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THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Marxism and Christianity: taking Roger Garaudy's
project seriously

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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Abstract

Roger Garaudy occupied a position at the centre of the debate with Louis Althusser, Lucien Sève and others over Marxist humanism within the French Communist Party. That, and his active participation in the Marxist–Christian dialogue, ensured that what he said, wrote and did was widely reported at the time. Even those who have continued to analyse the complex relationship between Marxism and Christianity rarely ignore his role.

All this changed completely when he was expelled from the Party in 1970. His subsequent adoption of a project which was both Marxist and Christian lasted just a decade, compared to an intellectual and political life that stretched from before World War II until well into the 21st Century. This period of his intellectual life and the project that he undertook has attracted no specific study. There are several reasons for this neglect. Firstly, Marxist commentators were either still Communist Party members and sought only to make political capital out of his expulsion, or they were sympathetic to Garaudy, eager to demonstrate continuity in his work, and therefore not seeking to emphasise his work after he left the Party. Secondly, Christians were suspicious of a former Party member, especially given that his Christianity did not seem to fit conventional understanding. Thirdly, Garaudy's populist style and ability to reach a mass audience distanced him from the academic world. Many of the central ideas of the project are scattered across different publications, and nowhere written up for academic publication. Then, after his conversion to Islam in 1982, his work was almost completely overshadowed by perceptions of his association with the Islamic world, especially after his conviction for Holocaust denial in 1998. The result is that Garaudy's project has been largely lost to history, rejected by Marxists and Christians alike.

This thesis by contrast focuses directly on the project itself, broadly covering his independent years between expulsion from the Party and his conversion. The result of this focus has been to uncover a very different and much more radical relationship between Marxism and Christianity within the project than Garaudy had ever evinced during his previous period as a Marxist humanist. Some

elements of Garaudy's previous Marxist humanism are retained, just as some are carried forward, if erratically, into his subsequent adherence to Islam. More importantly, however, for the Garaudy of the project, not only does Marxism need to be revised in political terms, but it also stands in need of two key concepts directly derived from Christianity: subjectivity and transcendence. There is therefore a need for detailed examination of the meaning, significance and plausibility of both concepts within Garaudy's project.

What emerges from Garaudy's project is a Marxism that appears very contemporary in its emphasis on the individual, its ecological politics, and in its insistence on the essential role of religion in human emancipation. The world has however moved on significantly since then. The next stage in the analysis of the project is therefore whether it still has relevance in the 21st Century, and to what extent. Others have developed a very different relationship between Marxism and Christianity, notably and in very different ways, Slavoj Žižek and Terry Eagleton. Their work is placed in the context of whether they have something to offer to improve Garaudy's project. The assessment, however, is that neither of them has produced a better blueprint for the relationship between Marxism and Christianity than Garaudy had already offered. This is not to suggest that Garaudy's project represents the last word. Other areas of thought and action that Garaudy left unexplored within the project, ethics in particular, are also considered as candidates for inclusion in a revised project.

There is no doubt that Garaudy's project was fragile — his subsequent trajectory proved it. Overall, however, the conclusion is very positive. In abandoning it, Garaudy threw away the key to how Christianity can provide a plausible basis on which to revise Marxism. Whilst recognising the import of his conversion, and condemning what followed, there is therefore good reason to take Garaudy's project seriously in the contemporary world, and to revise it, as the basis on which an enduring and potentially successful relationship between Marxists and Christians can yet be built.

Lay Summary

Born in 1913, Roger Garaudy had a long and remarkable career as a public intellectual in France. First at the centre of Communist Party politics in France, where he was responsible for developing a significant amount of the Party's policy towards culture and religion, only eventually to be expelled in 1970 after conflicts with the Party hierarchy over such issues as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. He then spent a decade as an independent intellectual espousing both Marxism and Christianity. In 1982 he converted to Islam, and remained a Muslim thereafter, his anti-Zionist stance leading him to prosecution for denying the Holocaust. At the time of his death in 2012 his former friends and colleagues on the Left in France had rejected him completely, whereas he enjoyed a high reputation as an Islamic thinker in countries such as Iran and Libya.

Until he converted to Islam, Marxism and Christianity were Garaudy's two principal interests, and as he himself said, his principal aim in life was to bring the two ends of the chain together. During his time within the French Communist Party, he led its contribution to the dialogue in the 1960s between the European Communist Parties and the Church, writing extensively on the common ground of faith in humanity and work for the future that he believed Marxism and Christianity shared. After he converted, however, his focus switched completely, and he became a dedicated and enthusiastic advocate of Islam.

In between was the period after his expulsion from the French Communist Party, but before his conversion to Islam. In this time of independence he sought to develop what he called his 'project' to bring Marxism and Christianity together under one roof, to include not just the West but all humanity in the joint endeavour to create a new and better world that would be free of capitalism and set all people free. It is that period, which falls almost completely within the decade of the 1970s, that I focus on in this thesis. It is a period of his life that has been largely lost to history, ignored by Marxists and Muslims alike.

Yet studying his work in that period uncovers a very different and much more radical relationship between Marxism and Christianity within the project than Garaudy had ever advocated during his previous period as a Marxist humanist. In particular, Garaudy seeks to take what he argues are essential ideas of Christianity, the importance of the individual — which he calls subjectivity — and the power to transform the world — which he calls transcendence — and use these twin ideas to breathe new life into Marxism.

What emerges from Garaudy's project is a very modern Marxism, with its emphasis on the individual, its ecological politics, and in its insistence on religion as central to human emancipation. Although other Marxist philosophers such as Slavoj Žižek and Terry Eagleton have also engaged with religion, it is certainly possible that Garaudy's project represents a good, perhaps even the best, starting point for Marxism in today's world. That is not to say that just as Garaudy sought to update Marxism, his project itself should not be itself updated: he missed out some important parts of any strategy to change the world, most notably ethics, and I have made some suggestions as to how his project can be improved.

Garaudy himself found his project wanting. Belonging to a community like Islam in the end became more important to him than the lonely task of sketching out a way forward for Marxists and Christians. Yet in converting to Islam, not only did he put himself on an unfortunate personal trajectory, but he threw away what is at the very least an important contribution to the future of both Marxism and Christianity, and at the most, the key to their future successful relationship.

Acknowledgements

This has been a very personal quest. I was educated at a Catholic De La Salle school during the 1970s, and then in a secular College; Marxism and Christianity are the twin lodestars of my personal convictions. I should identify the religious inspiration I originally received at school, not just from teaching but by the example of sacrifice set for me by the De La Salle Christian Brothers. My gratitude too for all those in my own Church, whose aid in developing my faith has been immeasurable. My equal thanks to my socialist teachers at Brockenhurst College, including Paul Hickman, whose stories of 'les événements' in Paris in 1968 were as memorable as the pavé he showed as proof of his participation. My gratitude also for my undergraduate experience at Oxford with scholars with as widely differing views on Christianity and Marxism as Professor Christopher Coker, John Torrance and Geoffrey Warnock. It was at Oxford too that I first read Marx and many other Marxists, especially Lucien Sève, through whose writing I became acquainted with debates within the Parti Communiste Français, and with whom I later had the honour to correspond. My thanks also to all those at Exeter with whom I subsequently interacted many decades ago as a postgraduate, Also to all those who made contributions in seminars at Edinburgh and Murdoch Universities, and to those with whom I have been in correspondence during the writing of this thesis — Yvan Balchoy, Adrian Minard, Carl Shames, Professor Ola Sigurdson, Dr Manfred Sing, and especially Dr Didier Gauvin, too much of all of whose time I have taken up in discussions about Garaudy over the years.

