accepted and signed it.” “Then its contents must be inserted in the definition,” replied Anatolius, but the bishops still refused. The resulting deadlock was resolved by the emperor’s intervention in the form of a response to an appeal by Anatolius, in which he took Anatolius’s side. He gave an ultimatum with three options: 1) the bishops could “produce a correct and unimpeachable definition … so as to please everyone,” or 2) each bishop could make “his faith known through his metropolitan so as likewise to leave no doubt or disagreement,” or 3) the council would move to, and meet in the West (V, §22), probably in Rome. The bishops unanimously accepted the first option.85

A second working group was established. In addition to Anatolius and some members of the senate, it was made up of twenty-one bishops (V, §29).86 Next to the three Roman legates, there were eighteen Eastern bishops, thirteen of whom firmly supported Dioscorus at Ephesus II, one (Maximus of Antioch) a strong Cyrillian, and no allies of Theodoret or the Antiochene party. In short, this group was unlikely to show partiality to any strongly dyophysite Christology. Despite this, however, two of the three changes introduced by the working group highlighted Christ’s dual nature. A clause referring to the union but distinctness of the two natures87 had been added and, in response to the demand of the Roman legates (V, §9), the phrase “Christ … acknowledged from two natures” (ek dúo phúsesin) was changed to “in two natures” (en dúo phúsesin). The third change consisted of adding the phrase “Holy Mary the Theotokos” (V, §8).

85 It is important to point out that the emperor’s ultimatum was not concerned with what the “correct and unimpeachable definition” would be (“so as to please everyone”), but that such a definition would be formulated. For a further discussion of this issue, see the section on “Violent Element” below, especially pp. 235-37.

86 The emperor’s instructions asked for, in addition to the Roman legates and Archbishop Anatolius of Constantinople, six bishops from the secular diocese of the Orient (the largest of all), and three each from Pontica, Asiana, Thracia and Illyricum (V, §22). At this stage, the thirteen Egyptian bishops were granted observer status at their own request because they did not have an archbishop and, canonically, they could not speak for their diocese (IV, §§19-60).

87 There is no mention of this change in the Acts and, judging from the syntactically intrusive nature of the clause (“a genitive absolute clause … interrupting as it does a series of phrases in apposition in the accusative”), this suggests that it was a last-minute addition (See The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, vol. 2, 186).
With these changes the Definition was then unanimously accepted, and ceremonially signed, at the sixth session in the presence of the imperial couple Marcian and Pulcheria.

Amidst these dramatic turns of events, it would be hard not to recognize the crucial role the two working groups played in the work of the council. In both cases, when the dialogic interaction among council members (and factions) was about to break down completely, it was the small working groups that came to the rescue. What, then, did these working groups have to offer that the conciliar gathering, as a whole, did not have? The difference between the conciliar gathering and the two working groups was that the members of the former, due to the group’s significantly weaker horizontal structure, were unable to engage in a collegial argumentation of equals, referred to above as the ‘Eastern approach’, in settling disagreements. While the strong vertical structure and corresponding frame created a sense of unity, it was based on loyalty, trust, and obedience to the authority of the head or leader (‘this is what we do’). This unity, however, was never fully articulated as reasoned personal conviction reaching across factional boundaries by horizontal organizational structures, in conflict-free common action (‘this is how we do what we do’). In other words, there was no common actional affirmation of the faith of the apostles and the fathers. Consequently, when vertical organizational structures weakened, relative to horizontal ones, factionalism resurfaced.

The main sequence of the Definition of Chalcedon (V, §§30-4) mirrors the work of, and dynamic interaction between, the conciliar gathering and the working groups, as these unfolded in sessions two and four. The formal opening sentence of the Definition (V, §30) is followed by a reference to Christ’s desire for peace and unity and an explanation that, in response to this, the emperor had called a council to dispel every cause of division and falsehood (V, §31a). After this introductory declaration of dependence on the will of Christ and the emperor, the Definition
declares allegiance to Christ, the apostles, and the fathers by affirming the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople, the teachings of Cyril’s Second Letter to Nestorius and Letter to John of Antioch, along with Leo’s Tome to Flavian (V, §§31b-34a). With this, the vertical organizational structure of the conciliar gathering and its corresponding frame was fully affirmed and spelled out: ‘this is our faith’, that is, ‘this is what we do’ (to show it). It was within this frame, then, that existing “divisions” and “falsehoods” had to be eliminated and the faith confirmed. In the process, the question became, ‘How do we do what we do’, in order to accomplish this task? The answer was given in the Christological formula (V, §34b).

As a result of their collegial reflections and argumentation, the members of the working groups came to a common understanding of how to respond to the demand of the ‘face of the Divine Other’ (Christ) in a common action (“this is what we do’) that was in conformity with—and thus confirmed—the faith of the fathers and the apostles. Their statement of faith in the Christological Formula (V, §34b) could be summed up as follows: We “acknowledge” or respond to the “one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten” as God (“consubstantial with the Father”) and we “acknowledge” or respond to him as a human being (“consubstantial with us”), with an overriding emphasis on the conjunction “and.”

88 A closer reading of the Christological Formula shows that its main purpose was to state that the incarnation happened (that Christ is consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with us), and not to provide a logical explanation concerning how it happened. In other words, the Christological Formula presented a new ‘frame’ that united two distinct language-games and forms of life into one language-game and form of life, without providing an explanation of how the two language-games were united. This was possible because, while the two distinct language-games grasped two categorically different truths (“this is how things are”) about the person of Christ, these truths did not mutually negate each other. While it is true that ‘human’ (creature) and ‘divine’ (creator) are two categorically different realities, human beings’ existence (having been created in the image and likeness of God) does not negate God’s being and presence; rather, the former assumes the latter. Therefore, the conjunction “and” could, and did create one (common) language-game and form of life by holding the two truths in tension as one truth.

One could argue, however, that this resolution is relatively easy when two mutually non-negating or non-conflicting moves, in one common language-game, grasp the same reality, as, for example, in the case of the person of Christ in his two natures. The situation becomes more difficult in the case of complex ethical issues, such as honour killing or slavery, when mutual negation or conflict exists. Indeed, in the latter situation, killing (enslaving) the ‘other’ or not killing (not enslaving) the ‘other’ cannot be held in the same tension as the two natures of Christ,
At the heart of this achievement was the ongoing dynamic interaction between the vertical and horizontal organizational structures and, consequently, between the Western and Eastern approaches to disagreement that made the common Formula possible. In a purely vertical relationship (structure), as the ‘face of the other’ appears in the field of vision of the ‘I’, the temptation for the ‘I’ is to equate its response to, or experience of, the ‘other’, with the ‘other’, making that experience normative, and ignoring or excluding any other possible response or experience (‘this is what we do’). In other words, the experience of the ‘I’ becomes (exclusively) identified with the one giving the experience, and the language-game (as a tool) with what it describes or grasps (the ‘other’).