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note in relation to both translations and works of English that in the era in which Garaudy wrote, it was customary to use the masculine in describing people as a whole; my retention of that nomenclature throughout this thesis for textual accuracy and consistency should not be taken as indicating support of the practice.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for my supervisors, Dr David Grumett and Dr Joshua Ralston, for their enthusiastic support of this project throughout and their generosity with their time and advice. Finally, my love for my family — my late parents, without whom I would never have had these opportunities, and on whose bookshelves at least one book by Roger Garaudy found a place — and my wife Gowri and our daughter Tabitha, who swiftly adapted to my return to my original interests and are tremendously supportive of my commitment of time and resources to successive academic projects surrounding the work of Continental Marxist philosophers.

'Then I aspired to be both a Christian and a Marxist, or at least as much of each as was compatible with allegiance to the other'

Alastair MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, 1968. 2nd edition. p.vii

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Chapter One: Why Roger Garaudy still matters

Introduction — Marxism and Christianity

This thesis sets out to analyse the project to establish the mutual dependence of Marxism and Christianity espoused, for a time, by a leading French intellectual of the 20th Century, Roger Garaudy: *to take Garaudy's project seriously* as the basis of a future relationship between Marxism and Christianity. I believe that this investigation is of deep and persistent importance, for three reasons.

First, I agree with one leading scholar of Marxism that religion is a deep and enduring part of humanity which is highly likely to continue at least into the near future (McLellan, 1987:5). This is despite the fact that pinning down a precise definition of religion has proved enduringly elusive. Religion is perhaps not unique in being gifted with almost as many definitions as there are people who have tried to define it (Smith, 1998: 281). Scholars have variously sort to define religion functionally, in terms of its capacity to meet fundamental social and individual human needs (Arnal, 2000:24–25), ostensibly, by practices and demonstrations (Spiro, 1966:87), or by a set of beliefs, however different between religions (Spiro, 1966:91), e.g. in a particular supernatural ontology or in a code of ethics, a view which in particular I suggest could be better described as a faith. Perhaps, as has even been argued for many decades, the whole attempt to define religion should be given up not just an intractable problem, but as one without any kind of solution at all (Ferré, 1970:4; Braun, 2000). I am not willing to go down this defeatist path, but the alternative does appear to me to avoid insisting on one definition, but rather to recognise an 'anti-essentialist, anti-hegemonic and multi-dimensional approach' (Platvoet & Molendijk, 1999:ix) recognising the immense variety and complexity of religious

phenomena, and the need for an intersection of analysis from different perspectives and academic disciplines. It may not therefore be necessary to reach a particular definition of religion.

Difficulties of definition notwithstanding, there can be fewer issues of importance for the future of civilisation as a whole than the choice of religious faith and political ideology. Whether the claim that 'At the core of every culture and every civilisation lies its religion' (Swidler & Mojzes, 2000:1) is fair, it is certainly plausible to suggest that 'if we wish to understand human life in general and our specific culture and history, it is vital to gain an understanding of religion and its role' (Swidler & Mojzes, 2000:1). It does also seem right to observe that, at least in Western countries, 'at times of political and economic turmoil, the Bible and theology become favoured zones for debate' (Boer, 2014:28). Moreover, Boer's further point, that the rationalist anti-religious position of dogmatic atheists is indissolubly linked with a Western economic and political dominance that he alleges is being eclipsed (Boer, 2014:38), does at the very least place faith at centre stage in a combat between economic systems. At most it may eventually involve the identification of particular faiths with economic systems themselves, as Max Weber (1906 [2001]) argued. So, it is short-sighted for the Left to ignore, or worse, reject, religions, as this will result in the political Right exercising political domination within them. And indeed, arguably this has been exactly the trajectory of the Left in recent times, to a lesser or greater extent, as writers have tried to show for Australia (Maddox, 2005) and perhaps above all, the United States (George, 2008).

Second, Christianity and Marxism were the two leading doctrines of the 20th Century West that promised a better life, whether in a spiritual or a temporal hereafter. So what shall I take for the meaning of 'Christianity'? A religion: but without unanimity of belief, doctrine or practice: an almost Wittgensteinian-like 'game' with a multitude of different institutional settings over history. Certainly, 'a religion such as Christianity is not merely a collection of ideas and beliefs; it also includes social, institutional and economic elements, often difficult to separate clearly from one another' (Boer, 2014:168). To focus exclusively on the Bible as the exclusive revelation of God in the world, or on the

preoccupations of individual theologians, is a very different task than to study Christianity as a faith through history. Consequently, although it has often been theologians who have spoken for Christianity in the Marxist–Christian dialogue, or who have sought to adopt elements of Marxism, theology is only one part of Christianity. There is wider ground to be covered and I wish to include all those who identify as Christians: not only Catholics and Protestants of the main churches as part of Christianity, but those outside the main churches as well.

Likewise, Marxism cannot — or at least I believe ought not — be reduced to Marx’s own thought as evidenced by the original Marxist texts and their interpretation. This is a contention for which there is support from at least one leading theological analysis of Marxism (Lash, 1981) as well as from many other scholars, both within and outside the Marxist tradition (e.g. Labedz, 1962; Girardi, 1966; Kolakowski, 1981; Molyneux, 1983; Carver, 2011; Boer, 2019). Indeed, the words of Marx have even been described as ‘unimportant’ for Marxism (Turner, 1983:3), which may be regarded as understandable, given the diversity of Marxist thought and practice (Gouldner, 1980; Kolakowski, 1981). It was Pope Paul VI who noted that whereas, for many, Marxism was class struggle, one-party rule and atheism, ‘At other times, finally, it presents itself in a more attenuated form, one also more attractive to the modern mind: as a scientific activity, as a rigorous method of examining social and political reality, and as the rational link, tested by history, between theoretical knowledge and the practice of revolutionary transformation’ (Pope Paul VI, 1971:33). At its core, however, what is generally understood is the capacity to understand history generally, the primacy of work, and perhaps above all, ‘the essentially transitory nature of capitalism¹’ (Sève, 2004:8).

In the 21st Century Christianity still retains its followers in the billions, whilst Marxism has largely retreated to the academy. Yet both doctrines remain of contemporary significance, although in the short term at least, it has been claimed, albeit perhaps contentiously, that ‘few would dispute that there is a better future for religion than for Marxism’ (McLellan, 1987:172). Whilst by the late 20th

¹ L’essence transitaire du capitalisme

Century it was already being argued that Marxism had become 'as bewilderingly pluralistic as has Christianity' (Lash, 1981:26), perhaps in the 21st Century it really is sufficient for a person to be 'deeply inspired by Marx' (Ojoy, 2001:343) or 'to think with Marx' (Sève, 2008:1) to be labelled a Marxist. At least in this sense, Marxism has proved more enduring than the regimes that professed to adhere to its tenets, albeit only in the academy, and even there, it is not widespread. But as one scholar who sought to be both a Christian and a Marxist was well qualified to remark, 'fashion is no guide to truth' (Collier, 2001:1).

And what of the relationship between them, which has been described as 'the tradition of engagement between Marxism and theology' (Boer, 2014:28)? Neither mutual amity nor enmity should be presumed. To start with two analogies. Roland Boer says that:

'I have come to see the relation between Marxism and theology as a difficult and tempestuous love affair, with a good mix of lust, affection, argument and profound differences of opinion. Even though they may go their own way for years at a time, they always return to renew their engagement' (Boer, 2014: xi).

I see their historical relationship somewhat more conventionally as two wary boxers in the ring: familiar opponents, each seeking to land a knock-out blow, but never succeeding, at the most hoping for the end of the match when they might put aside their enmity, but with a fickle audience that leans first this way, then that (significantly, there are only two parties in Boer's metaphor), occasionally applauding both sides as blows rain in, yet increasingly otherwise preoccupied during the match.

Such a view is not uncommon: from the Philippines comes the 'recognition of a perception of mutual antagonism' (Ojoy, 2001:1), echoing the view that for the most part it has been a relationship between 'two mutually hostile social forces' (Hornosty, 1976:1), as

'since its inception Marxism has appeared to be the very antithesis of Christianity. It seemed clear that its atheism scorned God and religion. Its materialism denied the soul and after-life. Its determinism negated free will. Its revolutionary strategy promoted class antagonisms and violent overthrow of the state. Its socialism would take away the right to private property, and with it, all incentive to work' (McGovern, 1980:1).

So, it was ‘this mutual regard for one another as a deadly virus that enabled the Christian–Marxist dialogue to have its own history of being repudiated in both camps’ (Ojoy, 2001:4). There even seemed to be an unbridgeable gulf between a critical theology and what has been characterised as ‘the critique of heaven and earth as projected by Karl Marx’ (Van Leeuwen, 1974:262). Whilst one author could suggest that the dialogue ‘remains a permanent fixture on the horizon of mankind’s hopes’ (Vree, 1974:50), another observed more soberly that ‘there must be a reconciliation, or both will perish’ (Lauer, 1968:48). To put it more mildly, ‘The mutual suspicion of an irreducible atheism on one side and complicity with the rulers of the world on the other have not helped matters’ (Boer, 2007:4). Cholvy & Hilaire (1988) went further, and blamed ‘the love affair of many radical Catholics with Marxism’ (McLeod, 2007:11), amongst other factors, for the decline of the Catholic church, not just in France but globally. ‘The results included bitter internal divisions, a weakening of the rhythms and disciplines of Catholic life, and disillusion when the unrealistic hopes of those years inevitably came to nothing’ (McLeod, 2007:11; Cholvy & Hilaire, 1988: 287–330). The persistence of the Catholic faith and the eclipse of liberation theology in Latin American countries might suggest that it may be unwise to base any policy on this argument, but it is evidently both sincerely held and worth consideration.

On the other hand, it could be argued that if adherents of these two very significant sets of ideas could never work together on anything other than the most temporary basis of dialogue or an uneasy, temporary alliance possible, and that any closer relationship could only be harmful to either or both, then the prospect of any further alternative society would then have to rest on one or the other, or as seems currently likely, neither, but definitely not on any close relationship between them. Their mutual downfall could even perhaps be inevitable.

Others have investigated the relationship between Christianity and Marxism with a more synthetic inclination — most notably Andrew Collier (2001), Alastair MacIntyre (1953 [1968], 1995 [2008]), John Macmurray (1933, 1935, 1938), David McLellan (1987), and Denys Turner (1983). It has even been pointed out that that between Marxism and Christianity ‘there are certain similarities in

their respective patterns of unity and diversity' (Lash, 1981:35) — cults and schisms, loyalty to certain texts, and internationalism, to name only a few. If Christianity is without doubt a significant continuing part of the history of the world, and if Marxism represents at least one serious attempt to understand how the world works, then solutions to this impasse are surely still worth serious study. But there is very little work in the Anglosphere on whether Continental thought, Garaudy in particular, was a different or in any way more satisfactory attempt to solve the same potential impasse.

Who was Roger Garaudy?

André Dupleix pointed out that one does not dialogue with ideas, not with Marxism, capitalism or Christianity, but with people with beliefs, who must therefore listen and make themselves heard (Dupleix, 1971:11). I therefore argue that, thirdly, this subject is worth studying because of Garaudy himself. Roger Garaudy was a principal exponent of both Marxism and Christianity, yet his project to bring the two into a closer relationship has received scant attention. There are several probable reasons. One may be because Garaudy's project emerged in the shadow of an immediately prior, very public, involvement in Marxist–Christian dialogue; and it ended when it eventually failed to satisfy its author. The reasons for Garaudy's conversion to Islam and its dramatic eventual consequences for his reputation have been discussed elsewhere (Fleury, 2004; Minard & Prazan, 2006; Prazan & Minard, 2007; Minard, 2019). I will myself address his conversion in Chapter Six, although from the standpoint of why the project ended, as this thesis is not primarily to tell the story again in more detail or from a different perspective. No doubt, however, biographical information and background is especially important in the context of an individual who was frequently portrayed by his numerous critics as changing his views with such alarming frequency that his commitment to any of them could reasonably be brought into doubt simply on the grounds of their lack of durability. Garaudy's trajectory was certainly one of significant change in views over time. Yet

he also had the experience of living through what were undoubtedly tumultuous times: in his own view, more change had been produced by the 20th Century than the previous five thousand years of written history (Garaudy, 1989:9).

In a long life, the periods when he considered himself as both a Christian and a Marxist were quite brief. Roger Garaudy was born in Marseille on 17 July 1913. From his childhood, he says in his autobiography, he derived inspiration from the love of his mother and grandmother (Garaudy, 1989:13). He further says that his identification as a Christian at the age of sixteen (Garaudy, 1973a:398) — to Protestantism, in particular — was a reaction, or perhaps a compromise, with the Catholicism of his mother's side of the family and the atheism of his father, whose faith was shattered by the First World War. After finishing several terms in a local lycée, Garaudy transferred to the prestigious Lycée Henri IV in Paris (McClain, 1972:162). The young Garaudy held a strong Christian faith: he led a young Christian organisation in Marseille as a student. This did not prevent him, however, from joining the Parti Communiste Français (PCF) in 1933. On the contrary, 'In such a context, he could not conceive of limiting the love he felt to his own immediate circle. Rather, he sought to transpose this feeling into a great project in which all humanity could share'² (Fleury, 2004:94).

He was not alone: it has been contended that the historically most outstanding thinkers of French Marxism in the 20th Century, Roger Garaudy and Louis Althusser — and Henri Lefebvre also — came to Marx from a religious background (Sève, 2008:402). At university in Aix-en-Provence Garaudy attended the last lectures of Maurice Blondel and also mingled with evangelical theologians enamoured of Karl Barth and Søren Kierkegaard, going on to receive his agrégation in philosophy at Strasbourg in 1936. He then became a philosophy teacher at a lycée in the Tarn region. His rapid rise in the equally rising PCF then saw him become an aide to the party's Secretary-General, Maurice

² Dans un tel contexte, il ne conçoit pas de limiter l'amour dont il se sent porteur, à son entourage immédiat. Plus que cela, il cherche à transposer ce sentiment dans un projet grandiose que l'humanité entière pourra partager

Thorez, the originator of the policy of the 'outstretched hand' towards French working-class Christians (Mauriac, 1936:1; Bustros, 1976:xiii). At this time Garaudy considered himself both a Communist and a militant Christian, so his writing from these early years may be of more than tangential interest for this thesis.