When, however, a new frame is established that includes two or more such vertical relationships (or organizational structures), differences in opinion (due to differences in corresponding language-games) will emerge. In this common frame, with the conflicting diversity that emerges among group members, a switch to horizontal relationships becomes necessary. In a collegial, rational argumentation along these horizontal relationships (by maintaining the maxim of giving the ‘other’ its due or justice), group members can eliminate conflicting moves in their respective language-games (‘this is how we do what we do’) and, by so doing, solidify or confirm the vertical organizational structure of the common language-game (‘this is what we do’).

due to their innate, logical contradiction. While in the first case, in the new, common language-game and corresponding form of life, both moves follow the rules constituting the language-game, and do not contradict, in the latter case, in the new, common language game the two moves—“kill (enslave) the ‘other’” and “do not kill (enslave) the ‘other’”—contradict. Since the difference in this latter case is not due to differences in language-game and corresponding form of life (as the options are united in one common language-game and form of life), it is due to one (or both) of the moves simply being wrong (and, potentially, denying the ‘other’ its just due or justice). It is this wrong move in the language-game which requires correction. For a more detailed discussion, see “Beyond Relativism: Unity and Truth” in Chapter II, pp. 101-107.
This is how the cognitive element, with its different tendencies in the approach to settling intellectual disagreements in the West and the East, fundamentally shaped and influenced the dialogic interaction of the council. For this to have occurred, however, Anatolius’s extraordinary facilitation skills and his introduction of small working groups, just at the right time, were critical. It was the work of these groups, with the mandate that their members engage in collegial argumentation without fear, favour, or enmity, and accountable only to God, that created a proper environment for this dynamic to unfold and the council to succeed. In other words, it was crucial for the dēmos, in its diversity, to do its work of collegial negotiation, integrated within a strong enough vertical frame (that could sustain the demands of such negotiations), for the truth to be commonly recognized and accepted.

c) “Supernaturalist” element As discussed in Chapter IV, the “supernaturalist” element (“the tendency to reach beyond nature—beyond the material world—in any attempt to explain our experiences”) was a determining factor in Late Antiquity conciliar gatherings. As I pointed out there, this was made possible by an absence of separation between the ‘natural’ and the ‘supernatural’, which I contrasted with the approach increasingly apparent in post-Enlightenment Europe. The “supernaturalist” element that shaped the bishops’ hearts and minds in conciliar gatherings consisted in a constant and interpenetrating interaction between the Divine (spiritual beings, the “supernatural”) and human beings (bishops, the “natural”). In a life experienced as fundamentally dependent on the Divine and other supernatural beings and forces, human beings articulated their respective (good or evil) inspirations, by responding to the promptings of these

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89 Anatolius’s extraordinary facilitation skills included his ability to recognize and make use of the two distinct, yet mutually complementary, tendencies, discussed above, in settling intellectual disagreements.

90 Had these small-group negotiations taken place earlier in the council, prior to the establishment of a common, strong enough vertical frame under Divine headship, the council would likely have ended very differently.

91 See Chapter IV, pp. 163-73.
beings and forces. Responses to Divine inspiration were exhibited in the form of unity with the
Divine Mind and Will (with Christ, in the Spirit), and unity of mind and heart (sharing a Christ-
like form of life) with fellow human beings, including the apostles and the fathers. At the same
time, obeying the inspirations of evil spiritual beings (those separated from God) resulted, and
revealed itself, in separation from God as disunity with Christ (absence of the Spirit), the
apostles and the fathers, and with one another.

The calling, and the stated goal, of the Council of Chalcedon itself was an expression of
the “supernaturalist” element at work. Emperor Marcian writes to Pope Leo as follows: “[I]ndeed
we are in no doubt that the solicitude of our power depends on correct religion and propitiating
our Saviour.”92 Therefore, he insists, all bishops should gather in a council and “perfect peace
should be established” among all of them “by the removal of every impious error” so that the
stability and state of his (Marcian’s) rule and of the empire may be strengthened and
confirmed.93 In his letter of response, Leo concurs by stipulating that the fruit of peace in the
Church is peace in the empire, or as he puts it, “[T]he increase of love and faith makes the
military power of [Christian kings] invincible, since the result of God’s being appeased by a
single confession is that the falsity of heretics and the enmity of barbarians are equally
overthrown.”94

The council’s work and proceedings exhibited a variety of forms of appeal to, reliance
on, and reaching out to, the Divine, along with rejection of the evil inspirations of the Devil. The
bishops recognized that God had gathered the council (III, §§47, 50). The reliance on the Spirit’s

92 Marcian, Emperor, “Marcian to Pope Leo (22 November 450),” in The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon,
vol. 1, 93.

93 Ibid.

94 Leo the Great, “Pope Leo to Marcian (23 April 451),” 97. Similar sentiments are repeated in Leo’s Letter
to Marcian of June 26, 451 [“Pope Leo to Marcian (26 June 451),” 99-100].
presence and final authority, as the one animating the dialogic interaction of the conciliar gathering, was indicated and symbolized by the placing of the “holy and undefiled gospel-book in the centre” of the church at the beginning of each session (IV, §2).

The bishops’ awareness of an ongoing active presence of evil spiritual entities and their attempt to influence the work of the council is illustrated, for example, by the bishops’ acknowledgment that “the evil one does not desist from choking with his weeds the seeds of piety” (V, §31), and by the numerous acclamations and cries by participants to “drive out” (ekballo) this or that person (for example, in I, §§27-40),95 which is the usual scriptural reference for driving out evil spirits or the Devil.96 When bishops encountered some idea or attitude that they perceived as contrary to God’s will, they viewed it as an individual’s response to the promptings of the Devil that had to be driven or cast out. Accordingly, when such expulsions took place, it was unanimously attributed to divine action: God deposed and stripped Dioscorus from priesthood (IV, §13; III, §102); Christ deposed Dioscorus (IV, §84).