Three years later came World War II, and Garaudy was conscripted. He distinguished himself by his bravery, earning the Croix de Guerre with two citations during the fall of France in 1940. In September of that year, after trying to re-establish the PCF clandestinely in the Tarn, he was arrested and deported to Djelfa camp in Algeria. Released in 1943, he worked briefly for Radio France in Algiers, and then for the communist journal *Liberté*. It was in 1945 that he wrote his autobiographical novel *Antée* (Garaudy, 1945), which was followed by another the following year (Garaudy, 1946). Once back in France, his political career took off: in 1945 he was elected as a provisional member of the PCF Central Committee, and as a full member in 1947, already occupying 'the first rank (or almost) amongst the theoreticians of the Party'³ (BEIPI, 1952:2). He became a provisional member of the Politburo of the PCF in 1956 and finally, a full member in 1961 (Robrieux, 1984:253). Electorally, he served as PCF deputy for Tarn (1945–1951) in the provisional National Assembly and then the first Assembly of the Fourth Republic, actively participating in the mineworkers' strikes of 1947–48, then as PCF deputy for the Seine (1956–1958) (Assemblée Nationale, 2020), eventually becoming Vice-President of the National Assembly, and then briefly, PCF senator for Paris (1959–1962). With the expulsion of the PCF from the National Assembly, Garaudy quit professional politics to lecture in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Clermont-Ferrand from 1962, allegedly 'over the protests of the faculty' (Hughes, 1970:26) but left after disagreements with Michel Foucault, who detested him, 'partly because of his Stalinist past, partly because of his "soft" humanism' (Macey, 2019:110). He transferred to Poitiers, where he stayed until 1973 (Prazan & Minard, 2007:92).

³ le premier rang (ou presque) parmi les théoriciens du Parti

Garaudy's political practice was intertwined with political theory. His rise to political prominence within the PCF was accompanied by an increasing intellectual dominance within the Party. At some point — it is not clear exactly when, he himself says only 'some years' after joining the Party (Garaudy, 1975:96) — Garaudy seems to have started to identify as an atheist and provider of intellectual support for Stalin against critics such as Arthur Koestler, André Marty and Henri Lefebvre (Garaudy, 1953, 1955a). In 1948 he published a study on Vatican policy towards communism (Garaudy, 1948) and in the following year, he began a long association with Latin America with a tour and subsequent report to the PCF on prospects for revolution there (Bustros, 1976:xiv). Having obtained his doctorat ès lettres in philosophy with a thesis on the materialist theory of knowledge from the Sorbonne in 1953, examined by a jury chaired by Gaston Bachelard, he spent a year in the Soviet Union, at the end of which he defended another thesis, this time on 'Liberty' before the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (Garaudy, 1955).

Then, at the beginning of 1956, the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) occurred. It was little wonder that Nikita Khrushchev's Secret Speech denouncing Stalin's crimes shook Garaudy to his core; he recounted weeping uncontrollably at his desk as the revelations tumbled out and the images of Stalin were torn down (Garaudy, 1989:161). Garaudy himself then paid tribute to Khrushchev for having 'fundamentally challenged, in the eyes of the whole world, an image and method that have led a socialist regime to commit crimes against socialism' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:19]) and for pointing out how dogmatic dialectical and historical materialism had been used ideologically to justify these crimes (Garaudy, 1966: [1970:17]). As he admitted, the events of 1956 were psychologically catastrophic. A decade later he confessed that:

'For a soul, the fear of death is the fear of losing its motives for living and acting: and there is no reason why one should not admit that for a moment, on the morrow of the Twentieth Congress, one understood just what this utter vital bewilderment could be' (Garaudy 1966 [1970: 18]).

His sternest critic agreed:

‘The effect on Roger Garaudy was devastating: was it then for these horrors that he had believed it necessary to repress the religious aspiration in himself? In what he himself called the vacillation of his communist faith, the road to Christian faith was re-opened’ (Sève, 2008:402).

And, Sève intimates, so too was Garaudy’s road away from Marxism. Certainly, the events of 1956 were of huge significance for Garaudy, as they were for every intellectual within the PCF and the wider Communist movement. But unlike others (e.g. MacIntyre, 1953 [1968]), Garaudy did not leave the PCF over the Hungarian invasion of the same year. For the time being at least, if the choice were between Soviet rule and the restoration of capitalism, Garaudy would support the former. It was perhaps little wonder, after more than two decades as a PCF loyalist, that ‘his break with the Stalinist heritage, like his party’s, was a slow and cautious process’ (McClain, 1972:226).

From the collapse of Stalinism, however, Garaudy steadily emerged as ‘one of the French Communist Party’s leading theoreticians, a respected philosopher and authority on Hegel, and an author of dozens of scholarly works’ (O’Keefe, 1999:31). Although he wrote few academic articles, Garaudy excelled in the book form. They included *La Liberté* (Garaudy, 1955), his doctoral thesis from the Soviet Union, and also probably his most significant philosophical work during this period, *Perspectives de l’homme* (Garaudy, 1959 [1969]). In that work, the evolution of his thought in the direction of openness towards Christianity was already evident (Robrieu, 1984:253). He also published *Dieu est mort* (Garaudy, 1962 [1970]), a study on Hegel. As if this were not sufficient, he also published critical aesthetics: *Du surréalisme au monde réel. L’itinéraire d’Aragon* (1961), *D’un Réalisme sans rivages. Picasso, St. John Perse, Kafka* (1963), and *Pour un réalisme due XX^e siècle. Dialogue posthume avec Fernand Léger* (1968).

Scholars variously suggested that Garaudy’s aim after 1956 was to demonstrate ‘how Marxism is not only a humanism but a theory of human liberation compatible with Judeo-Christian notions of emancipation’ (Lewis, 2005:162); noting ‘his will to syncretism’⁴ (Prazan & Minard, 2007:99), and that the ‘union of Marxism and Christianity [would] remain the great objective of Garaudy’s life and work’

⁴ sa volonté de syncrétisme

(Bustros, 1976:xiii). How differently these last words read in the light of Garaudy's eventual conversion to Islam.

One key point often lost in subsequent criticism of Garaudy was his 'broad reputation beyond the confines of the PCF as a party spokesman on ideological and cultural matters' (McClain, 1972: 174), that 'his views carried weight well beyond party circles' (O'Keefe, 1999:31). He was in held in high repute as a philosopher during his period in the PCF — not just by Communists, but by significant Western philosophers outside, or almost outside, the movement. Notably for example by Jean-Paul Sartre, who in an exchange regarding existentialism and Marxism paid Garaudy the compliment of engaging with him as the intellectual voice of Marxism in France (Sartre, 1960). Certainly 'It is really difficult today to convey the authority exercised by Roger Garaudy over the post-war years'⁵ (Prazan & Minard, 2007:53), but by way of further illustration, he was mentioned alongside such Marxist greats as György Lukács and Ernst Fischer as a 'critical luminary' (Versluys, 1978:608), whilst one Catholic theologian writer even referred to 'Sartre and Merleau-Ponty to Mounier in the past, *to Garaudy himself*'⁶ [my emphasis] (Sommet, 1973:543). Garaudy's own photographic album, from which he extracted priceless examples of his own fame (Garaudy, 1985), is testimony to the extent of his travels, the breadth of his contacts (Sartre, Castro, Picasso, Ben Bella, Nasser and Khrushchev, amongst many others) and the extent of his influence: 'his impact was massive and his contribution substantive' (Swidler, 1990: 35). No doubt his skill at languages in a pre-Internet age was part of his success.

But under the surface, all was not well within the PCF almost from the beginning. It was evident as the years passed that Garaudy was experiencing progressively more difficulties with the Party line. Intellectual debate had broken out throughout the PCF along with destalinisation, and Garaudy, and his principal ally, the poet Louis Aragon, soon found themselves confronted with

⁵ Il est bien difficile aujourd'hui de se représenter l'empire exercé par Roger Garaudy sur les années d'après guerre.

⁶ De Sartre et Merleau-Ponty à Mounier hier, à Garaudy lui-même

ideological enemies not only outside the Party, but within it. These included notably the anti-humanists Louis Althusser and his younger adherents such as Pierre Macherey and Étienne Balibar, but also those opposed to Marxist humanism and anti-humanism alike, such as Lucien Sève, Michel Verret, and Michel Simon (Pudal, 2006:55). Garaudy's critics rejected principally his adoption and development of 'Marxist humanism'.

The sequence of Garaudy's works during this subsequent period is an indication of his increasingly defensive intellectual focus: a biography of Karl Marx (1964), *Marxisme du XXe siècle* (Garaudy, 1966 [1970]), *Le problème chinois* (Garaudy, 1967), *Lénine* (Garaudy, 1968a), *Peut-on être communiste aujourd'hui?* (Garaudy, 1968b), reformulated as *Pour un modèle français de socialisme* (Garaudy, 1968c) and *Le grand tournant du socialisme* (Garaudy, 1970). He also came in for internal criticism within the PCF for his enthusiastic support of Marxist–Christian dialogue, of which Garaudy was one of the leading Marxist participants during the 1950s and 1960s (Garaudy, 1965 [1967]), in a party that has been described as riven with vanity and rivalry (Verdès-Leroux, 1981:54). After the death of his mentor Thorez, Garaudy found himself increasingly isolated politically from his comrades in the PCF. Disagreements were not only theoretical, about humanism and religion, but also practical, concerning attitudes towards the Soviet Union and the correct political path for the PCF (Garaudy, 1968b). There was an increasing disparity of views between Garaudy and most PCF Central Committee members, not only in respect of relations between Christians and Marxists, and the status of faith itself within Marxism, but also his reluctance to continue to place the traditional proletariat at the centre of political action for Marxism in France (Garaudy, 1970:25–41). This became a gulf that was too wide to be bridged as Garaudy struggled, and eventually failed, to keep ideological control of the Party. Finally, following his outspoken criticism of the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, about which comrades in the Party such as Sève and even the *de facto* leader Georges Marchais had remained tellingly silent, Garaudy was dramatically expelled from the PCF at a Party Congress at the

Palais des Sports in Nanterre, in February 1970. He described the shock of the event: ‘for the first time in my life, I was tempted to suicide’⁷ (Garaudy, 1975:22).

His actual reaction was the opposite: to capitalise on his reputation as a public intellectual by explaining the events that had led to his expulsion (Garaudy, 1970a, 1970b), and to call for more radical politics based on ‘self-management’⁸ (Bustros, 1976: xvii; Garaudy, 1972, 1975) outside and beyond conventional political parties. Amongst his intellectual allies was the Abbé Pierre, who supported Garaudy much later when he became famous for Holocaust denial. The 1970s were undoubtedly a very difficult period for a man who had spent almost four decades inside an institution — the PCF — which although it had now rejected him, seemed to Garaudy now in apparently terminal decline. Confronted by the evident failure of Marxist practice, he invoked now a strong environmentalism, supported liberation theology and began to embrace a much wider religious perspective than hitherto. He eventually announced that he was a Christian⁹. His publications from the 1970s chart the continued progress of his intellectual odyssey and the increasing importance of religion within his worldview: from his espousal of faith in humanity, and what has been described (Norris, 1974:11) as the integration of love, sin and even grace into the Marxist perspective: *Reconquête de l’espoir* (Garaudy, 1971), his enthusiastic adoption of revolutionary youth, *L’Alternative* (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]) and aesthetics, *Danser sa vie* (Garaudy, 1973) through the personal expression of faith and policy which he concluded by announcing his Christianity, *Parole d’homme* (Garaudy, 1975). Onward again to overtly religious political manifestos for the coming century, *Le projet espérance* (Garaudy, 1976), a tour of worldwide human and religious development, *Comment l’homme devint humain* (Garaudy, 1978) and finally the best-selling *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979).

However much sympathy for Islam and other religions is evident from these books, as late as 1980 Garaudy is reported as having answered a question as to whether he was already Muslim

⁷ Pour la première fois de ma vie, j’ai la tentation du suicide

⁸ l’autogestion

⁹ His conversion specifically to Catholicism, claimed by Collès (2014), was denied by his daughter in a post on the same blog.

‘scathingly’¹⁰ and that Marxism remained his creed¹¹, adding that nothing that had happened intellectual or politically had shaken his view of the dangers of religion (Mekki, 2012). Nor apparently of the merits and importance of feminism (Garaudy, 1975:29, 1981). For this thesis, the importance of his biography must be that which he left behind at this point in his writing and actions, not what lay ahead.

Yet it is impossible to ignore his subsequent trajectory. For in fact, the position of a powerless Western Marxist left-wing intellectual outside the Communist Party, which for example eventually became that of his younger PCF colleague Lucien Sève — in fact, outside any Party, as not for a moment did either of them consider joining the Socialists — was not one with which Garaudy himself could ever feel especially satisfied. Neither did standing for the Presidency of the Republic in 1981 bring any solace (Garaudy, 1981a). Instead, for reasons that will be discussed in Chapter Six, Garaudy dramatically converted to Islam in 1982. From then on, everything changed. For his critics, his conversion to Islam was just one in a series of reversals and betrayals that eventually culminated in antisemitism and Holocaust denial. His change of beliefs was indicative of ‘a certain breed of Western intellectuals who play with ideas and concepts just as they play golf or poker on a weekend . . . [and] shows how irrelevant political religious and moral issues have become to a certain intelligentsia that treats politics, religion and ethics as consumer goods’ (Taheri, 2007, n.p.). Garaudy himself strenuously denied the charge, as he had equally done almost three decades earlier when he proclaimed Marxist humanist credentials, and for much the same reason. Conversion to Islam, he maintained, was a change of community, not of faith, just as he had maintained earlier that Marxist humanism was a different, more likely way than Stalinism to achieve the same communist goal that he had always espoused.

¹⁰ cinglante

¹¹ credo

As a Muslim he adopted the name 'Ragaa' and once again emerged, this time as a prominent Muslim intellectual, continuing to support the Palestinian cause. Most notably he became embroiled in Holocaust denial after publishing a strongly anti-Zionist book, *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne* (Garaudy, 1995). For this he was in 1998 prosecuted by the French State, sentenced on 27 February 1998 for challenging crimes against humanity and racial defamation, and given a suspended jail sentence. In its Judgement, the tribunal emphasised that 'far from being limited to a criticism of Zionism . . . Roger Garaudy has engaged in a virulent and systematic challenge to the crimes against humanity committed against the Jewish community' (European Court of Human Rights, 2003). Despite numerous appeals on his part, including to the European Court of Human Rights, his conviction was upheld. His reputation lay in tatters in France, and it has never recovered.