When, through the “inspiration of grace from above,” the council “dispelled all dissent” (VI, §6), God reunited the five suspended bishops with the council (IV, §18), and bishops were enjoined by Anatolius to make themselves accountable only to God (II, §2). The bishops relied on Divine inspiration to help them make decisions they hoped would be “pleasing to God” (II, §29; III, §78). Divine inspiration was at the heart of their recognition that Christ had revealed the truth through Leo (III, §103). It was God, too, who conferred wisdom (IV, §9) and, finally, the Holy Spirit who dictated the Definition (V, §12).

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95 In this section alone, there are thirteen “ekballo” exclamations, but such instances of “lung-power” (democratic element) are frequently noted in the Acts, especially in the context of heated exchanges.

96 Expelling demons (ekballo, “to cast out, drive out”) and hostile spiritual influences from people is a deed which is associated throughout the Gospels with Jesus (Mk 1:23-27; 3:20-27; 16:17; see also Origen, Contra Celsum, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), Bk. 6, §44).
Another (indirect) indication of the extent to which the bishops gathered at Chalcedon relied on the promptings of the Divine Spirit is the lack of reference, or formal or communal appeal, to, or invocation of, Divine intervention in the Acts. Despite the council being a gathering of bishops on a scale never before seen, it is striking that, except for the mention of the enthronement of the Gospel-Book at the beginning of the Fourth Session, there are no references to communal prayer or other liturgical acts for the invocation of Divine assistance. Since, as noted above, the Gospel-Book was enthroned at the beginning of every session (as a divine-assistance-invoking liturgical action), but mentioned only once in the Acts, this seems to suggest that the bishops either did not feel it necessary or appropriate to set aside special times and places to invoke Divine assistance, and/or did not see the necessity of making mention of them, because they did not think that there was any time and place when and where they were not dependent on, and not receiving, such assistance. In other words, they did not conceive of the natural as something limiting the supernatural (or vice versa). Rather, they conceived of the two as interpenetrating realities, where the natural is constantly dependent on the supernatural, the Divine. It was because of this intense sense of complete dependence on God that the bishops arrived at truth about God with an existential certainty as a result of their experience of unity with the fathers and the apostles, and with one another.

The strongest sense of dependence among bishops on God alone seems to have transpired at the working group meetings, where any other (factional) dependence was minimized or eliminated, resulting in a remarkably speedy consensus on what had previously been stubbornly divisive issues. The importance of this sense of dependence on God alone is highlighted also by

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97 This certainly does not mean that the bishops did not pray or did not attend liturgies. For example, there are records that at Ephesus I, Mammon of Ephesus did not make any of the city’s churches available to Nestorius for liturgical celebrations at Pentecost (Davis, First Seven Ecumenical Councils, 152).

98 See p. 220, n. 81, for example.
the counter-example of the thirteen Egyptian bishops who were unable to subordinate their
loyalty to their leader and Church to dependence on God experienced in the unity of the council.
After the deposition of Dioscorus in the third session, the Egyptian bishops, in the fourth session,
argued in a petition that, due to the canonical restrictions of the Egyptian Church, they could not
depart from its existing policies regarding Leo’s *Tome* and draw up a new definition of faith. In
short, they claimed, they would follow a new leader in everything, but without a new leader,
could not act (IV, §§31, 48). Pleading with the council, they exclaimed, “[W]e submit, we do not
disobey” (IV, §56), but if they signed Leo’s *Tome* without the leadership of a new archbishop,
they would be killed upon their return (IV, §54). Anatolius, in his response, deemed it reasonable
and compassionate to allow the bishops to retain their present status at the council until the
appointment of a new Archbishop of Alexandria (IV, §60).

The case of the Egyptian bishops, then, is a good example of the “natural” attempting to
limit the “supernatural.” It is true, the bishops did not see their dependence upon their archbishop
Dioscorus as a purely “human” demand, but one bound up with the pneumatic ordering of their
lives in the Church. However, Dioscorus allowed his own dependence on the Divine to be
limited by political (“natural”) interests. Therefore, in his capacity as head and leader of his
bishops dependent on him, Dioscorus limited his bishops’ dependence on the Divine as well. In
addition, that the bishops’ dissent was based not on loyalty to the Divine (as they had no issue
with the council and were ready to submit), but on loyalty to human interests, is demonstrated in
their overriding concern for their social status and physical well-being upon their return to Egypt.
This, it seems, took hold of them (and perhaps understandably so) more than their dependence on
the Divine. In sum, the “natural” became a limitation for the “supernatural.”
The issue, then, is not about determining to what extent the “natural” should limit the “supernatural,” but rather, about how to discern the workings of these two interpenetrating realities in human experience. Is it the case that priority is to be given to the “natural,” and the “supernatural” must conform to its limitations? Or is it the case that an overarching precedence is to be attributed to the “supernatural” that prompts and challenges the “natural”—in the context of its radical dependence on the “supernatural”—to reach beyond its own limitations? To put it differently, are human beings trying to form God into their (human) image and likeness, or do they allow God to form them into God’s image and likeness? This fundamental dilemma corresponds to two diametrically opposing language-games and forms of life, the first having its main focus on the ‘I’, while the second is primarily directed towards the ‘other’. Consequently, opting for one or the other will strengthen or weaken the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, accordingly.

The inspirations which I have referred to above as evil and divine do not correspond to promptings by the “natural” as opposed to those by the “supernatural.” Instead, they correspond to promptings of language-games and forms of life (of natural or supernatural beings) claiming independence (falling away) from God as opposed to acknowledging (radical) dependence, in pursuit of union with God. If the bishops at Chalcedon considered Anatolius’s (and the emperor’s) request for a new definition of faith as an attempt to ‘redefine’ who God was for human beings in order to suit current expectations or needs (natural limitations), then their vocal and determined opposition was understandable. However, when, after hearing it, they realized that the new definition maintained a complete dependence on the apostles, on the fathers, and on Christ (God), and did not actually reshape the faith, their initial opposition turned into enthusiastic support. The change consisted not in the faith, but in how to confirm the unity of
faith when facing disagreement and conflict. In other words, the change consisted in the re-articulation of the elements of the faith (of the ways in which individuals and the community responded to the promptings of the Divine ‘Other’ in Christ), so that these elements could not lead to disagreement when received (practiced) in differing language-games and forms of life, such as were represented in the Antiochene and Alexandrian cultural and socio-religious contexts.

In sum, we can say that the “supernaturalist” element played a crucial role in the council’s proceedings. The bishops, while fully grounded in the “natural” reality of their lives, constantly reached to, and remained firmly reliant on, the “supernatural.” Instead of trying to limit or control the latter by means of the former, they discerned the dynamic interaction of these two interpenetrating realities. They did so by determining whether the promptings of these realities led to greater dependence on, and union with, God, and to a confirmation of the faith of the apostles and the fathers (‘this is what we do’), or to the opposite, to separation from God, confusion, and a weakening of the faith.

d) Violent element Violence has many forms. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, it consists in injurious use of power, and is rooted in denying the ‘other’ its due (not to be harmed) or justice. While there was a discussion and common agreement by all bishops at the first session that there had been physical violence at Ephesus II, it is certain that there was no such violence at the Council of Chalcedon itself. The threat of physical violence outside the conciliar

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99 While there was some disagreement about the extent of physical violence and coercion at Ephesus II, all bishops agreed that violence had occurred (I, §§54, 56, 62-3, and 130). It is also commonly accepted that Flavian died as a result of trauma caused by physical abuse or violence [H. Chadwick, “The Exile and Death of Flavian of Constantinople: Prologue to the Council of Chalcedon,” Journal of Theological Studies 6, no. 1 (April 1955): 17-34]. Also, the physical coercion begun at Ephesus II extended beyond its sessions (I, §§58, 60).

100 Given the vicious and unmerciful tone of the anti-Chalcedonian rhetoric, especially in the Egyptian Church, as De Ste. Croix points out, had there been any physical coercion or violence at Chalcedon, it would have been reported, but there were and are no such claims (G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, “The Council of Chalcedon by
gathering, however, remained. This is well illustrated, for example, by the Egyptian bishops’
begging the council to exempt them from having to sign Leo’s Tome, due to life-threatening
consequences upon their return to Egypt (IV, §56). Indirectly, then, in terms of consequences,
the violent element did influence the hearts and minds of the bishops participating in the
conciliar gathering as well.

Even if there was no physical violence at the council, many authors claim that there was
significant pressure or compulsion exercised there by Anatolius, and through him, by Marcian.
Among ancient authors, for example, the anti-Chalcedonian Zachariah of Mytilene claims that
the bishops were “required to subscribe under compulsion.” Among modern authors, De Ste.
Croix concludes that, although there was no physical violence, the “power of the almighty state
was irresistible.” In a similar way, Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, in their commentaries
on the Acts, repeatedly refer to the government “dictating to” and “manipulating” the council,
and to the “political reality of the council—the determination of the outcome by the imperial
will, and the lack of episcopal freedom.” An example of this state intervention, often referred
to, is Marcian’s “Notification” by which, in the fifth session, he gave three options to the
participants of the deadlocked council: to set up a working group to resolve the problems;
individually to express each one’s faith in a manner that would create and ensure the unity of the
group, or to move the council’s location to the West, most likely to Rome (V, §22).

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104 Ibid., 190.
The ancient anti-Chalcedonian sources’ silence on actual physical violence (and a mere reference to compulsion), despite their otherwise strongly polemical and adversarial tone, seems to indicate that Chalcedon was free from any violent coercion.\textsuperscript{105} As for the issue of state intervention, the following should be taken into consideration:

Marcian considered the unity and peace of the Church essential for unity within the empire.\textsuperscript{106} The urgency of this issue became relevant especially in view of mounting, outside Hunnic threats in Illyricum.\textsuperscript{107} It is understandable, therefore, that facing a \textit{de facto} schism, Marcian demanded unity between West (Leo) and East (Dioscorus), and, within the Eastern Church, between those abandoning Ephesus II (such as Anatolius of Constantinople and other bishops who signed Leo’s \textit{Tome}), and Dioscorus. Like Constantine the Great, and as an emperor and a military man, Marcian was consistently unrelenting on this issue. His demand was stated repeatedly in all of his relevant letters (referred to above), and noted throughout the \textit{Acts} of the council.

It seems that Marcian considered the divisions and conflicts in the Church—and any other civic division and conflict—an absence of peace and unity, that is, a state of violence. He could not, therefore, consider a violent and volatile \textit{status quo} as an acceptable starting point for bringing about unity and peace. He needed to repel violence by eradicating it. For this, he was prepared to use justifiable coercion or force, but he was not in favour of physical force. As we

\textsuperscript{105} De Ste. Croix concludes that there is a “significant difference between these texts and what was said about physical compulsion at Second Ephesus” (De Ste. Croix, “The Council of Chalcedon,” 315).

\textsuperscript{106} Marcian writes to Pope Leo, “Your holiness can be confident about our zeal and prayer, since we wish the true Christian religion and the apostolic faith to remain firm and be preserved with a pious mind by all people; indeed we are in no doubt that the solicitude of our power depends on correct religion and propitiating our Saviour” (Marcian, “Marcian to Pope Leo (22 November 450),” 93).

\textsuperscript{107} This is what Marcian refers to in his \textit{Second} and \textit{Third Letters} to the council, when he is talking about important state business that compelled him to ask the council to move to Chalcedon from Nicaea.
have seen, he even rejected excommunication and exile as a preferred way to exert influence.\footnote{Eventually, all bishops were reinstated except Dioscorus, who was deposed in the third session not presided over by Anatolius, and the thirteen Egyptian bishops were not expelled, despite refusing to sign Leo’s \textit{Tome}.} His approach, instead, was to call every bishop into a council (even Nestorius, as we noted above) and simply saddle them with his clear but firm demand: As bishops, you were the causes of conflict and disunity. It is, therefore, your responsibility and task to make peace and unity.

For this, he imposed a strong frame and enforced strict rules of proceeding in a vertically structured conciliar setting, presided over by Anatolius and the members of the senate. In this sense, one can speak of compulsion. However, the compulsion was not about what the bishops had to decide, but that they must arrive at a decision that established unity and peace. Let us consider, for example, Marcian’s “Notification” (referred to above) to the fifth session of the council, often referred to as coercive and manipulative, by which he allegedly enforced his will on the bishops: \footnote{See, for example, the relevant comments by Price in \textit{The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon}, vol. 2, 188, 190.}

\begin{quote}
Our most divine and pious master has issued the following commands. Either, in accordance with the decision of the most magnificent and glorious officials, six of the most devout bishops of the diocese of the Orient, three from Pontica, three from Asiana, three from Thrace, and three from Illyricum, in the company of the most devout Archbishop Anatolius and the most devout men from Rome, are to go into the oratory of the most holy martyrium and produce a correct and unimpeachable definition of the faith so as to please everyone and leave no single doubt. Or, if you do not approve this, each one of you is to make his faith known through his metropolitan so as likewise to leave no doubt or disagreement. If your holinesses do not want even this, you are to know that the council will have to meet in the western parts, since your religiousness is unwilling to issue here an unambiguous definition of the true and orthodox faith (V, §22).
\end{quote}

A closer read confirms that Marcian was not dictating theological content (he was not a theologian), but he required the bishops’ decision because perpetuating existing violence (of conflict and division) had serious consequences, outlined in the last sentence of the
“Notification.” This threat was not about physical violence. Rather, it was an appeal to the bishops’ weakness, namely, to their factiousness. Nor was the threat doctrinal, in the sense of attempting to impose a doctrinal solution on the bishops. The emperor’s threat was simply that, if this group of bishops refused to cooperate, he would find another, more sensible group of bishops, who could cooperate in unity and arrive at doctrinal solutions that would satisfy everyone, and prevent new divisions and conflicts.