It would however certainly be a mistake to judge Garaudy's long period as a Muslim solely on the basis of Holocaust Denial. He continued to make intellectual contributions — some of them quite radical, and consistent with his own previous contentions, on occasion startlingly so (Garaudy, 1992), others much more conventionally Islamic, especially during the early years after his conversion (Garaudy, 1981b, 1981c, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987). As a result of these endeavours, he was widely appreciated, as well as applauded, in the Islamic world. The stark disparity of his reputation is illustrated by the comparison of a retold anecdote to the effect that French intellectuals would not even sit next to him in a café (Taheri, 2007, n.p.), whilst during the same period Garaudy was invited to Tehran as a guest of the President, receiving honours reserved for visiting heads of state. In June 1999, Jordanian intellectuals named Garaudy 'the most important international cultural personality of the 20th Century', whilst former Syrian Vice-President Abdul-Halim Khaddam called Garaudy 'the greatest contemporary Western philosopher', and Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi even called him 'Europe's greater philosopher since Plato and Aristotle' (Homa, 2018:42fn). He eventually settled in Cordoba in Spain, living relatively quietly, and establishing a Foundation dedicated to research into Islamic influence in Spain.

Garaudy's death aged ninety-eight at Chennevières-sur-Marne, east of Paris, on 13 June 2012, during a period which can undoubtedly be characterised as one of deteriorating international relations between OECD countries and much of Islam, therefore predictably occasioned very different reactions in Paris and in the Islamic world. His story continues to generate strong, mainly adverse responses, amongst those few Western intellectuals who engage with him; in France, 'the figure of Roger Garaudy has sunk into oblivion very rapidly'¹² (Michaël Prazan, personal communication, 28 March 2018). But on the contrary, his death occasioned respect in Islam (MEMRI, 2012), his role in Holocaust denial especially noted. What few denied was either his ability to reach a wide audience through his writing, which enjoyed far more sales than his philosophical contemporaries, even Althusser or Foucault, let alone his capacity for controversy.

Very recently the faintest traces of revisionist appreciation of Garaudy may be discerned in France and even more widely. Adrien Minard delivered a paper on his conversion to Islam as part of a conference on the subject (Minard, 2019), Roland Boer has reached back to his contribution to the Marxist–Christian dialogue of the 1960s (Boer, 2019:123), Gerard Ronge has presented Garaudy's theory of aesthetics from a Polish perspective (Garaudy, 1963; Ronge, 2019) whilst Didier Gauvin (2018) has written a thesis on Garaudy as a 'disruptive' French intellectual, presenting the case that even before his conversion to Islam, his refusal to adhere to 'conventional' Marxism and his support for religious ideals marked him out as ideologically unacceptable to the majority of the strongly anti-clerical French intellectual Left (Gauvin, 2018).

Organisation of the thesis

¹² la figure de Roger Garaudy ayant sombré dans l'oubli très rapidement en France

I have chosen to write this thesis in eight chapters, including the Conclusion. This first chapter has set the scene, explained the issues involved, provided a biographical sketch of the author of this project concerning Christianity and Marxism, and explains how I shall go about the task.

Chapter Two is a literature review, examining the existing literature on Garaudy, but focusing on what has been written about his Marxism, his Christianity and especially on that little written surrounding his concurrent espousal of both, seeking thereby to place both him and his work in historical and theological context.

The core of the thesis lies in the three succeeding Chapters. Chapter Three presents what Garaudy concluded of his work after leaving the PCF in one key text, that it was ‘a project. That is to say the start of an action’¹³ (Garaudy, 1976:217), as evidenced in the evolution of his views through published books and articles, correspondence, and the media. It is this project, its components and construction, how it compares and contrasts with other work in the same tradition of engagement between Marxism and Christianity, perspectives on other religions, and its significance — past, present and perhaps future — which is the core set of views that is the subject of the thesis. Some of the project I will argue was long established by the time he announced his renewed Christianity (Garaudy, 1975). Other parts — not only in respect of his reasons for converting to Islam, common themes throughout his work, or observations about the past — can usefully be derived from his work even after he converted to Islam (e.g. Garaudy, 1992).

Having established what the project is in general terms, the following two Chapters focus in turn on the two key areas that Garaudy believed Christianity had most to offer Marxism: subjectivity and transcendence. A contemporary commentator recognised the importance that Garaudy attached to both in the Marxist–Christian dialogue: ‘Garaudy specifies two themes in regard to which Christianity can amplify Marxism: transcendence and subjectivity. Man can contemplate his own destiny and project imaginatively future possibilities that qualitatively surpass his present

¹³ un projet. C’est-à-dire, le commencement d’une action

constrictions' (Moellering, 1971:40). Throughout his work, Garaudy insisted on the importance of the role that both must play in the construction of socialist society (Bustros, 1976:xv). The succeeding two chapters therefore address each of these in turn.

Chapter Four analyses Garaudy's concepts of subjectivity and the individual, their connection with relativity and openness in his thought in the context of Marxist humanism and Christianity, and their importance for the consistency of Marxism with Christianity in Garaudy's thought. It also attempts to place Garaudy's approach to the individual and subjectivity in relation to both Marxism and Christianity in the context of the views of a range of other authors on the same subjects.

Chapter Five likewise focuses on definitions of transcendence, Garaudy's own concept of the term, the role he believed it played in the consistency of Marxism with Christianity, and the relationship between Garaudy's own views and those of others, notably leading theologians who have grappled with this subject. Chapter Five also therefore analyses the broader eschatological relationship between Christianity and Marxism that Garaudy espoused, and again how it compares to other writers on the same subject.

If Garaudy's intellectual odyssey had abruptly ended before his conversion to Islam, there would not be a need for the following chapters. But it dramatically did not, and so we have the advantage of a kind of having all of its author's subsequent views on which to draw as part of a critique, or even a contribution, to his project. The subsequent Chapter Six therefore reviews Garaudy's project in relation to his evident eventual dissatisfaction with it himself, the political issues that caused him to focus increasingly on Islam, his eventual conversion itself, and its consequences.

Garaudy left the task of his project in pieces on the floor. And yet, the possibility and even the need for consistency between Marxism and Christian faith, the task of building a faith-based alternative to capitalist hegemony, which Garaudy asserts is perhaps one of the major conditions of the transformation of the world and its survival (Garaudy, 1975) remains as important as ever to the Left of politics and many of Christian faith. Few have taken up the task. In Chapter Seven I therefore

go further, to present the questions, and cover the subject areas, both those that I contend Garaudy missed, and those that have come to light as a result of developments, both theological and political, since he converted to Islam. I seek too to elucidate the extent to which anyone seeking to establish the mutual dependence of contemporary Marxism and Christianity might provide different answers to those Garaudy himself gave. From this exchange I have boldly attempted to move Garaudy's project on from where he left it, to a position that may be more appropriate for a fresh audience and changed economic and political conditions. I will also make an attempt to identify and reflect upon the kind of intellectual coherence and strength for such a new mutual dependence that might reasonably be required to claim plausibility.

I then conclude the thesis. Did the failure of the project to establish the wide acceptance of mutual dependence between Christianity and Marxism have any practical significance? What is of contemporary relevance from the story of Garaudy's short-lived and ultimately unsuccessful project? Was there something of genuine and lasting worth — a combination of ideas, politics and personality — that we can glean from *taking Garaudy's project seriously*? Did Garaudy in fact throw away an achievement of great merit: a work in progress, for sure, but his own, and reach out, however understandably, to a ready-made alternative. Or did he simply stop attempting the impossible?