Even if the state did not coerce a new doctrinal solution, some could argue, it certainly coerced the council (through the leadership of Anatolius) to go against the canons and formulate a new creedal definition, which the bishops so forcefully opposed (II, §§3-5). Each time, however, when the bishops voiced their opposition, Anatolius simply pointed out the existing divisions and conflicts, and requested (demanded) that the bishops come to a common agreement that could not serve as the sufficient cause for future divisions and conflicts. Again, he did not apply pressure on the bishops to go against existing canons, but—within the scope of existing canons—to eliminate present (actual), and/or future (potential) violent situations. As we discussed above, the bishops answered this call. They did not produce a new creed that would be used in liturgical and sacramental contexts as a “symbol” of faith. In the Definition, they simply confirmed existing creeds and canonical documents, and added a clarifying exposition concerning contested Christological issues.\footnote{As Meyendorff notes, “The status of the definition, or horos (ὅρος) was never intended to be that of a new creed. The use of the term ‘creed of Chalcedon’ in contemporary manuals is misleading. The text was not intended for liturgical, sacramental, or ‘symbolic’ use, but was conceived only as a statement excluding both the Nestorian and the Eutychian heresies” (Meyendorff, \textit{Imperial Unity}, 177).}

Charges, then, of the state’s coercive meddling in ecclesial affairs, especially in the doctrinal life of the Church, appear to be mostly unfounded. Clearly, there were coercive measures employed by the state during the council, but these were well within the limits of the
state’s jurisdiction, in terms of looking after the safety and security of the empire (that included the Church) by maintaining unity. As far as we can see from the Acts and related documents, at no time did the state suggest or prescribe actual doctrinal solutions to the bishops, let alone coerce such state-prescribed solutions. In other words, while there was a compulsion for unity, there was no compulsion regarding truth, that that unity ought to uncover.

e) Socio-political element Due to the strong influence of the previous four socio-religious elements, the impact of the fifth—the socio-political element—was kept to a minimum, but not completely eliminated. The only notable exception to this was the case of the thirteen Egyptian bishops. In their instance, the strength and influence of the violent and socio-political elements (factional divisions and loyalties) overpowered the influence of the democratic, the cognitive and the “supernaturalist” elements on the workings of the council. As a result, the thirteen bishops (and with them, the Church of Egypt) were not fully united with the rest of the council, which meant that they could not recognize the truth the council had reached. This, of course, as I will discuss briefly below in the “Conclusion,” crucially influenced for centuries the reception of the council’s doctrinal solution and teaching, especially in the Egyptian Church, but also in other Churches with close ties to it.

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111 This becomes even clearer, if we take into consideration that the concept of ‘church-state division’ was foreign to late antique jurisprudence and thinking. The emperor was considered, and he considered himself, a ‘bishop of bishops’, which meant that, by virtue of his office, he bore responsibility not only for state affairs, but, to a certain extent, for church affairs as well. In this paradigm, therefore, strictly speaking, his actions regarding the Church would not qualify as “meddling” or “intervention,” rather, as a form of collaboration born out of duty.

The question, however, does arise today, in a paradigm of clear separation of church and state, Is the Church capable of vertical/horizontal integration on its own, that is, without an intervening power? The answer to this question primarily depends on how seriously the Church takes its dependence on God alone, and how strong the resulting vertical frame will be. In the Christian experience (in the Christ-event), God does not force salvation on humanity. The force for integration, therefore, has to come from within. A study of the nature of this force or power and how it is to be managed or exercised is beyond the scope of this thesis. One thing, however, seems obvious: it has to maintain an ‘I’-'other’ dialogic structure.

Conclusion In this chapter, having provided some relevant historical antecedents, I discussed in detail the first six sessions of the Council of Chalcedon as a historical event of dialogic interaction in pursuit of doctrinal truth. I did this by examining how the five socio-religious elements (democratic, cognitive, “supernaturalist,” violent and socio-political) shaped the hearts and minds of the bishops and the work of the council as it engaged in maintaining an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, a strong vertical organization and corresponding frame such that a greater unity could be, and was, facilitated.

By giving procedural priority to unity over doctrinal understanding, to inclusion over exclusion, encouraging freedom of expression, and introducing small working groups that allowed a dynamic interaction of differing approaches to cognitive consensus seeking, Anatolius the head of the senate (the group of lay officials effectively presiding over the council’s proceedings) demonstrated his outstanding abilities as a facilitator. To a great extent because of this, the effects of the five socio-religious elements, in just two weeks, made it possible for the council to arrive at a unanimous understanding of the doctrinal issues that previously, for over twenty years, bitterly divided the Church.

Unfortunately, neither the large attendance, nor the unprecedented freedom of the debates and the resulting virtually unanimous consensus resulted in a swift acceptance of the council’s outcome by all. On the contrary, its Definition became a sufficient cause for division and conflict for centuries. Why did this happen? The answer to this poignant question can be

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113 The personal consent of the thirteen Egyptian bishops, while in principle agreeing with the council’s outcome, was not binding for the Egyptian Church since, due to the deposition of Dioscorus, it was not authorized by the Archbishop of Alexandria.
summed up succinctly as follows: Those who opposed the Definition had not attended the council.

In other words, those who did not experience the unifying dynamics of the council as a new language-game and corresponding form of life, which allowed the participants to arrive at a commonly recognized truth, remained locked into their respective language-games and corresponding forms of life. To refer once again to our earlier discussion of Jastrow’s duck-rabbit image, those parties in opposition refused to step outside their particular personal (or communal) experiences of reality, by not giving the ‘other’ its due (justice) in a dialogic interaction with an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure. This fact of division and conflict following the Council of Chalcedon, therefore, augments rather than undermines our findings, by highlighting that it is unity that leads to common rational agreement, and not the other way around, and also that this unity is to be achieved only through dialogic interaction where an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure is maintained.

These insights are accentuated by more recent developments in ecumenical dialogue between the *miaphisite* (non-Chalcedonian), and *diaphysite* (Chalcedonian) Churches. For example, in the Roman Catholic-Coptic Orthodox bilateral dialogue, after the 1973 groundbreaking meeting and “Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and of the Pope of Alexandria Shenouda III,” the two sides, in 1988, signed the Christological Agreement that

114 My reference to this particular dialogue is for example’s sake only. There were, for example, similar bilateral dialogues taking place, both in scope and fruitfulness, between the Roman Catholic and so-called Nestorian Churches, between the Coptic Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox, and others.

officially ended Christological disagreement. Given that neither Church had changed its faith since the Council of Chalcedon and, effectively, made use of the same vocabulary that was used at the council, what made it possible to come to an agreement now and not then? What has changed? In short, many of the socio-religious elements have changed. Some of the more momentous events include: the rise of Islam; Christianity as a minority religion under Muslim rule, first in Egypt (Alexandria) and later in Byzantium (Constantinople); the fall of the Roman Empire (East and West). This meant dramatic changes especially in the socio-political element, but also in other socio-religious elements. Once the socio-political loyalties changed, and bishops lost their status and power in the context of a powerful imperial socio-political system, the “supernaturalist” element gained more prominence. As a result, the cognitive element, in the context of the emerging unity, unveiled the truth experienced in faith and facilitated by the “supernaturalist” element.

If it is the case, then, that there was no new doctrinal insight as a result of this Roman Catholic-Coptic Orthodox dialogic interaction, was it at all that important to pursue it? After all, both sides seem to have preserved the faith in Christ as perfect man and perfect God. Was the pursuit of dialogue in the hope of unity worth it? The answer to this question is given in the combined statement of Pope Paul VI and the Pope of Alexandria Shenouda III:


117 “We believe that our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the incarnate-Logos is perfect in his Divinity and perfect in his Humanity. He made his Humanity One with his Divinity without Mixture, nor Mingling, nor Change, nor Confusion. His Divinity was not separated from his Humanity even for a moment or a twinkling of an eye. At the same time, we anathematize the Doctrines of both Nestorius and Eutyches” (Ibid.). For a more detailed account of the history of this bilateral dialogue, see Metropolitan Bishop of Damiette, “International Commission on Theological Dialogue between the Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Churches,” accessed October 5, 2017, http://metroplit-bishop.org/files/Dialogues/Catholics/ICTD.doc.
We have met in the desire to deepen the relations between our Churches and to find concrete ways to overcome the obstacles in the way of our real cooperation in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ who has given us the ministry of reconciliation, to reconcile the world to Himself (2 Cor 5:18-20).\textsuperscript{118}

In other words, the Church’s unity is not for itself, not for the service of its institutional needs or aspirations. Rather, its unity is the quintessential vehicle or means by which Christ’s mission is to be accomplished: to reconcile the world to Himself, so that God may be all in all. Any division and conflict, therefore, turns the Church into an obstacle to God’s universal salvific will.

\textsuperscript{118} Common Declaration (1973).
Conclusion: What Have We Learned about Doctrinal Dialogue from the Council of Chalcedon?

The primary topic of this thesis has been the exploration of the Council of Chalcedon as a historical event of dialogue, with the aim of finding new and relevant insights about dialogue—especially doctrinal dialogue—for today. With this goal in mind, I explored, in the first three chapters, some of the relevant philosophical, epistemological, and sociological aspects of dialogue. Drawing on this background, I discussed subsequently, in chapters four and five, the Council of Chalcedon as a historical dialogic event. In what follows, I will provide a summary of the key findings of this study.

Considering the title question, then, let us recall some of the main insights concerning dialogue in general:

1) To be is to be in dialogue. A study of dialogue, therefore, ought to be concerned not with establishing dialogic interaction, but with the identification and elimination of factors and circumstances that impede or suspend the ongoing dialogic interaction that characterizes the unfolding of human existence.

2) Dialogue is, in fact, a language-game (in a corresponding form of life), with an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure.

3) The primary result of dialogue is unity. Unity is arrived at by an ongoing practice of a commonly shared language-game, during which the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure of the language-game is maintained. Since language-games are also rule-governed activities, a practice of language-games implies a practice of following the rules that constitute the language-games (‘this is what we do’). This ongoing practice and maintenance of right relationships in the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure, by giving the ‘other’ its just due, sustain or establish actional unity.
4) The actional unity thus achieved in a common language-game and corresponding form of life enables those involved in the dialogic interaction to grasp or see things as they are, that is, to uncover or recognize truth. It is not agreement in opinion (rationally negotiated truth), therefore, that brings about unity; rather, it is unity that facilitates an uncovering of truth.

5) Unity precedes disunity. It is within the context of a common unifying frame that disagreement or disunity emerges. This context or frame corresponds to the vertical organizational structure of a group, and it takes the commonly assumed moves in the language-game (hinge-propositions) for granted (‘this is what we do’). It is within this or a similar frame, then, that unity becomes a possibility.

With these considerations in mind, we return to our title question: What can we learn about doctrinal dialogue from the Council of Chalcedon? In considering the Council of Chalcedon as a historical event of dialogic interaction, we first explored five socio-religious elements that shaped the hearts and minds of the bishops gathering in the council. Subsequently, we evaluated how these elements affected the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure of the language-game and corresponding form of life of the council, its unity and its common recognition of truth.

The bishops gathered at Chalcedon as a divided group. Their gathering had a strong vertical organizational structure that provided an equally strong and wide enough frame that could accommodate the different parties and groupings in attendance, with their respective (and similar) vertical organizational structures. The different parties and groupings recognized their common and complete dependence on God, as articulated in the common faith of the apostles and the fathers (‘this is what we do’). In a similar way, they acknowledged God’s ultimate headship over the council (“supernaturalist” element). They also accepted their dependence on the emperor and his officials as the ones calling and procedurally presiding over the council.
These dependencies prompted a response of faith (in God), trust (in the emperor) and loyalty, as well as a sense of freedom of expression (democratic element), that exceeded the centrifugal force of the existing vertical factionalism (violent and socio-political elements), and created unity.

Within the frame of this new language-game and corresponding form of life, the unity established among council participants exerted a strong enough demand for overcoming the factionalism of vertical loyalties and for engaging in horizontal (collegial) dialogic interactions that a united confirmation of the common faith in God (as articulated by the apostles and the fathers) could be achieved. The goal was confirmation of the faith (‘this is what we do’), but the confirmation was done by means of the combined horizontally shared experiences and practices of the faith.