Reading Garaudy

This is not a straightforward task, for many reasons. In common with all historical writing, events at the time must be recalled. The comment that 'The popular misconception of communism which has formed a basis for much anti-communist propaganda — that human value must be

sacrificed on the altar of the state — is the misconception Garaudy fights’ (Ratliff, 1975:21) serves as a reminder to the political reality under which Garaudy wrote much of his work.

Secondly, Garaudy was not — and never claimed to be — an ‘original’ thinker, in the way that for example Ernest Bloch or György Lukács might reasonably have been claimed to be. Whatever value lies in his work must be sought elsewhere than in originality: in its ability to synthesise the work of others, to persuade, or both. This results in a further problem with reading Garaudy, it must be admitted. On the one hand Garaudy read the work of others prolifically. His project, I will argue, created an original mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity. He never hesitated not only to refer to and promote the work of others, but to weave them into a view of the world that he, at least, regarded as consistent. He was in that sense a compulsive system-builder. Those on whom he drew ranged from Rabindranath Tagore, whose commitment to love and beauty as proof of the divine future of humanity Garaudy celebrated (Garaudy, 1935) to Karl Barth, Maurice Blondel, Ernest Bloch, Karl Rahner, Josef Hromádka, Jan Lochman, Gabriel Marcel, Jean Lacroix, Emmanuel Mounier, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, amongst others. Jürgen Moltmann wrote to him that Garaudy’s project between socialism and Christianity ‘is also my own ‘Project’¹⁴ (Moltmann, 1977: n.p.). On the other hand, especially during his ‘prophetic period’ (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:451) during which he developed his project, he was writing polemically, and certainly not academically. He did not — in his defence, perhaps wisely, given his audience — provide overmuch in the way of academic references to others’ work, or even indexes. But whilst even some academic texts from the 1970s often do not quite match up to contemporary standards for referencing or even plagiarism, Garaudy scarcely excelled in that department even amongst his contemporaries. One reviewer lamented that ‘a work of this magnitude [Garaudy, 1979] deserved a rich bibliography, but it is missing’¹⁵ (Thomas, 1980:200), whilst a less tolerant more recent reviewer commented acidly that the bibliography of one of his books [Garaudy, 1990] was confined to his own work (Poulat, 1991). Assembling intellectual contributions to his project

¹⁴ ist auch mein “Projekt”

¹⁵ Un ouvrage une telle ampleur méritait en outre une riche bibliographie or celle-ci est absente

of establishing mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity is therefore of necessity something of an exercise in detection, comparison and analysis, both from the Marxist and the Christian perspective.

Conclusion

Conviction for Holocaust denial may, and arguably should, prevent any wholesale posthumous rehabilitation of Roger Garaudy in the West. It must also be recognised that Garaudy's later conversion to Islam and involvement in Holocaust denial has overshadowed his earlier reputation in the West as a radical of immense note. It also no doubt goes some way to explaining why his earlier work is now largely ignored.

My central argument will therefore be this: if Garaudy's earlier views were plausible as a position that others could adopt, then they should be examined on their own merits, despite the fact that their author subsequently changed his mind. Many individuals do change their minds (Pettinger, 2013). And as human lives lengthen, spanning longer periods of socio-economic change as well as more events of personal biography, we should perhaps expect more evidence of individuals doing so, even on fundamental issues. But equally, no one is obliged to agree with them when they do. So, was the collapse of his project inevitable, and if so, was it so for Garaudy alone? Does his experience provide some form of guidance, or even proof, of the inevitable failure of such attempts? Or alternatively, was there any direction in which he could have turned that might have placed in question his own perceived necessity to convert? Was there merit in his project for the relationship between Marxism and Christianity, even under the very different circumstances of the 21st Century?

If my argument that there is such merit were accepted, there may be some hope that the very length of his intellectual career and the different positions he adopted may give rise to separate

evaluations of his contribution to an important debate at different times. Therefore, our view of the Muslim Ragaa Garaudy, convicted of Holocaust Denial, should only be allowed to inform, not completely eclipse, that of the influential Marxist and Christian intellectual Roger Garaudy. Finally, then, let there be no doubt: this thesis is an attempt at a revival, and tentative development, of Roger Garaudy's project of mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity.

Chapter Two: Did others take Garaudy seriously?

Introduction — different perspectives

Dividing up Garaudy's life and work into different periods has become something of a *leitmotif* in 'Garaudy studies' from Bustros (1976) to Gauvin (2018). Hence, for example, the Melkite Greek Catholic Christian Selim Bustros, who wrote his PhD thesis on Garaudy's thought, separated an initial Stalinist phase before 1956 from a subsequent Marxist humanist phase, compatible with Christianity, which continued indefinitely thereafter. Bustros did not, of course, have the advantage of writing after Garaudy's conversion to Islam, nor even his later work before he did, in order to question this supposed post-Stalinist homogeneity. Almost a decade later, the Catholic Julian Rodriguez identified 'the Stalinist or acritical period of his intellectual formation where loyalty to official Marxism and to the Party was the ideal life'¹⁶ (Rodriguez, 1984:11), a prolonged period of 'a critical, engaged, humanist Marxism'¹⁷ again starting from 1956 (Rodriguez, 1984:11), and then 'Finally, the period of openness to the dialogue of civilisations, of transcendence'¹⁸ starting with Garaudy's expulsion from the PCF and ending in conversion to Islam (Rodriguez, 1984:12). With more hindsight, Garaudy's friend Father José Rui Da Costa Pinto divided Garaudy's work into five phases: the Stalinist phase (1949–1959), the phase of dialogue and reconsideration (1959–1969), the phase of rupture (1969–1972), the 'prophetic' phase (1972–1981) and finally, 'Garaudy, or brother Rajaa' (1981–2012)¹⁹ (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:452). Finally, in a recent authoritative doctoral treatment of Garaudy as an 'rogue communist intellectual'²⁰,

¹⁶ El período staliniano o a crítico de su formación intelectual y su fidelidad al marxismo oficial y al partido como ideal de su vida

¹⁷ El período de un marxismo crítico humanista y dialogal

¹⁸ Finalmente, el período de apertura al diálogo de civilizaciones, de transcendencia

¹⁹ Fase estalinista (1949 – 1959), Fase do diálogo e do repensamento (1959–1969), Fase da ruptura (1969–1972), Fase do "profetismo" (1972–1981), and Garaudy, o "irmão Rajaa" (1981–2012)

²⁰ intellectuel communiste illégitime

and despite seeking to demonstrate an overarching continuity in Garaudy's thought, Didier Gauvin (2018) identified four phases: 1. The liberation phase; 2. The Stalinist phase proper, in the heart of the Cold War; 3. The 'détente' phase linked to the 'aggiornamento' of the PCF; 4. The final phase, dispute and exclusion²¹, with a prophetic character throughout, although especially noticeable after his expulsion from the PCF. Perhaps most remarkable of all is the simple division between a Marxist phase and a post-Marxist one implicit in Mattei (2012).