It is important to point out that this was not a redefinition or reshaping of the faith. It was not about changing the content of the faith to fit existing expectations and practice, but about changing the diverse existing practices, or language-games and forms of life, so that they would fully affirm the actions of Christ as witnessed to by the apostles and the fathers and further uncover and grasp, by so doing, the common truth about God. Whether or not this confirmation of the common faith was successful was tested by whether the newly articulated common practice (‘this is what we do’) eliminated the possibility of future disagreement in action. It did, as we have seen, for those who participated in the council’s unifying experience. For those who did not participate, however, the council’s outcome, in some cases, did not eliminate such disagreements. What defined the difference between the two groups was whether the existing obstacles to dialogue—those undermining the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure and weakening the
unifying effects of a common vertical frame—weakened sufficiently or were eliminated, or instead, remained intact.

In the introduction to this thesis, I referred to a slowdown in ecumenical and interfaith doctrinal dialogue in recent years. Although my intention was not to provide a detailed and comprehensive study of the causes of this slowdown, nevertheless, in the discussions concerning the misunderstandings and confusions about the nature, purpose, and role of dialogue in this thesis, I have hoped to contribute to a fuller understanding of these causes. More importantly, the insights attained in this study convince me that doctrinal dialogue was not only foundational for the survival of an empire, as Constantine the Great and Marcian believed, but is essential for the unfolding of human existence in general.

It is only within a (human) community with a strong enough frame and vertical organization, characterized by faith (trust), loyalty, and care, that the exponentially increasing diversity of human experience and knowledge, in its various and corresponding language-games and forms of life, can be grasped and comprehended through actional unity. If human existence is to continue to unfold, it will do so by an ever-increasing unity in diversity. This means an ongoing and amplified reaching beyond the limitations of existing language-games and corresponding forms of life, implying an ever greater sense of dependence on, and faith in, a Divine ‘Other’. Anything less will lead to a decreased chance for unity, and a greater likelihood for differences to become conflicts and sufficient conditions for violence.

My aim in this thesis has not been to introduce another theory of dialogue in general or of doctrinal dialogue in particular. Instead, I set out to clarify some of the confusions that prevent us from the continuous participation in the ongoing dialogue of our human existence. Therefore, drawing on the experiences of the Council of Chalcedon as a dialogic event, I will here articulate
not the main points of a theory of doctrinal dialogue, but the turning points within the dynamics of this and similar such dialogic interactions:

a) The first and foundational principle is a recognition that all that we have or are, individually or as a community, is a gratuitous gift of an individual or communal ‘other’\(^1\) and, ultimately, of the Divine ‘Other’. This includes the gifts of life, freedom, love, faith, unity and salvation. The face of the individual ‘other’, the communal ‘other’, and the Divine ‘Other’ make me who I am, and who we are as a community. The inevitable and natural reaction to this recognition is gratitude, justice (as a minimum measure of love), love itself, an ongoing confirmation (deepening) of faith in God, and a deeper unity that leads to a greater recognition of truth about God.

b) If nothing hinders such a response to the promptings or demands of the ‘face of the other’, the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure is maintained and the dialogue (and human existence) unfolds.

c) This, however, is often not the case. There are promptings of language-games and corresponding forms of life that undermine the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure and the corresponding actional unity with the Divine ‘Other’ and human ‘other’ (individual or communal).\(^2\)

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\(^1\) In what follows, every reference to the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ implies not only the first and third person singular (individuals), but also the first and third person plural (communities), or combinations thereof.

\(^2\) In the context of the Council of Chalcedon, for example, these included, but were not limited to, inordinate attachments to national, cultural, historical, political, and economic issues and interests. These issues and interests, while not irrelevant or wrong in themselves, became a problem when they relativized dependence on the Divine ‘Other’ and, by so doing, weakened the unifying effect of the vertical frame, impeding dialogic interaction. I suggest that the recent slowdown in ecumenical dialogue, referred to in the introduction to this thesis, is also due, at least in part, to experiencing the effects of such and similar inordinate attachments. For example, in the case of doctrinal dialogue concerning Petrine ministry, while there seems to be a sufficiently broad consensus that such ministry is needed for the Universal Church, there are considerable disagreements about how it should be exercised. Churches with differing senses of national identities, varied understandings of authority (due, for example, to past historical circumstances), experience the pull of national, historical, and power-political interests differently, but also more strongly than the unifying effect of dependence on the Divine ‘Other’. For a discussion of
d) It is in the light of giftedness and love, then, that an individual is capable of authentically recognizing and assessing any inadequacy (as absence of adequacy) in his or her response. This means an identification of the language-games and corresponding forms of life that bring about separation from God and fellow human beings.

e) After the divisive language-games have been identified, their neutralization may come about by a reaffirmation of the individual’s and/or group’s dependence on God alone and, subsequently, by a better appreciation of the frame that, at the same time, facilitates and demands the group’s unity. The ensuing collegial dialogic interaction of individuals as equals—along horizontal relationships—will articulate the renewed confirmation of the common dependence on God, or common faith, as it was expressed by the apostles, the fathers, and in subsequent communal confirmations that preceded the existing disunity.3

f) If the commonly confirmed faith and its collegially argued articulation can indeed sustain the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure and maintain the unity with God (and the apostles, the fathers, and subsequent confirmations of the faith that preceded the existing disunity) and within the group, then dialogue will unfold and bring about greater justice, love, unity, and a deeper understanding of the truth about God.

arrived-at agreements and remaining divergences on this issue, see, for example, James F. Puglisi, ed., How Can the Petrine Ministry Be a Service to the Unity of the Universal Church? (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010). In the interfaith context, Christian-Muslim doctrinal dialogue has also become heavily burdened by cultural, geo-political, and economic issues and interests, especially in recent times. A more detailed study of these issues is beyond the scope of this thesis.

3 Recent experience in ecumenical dialogue shows that centuries of division and separation can present a formidable obstacle in overcoming the divergent pull of the respective language-games and forms of life of the different Christian denominations. This experience tests and questions the capacity and effectiveness of the unitive and integrative, vertical and horizontal organizational principles of today’s Christian community. Some of the difficult divergences in horizontal ordering, especially among divided Churches, are discussed in Curtis W. Freeman, Contesting Catholicity: A Theology for Other Baptists (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014).
g) If, however, this is not the case, as, for example, after the report of the first working group at the Council of Chalcedon, then the process returns to c), and repeats the subsequent steps (as happened with the second working group at Chalcedon).

I want to conclude by offering some additional insights and considerations to keep in mind for a successful unfolding of a dialogic interaction:

1) Unity presumes diversity. In some cases, however, unity may also take the form of uniformity.

2) There is a difference between differing truth claims and contradictory truth claims. A mere difference in truth claims indicates a disagreement in form of life, while contradictory truth claims assume the same form of life but indicate a mistake or wrong move in the language-game. For example, in the case of the differing truth claims that Christ—at the same time—is fully human and fully divine, the varied experiences and their respective articulations in the Definition of Chalcedon are different, but not contradictory, and their respective truths can be held in tension. In a similar way, in the case of the duck-rabbit image, a reference to the image as a duck does not mean that the duck-rabbit image cannot be referred to as, or depict, a rabbit. It only means a difference in language-games and corresponding forms of life, by which reality is grasped. This, in turn, indicates a level of complexity of reality that neither language-game and corresponding form of life can fully grasp by itself.

For two truth claims (propositions) to contradict one another, however, they both have to be moves in the same language-game and corresponding form of life. In this case, one proposition is true (it follows the rules of the language-game), and the other is false (it is a wrong move in the language-game). Not only truth claims, but whole language-games and corresponding forms of life can contradict one another. Since truth precedes falsity and
agreement precedes disagreement, in these cases, we reach back to and find the last language-game and corresponding form of life where contradiction (falsity or disagreement) was not yet present. It is in this common language-game and corresponding form of life, then, that the truth is confirmed step-by-step in such a way that false moves in this common language-game and corresponding form of life are corrected, and contradiction eliminated.\(^4\)

3) Holding different experiences of reality in tension in a new and common language-game and corresponding form of life facilitates a reaching beyond the limitations of space and time and the experiencing of reality in its previously unknown complexity. As long as two experiences are held in actional unity and tension, we cannot speak of relativism.

4) The collegial argumentation as exemplified in the working group discussions at Chalcedon does not represent a negotiated arrival at a doctrinal common ground. Just as the overlapping area of two circles in a Venn diagram is always smaller than the combined area of the two circles, a common ground between differing opinions is always less than the sum total of both. Inevitably, then, a negotiated common ground means a diminished ability to see reality as is, in its full complexity. A doctrinal dialogic interaction, therefore, is aimed at bringing about a unity of differing language-games and corresponding forms of life, and it implies a confirmation of the fullness of the faith, articulated by the apostles and the fathers.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) For example, in a Christian-Muslim dialogue, we should not attempt to reconcile notions such as āskēsis and jihād. While both involve a certain sense of ‘struggle’ or ongoing practice for betterment, they also contain strongly contradictory elements. Instead, it would seem more fruitful to allow dialogic interaction to unfold in (common) language-games (and corresponding forms of life) where there are no contradictory moves and there are no significant obstacles to dialogue, for example, along the lines of ‘dependence on God’ or ‘dependence on God the Creator’.

\(^5\) For example, in the Definition of Chalcedon, there is no attempt to consolidate the two natures of Christ: “one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood” (V, §34). One nature does not limit or restrict the other: there is no overlap. Both are upheld fully and boldly (without hesitation), in their entirety, and afterwards, held in tension. This is possible at all because the two articulations do not address each other (horizontally), but each one addresses Christ in a common (simultaneous) dependence on him. In this common dependence, and vertical organizational structure, truth can be uncovered in all its complexity.
To be is to be in dialogue. The major turning points of dialogic interactions, itemized above, are simply reminders of the dynamics of the unfolding dialogue of our lives. Consciously or subconsciously, we all participate in these dynamics unless something prevents us from doing so. As long as the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure is maintained, dialogic interaction is unfolding. Therefore, a success in dialogic interaction does not primarily depend on memorizing these or any other principles or insights, but on giving the ‘other’ its due or justice, as it appears in our field of vision and prompts a recognition or response.

Areas for Further Research

I have hoped to provide new and relevant insights for identifying and eliminating obstacles to the complex reality of dialogic interactions constituting human existence in general, and to religious and doctrinal dialogue in particular. The outcome of my research as a whole, then, can be viewed primarily as an invitation for further research on, and a deeper understanding, and better practice, of dialogue in its countless forms. Some questions and research areas have been touched upon in this thesis but could not be pursued in any depth due to the limitations of my research topic.

One such area of study is the immediate aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon and the reception of its teaching. Despite the remarkable achievement of the council, some of those not participating in its unifying dialogic process (for example, in Egypt), remained enclosed in their respective language-games and forms of life, and could not recognize the truth in the council’s doctrinal conclusion. It would be interesting to investigate what the dominant obstacles were, for example, that persistently undermined the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure for centuries to come, perhaps making use of the general categories of the five socio-religious elements to guide the research process. Furthermore, it would be illuminating to investigate how and why these
obstacles eventually dissipated, resulting in the recent bilateral doctrinal agreements between previously divided Churches. A topic closely related to this that I believe would be worth investigating is how to transfer or expand the unitive experience of a gathered group (council) to those not physically present at such a gathering. Due to media interest and involvement, the events and unfolding of the Second Vatican Council can provide us with general directions in this regard, but much has changed since then. A fresh, new investigation could prove helpful, and shed some light on questions such as whether or not there is a time limit on the reception of the outcomes of an ecumenical council or bilateral ecumenical agreement.

Another general area for further study concerns how to handle deep or irreconcilable disagreements—especially on ethical and doctrinal issues—when the parties involved lack sufficient motivation to pursue the identification and elimination of existing obstacles to maintaining the ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic structure. In the case of the Council of Chalcedon, the emperor (the state) provided the sufficient demand for unity, but who and what will exert such a demand (with tangible consequences) on today’s Church and religious leaders? What will motivate religious people to overcome the inertia of the divided status quo, and engage the ‘other’ in an ‘I’-‘other’ dialogic interaction and give it its justice? In an era of strong sensitivity to church-state division, who and what could bring home the ‘violent’ nature of division and disunity that harms our capacity to be in dialogue and, consequently, to be as human beings?

Finally, it would be worth exploring how the approach to dialogue discussed in this thesis relates to forms of dialogue outside the realm of religion and doctrine. Scientists dialogue with their objects of scientific inquiry, artists with their media, and sports enthusiasts with their opponents, for example. If "to be is to be in dialogue," the opportunities for further exploration seem limitless.
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