I largely follow Rodriguez (1984). However I am not as persuaded as are he and Da Costa Pinto (2017), as well as critics such as Lucien Sève (1969 [1978], 2008) that Garaudy's thought, as opposed to his practice, was ever especially 'Stalinist', especially given his Christian faith at the time he joined the PCF. I am therefore reluctant to concede that his entire intellectual output prior to 1956 should be disregarded in the context of his Marxist humanism. My focus though is on the subsequent project, so I will not adopt a chronological approach, as does one of the principal analysts of the relationship between Marxism and Christianity (McLellan, 1987), however 'insightful' (Boer, 2019:123) Garaudy's contributions to it may have been. Still less will I attempt a biographical approach to Garaudy himself (e.g. Prazan & Minard, 2007).

My own division of Garaudy's thought and practice is into three. The first is that of Garaudy as PCF loyalist, politician, and eventually as theoretician of Marxist humanism. This may be said to have begun with his adherence to the PCF in 1933. I do not therefore agree that:

'With Garaudy, the complete militant commitment of the 1940s and the assumption of party responsibilities had, as a corollary in the philosophical domain, a complete alignment with Soviet orthodoxy as defined by Stalin's famous text *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* (Stalin, 1938), in which the humanism of the young Marx finds no place. Christian faith no longer found any expression in his writings of the time except for the forced lyricism with which the theorems of Marxism–Leninism are presented' (Sève, 2008:402).

Rather, consistent with my contention that his Marxist humanism was not a mere intellectual rapture which concealed a cynical political response to destalinisation, I argue that there are contributions to

²¹ 1. La phase de la libération ; 2. La phase stalinienne proprement dite au coeur de la guerre froide ; 3. La phase de « détente » liée à « l'aggiornamento » du PCF ; 4. La phase finale, de contestation et d'exclusion

Garaudy's project whose origin and even development lie throughout his earlier work. Not only do his writings whilst a senior member of the PCF provide a strong indication of his future project, even though his official public position to say the very least severely cramped his style, so do those even from his youth (e.g. Garaudy, 1935).

The second is the short phase where Garaudy developed his 'project' (Garaudy, 1976:217), on which I focus exclusively in Chapters Three, Four and Five. I locate its inception in 1970, when Garaudy was expelled from the PCF; its apogee, his declaration of Christian faith in 1975 and his public promulgation of the project; and its downfall, his conversion to Islam. The project is therefore the result of Garaudy unchained — the only period in his long adult life where he was not an active member of a particular political party or adherent of a religion. As an end date I therefore suggest 1981 if a year must be given, with his actual conversion following within a year. Just over ten years in all at most, conveniently falling almost exclusively into the decade of the 1970s, in only the latter part of which he held Christianity as a public position, although I argue that his writing between 1970–1975 may definitely be included within his project, albeit that he did not officially declare himself a Christian.

Finally, the third is the period after the end of the project, which forms the content of Chapter Six. Even some of these subsequent texts may be interrogated, if cautiously, for the light they may shine on the project. However, I seek firmly to distinguish selective inclusion of pre- and post-project material from any contention of complete consistency. Through this approach I hope to avoid creating a 'best of Garaudy' theoretical album, concentrating on a very small body of texts and ignoring the process of change and development underlying them.

This literature review therefore focuses primarily on what Da Costa Pinto calls the 'prophetic' period and Rodriguez the period of 'openness'. It also includes prior and subsequent work that I will argue in Chapter Three should be considered as relevant to Garaudy's project to establish the mutual dependence of Marxism and Christianity during this period: his contribution to Marxist–Christian dialogue, his Marxist humanism, and his outburst of syncretic writing after his conversion to Islam

(Garaudy, 1992). I have however largely omitted contemporary political criticism of Garaudy, which can perhaps most usefully be viewed with the benefit of the hindsight I myself use in Chapter Seven.

Where to find this commentary? Garaudy's written output was mostly in the form of books, rather than academic articles — a practice admittedly generally more common last century than this, but partly motivated by his increasingly polemical motivation in writing for the wider audience that he undoubtedly did eventually reach (Bourdieu, 1984). Some commentary on his work can therefore be found in books and articles where Garaudy and his opponents talked past each other, for example in the prolonged debate with Althusser over Marxist humanism (e.g. Althusser, 1965 [2005], 1966 [2007]). Other more sympathetic, or at least tolerant, commentary emerged in the form of brief citations, and reviews of his work, in newspapers and political and academic journals, often identifying Garaudy with a particular viewpoint, notably in favour of Marxist humanism (e.g. Cottier, 1967), or even expressing agreement with him from a Christian standpoint that 'the meaning of history is to free man' (Daniélou, 1951:506).

In much of this commentary, Garaudy was often mentioned as a leading light of the Marxist–Christian dialogue. Sometimes, this was along with other intellectuals: 'Among the philosophers we shall mention the French Garaudy, Mury, Goldman, the Polish Schaff and Kolakowski, the Germans Bloch, Havemann; the Hungarians Lukács and Márkus; the Italians Gramsci, Lombardo-Radice, Luporini... .'²² (Girardi, 1966:281). And sometimes, it was alone — one Jesuit scholar, for example, cited no other representative of Marxist–Christian dialogue, referencing Garaudy's reminder that Marx had always recognised that under certain circumstances at least, religion could play a positive role (Decloux, 1966:480), another in discussing a conference in Vienna on dialogue hailed Garaudy as 'the leading French Communist participant' (McLellan, 1968:463), whilst a review of the dialogue from a Chilean perspective commences with Garaudy's question as to why Christians should engage in

²² Parmi les philosophes nous citerons les français Garaudy, Mury, Goldmann, les polonais Schaff et Kolakowski, les allemands Bloch, Havemann; les hongrois Lukács et Márkus; les italiens Gramsci, Lombardo-Radice, Luporini

dialogue with their persecutors (Bartolomé, 1970:241). Two years later one writer suggested that the future of Russia 'will create a community which is both socialist and personal — that is to say — I apologise to M. Roger Garaudy — Christian' (Matzneff, 1968:863). Similarly, Garaudy was often cited as *the* representative of the humanist tendency in Marxist thinking across a wide range of topics, for example, his view of the individual as the sole source of the liberation of Man (Sommet, 1973:543), or a sympathetic sociology of religion (e.g. Heeger, 1971:230; Eyt, 1973:533). Across all this commentary, it is noticeable that frequently one of Garaudy's observations would be cited out of context, if sympathetically, for example: 'That's what R. Garaudy remarkably observed by saying that Judeo-Christianity had "defatalised" history. Faith is here a discourse on the impossible made possible' (Gesché, 1975:810). This kind of isolated quotation was certainly much more frequent than any detailed analysis of Garaudy's position, whether on Marxism, Christianity or anything else.

Finally, it is noticeable how once Garaudy ceased to hold particular views himself, reference to his previous views largely disappeared from the relevant literature. His intellectual reputation survived the publication of relatively short works, such as *Marx* (Garaudy, 1964) and *Lénine* (Garaudy, 1968a), the latter of which was described as readable, but nonetheless not without technical merit, presumably on the assumption that the two were almost incompatible (Drooghenbroeck, 1973:609). But it did not survive his attempt after he was expelled from the PCF to establish mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity and to reach a wider audience in so doing. Rapidly, both Marxist and Christian critics stopped taking Garaudy seriously: despite his initial celebrity status, commentary soon became either distinctly adverse, dismissive, or vanished altogether. For example, there was no further commentary from theologian Johann Metz, who had previously engaged in debate with Garaudy as part of the Marxist-Christian dialogue (Garaudy, 1966c:409). Perhaps this was because Garaudy's *usefulness* to either side had diminished, perhaps because his announced Christianity provided some satisfaction to the establishment of the PCF that they had been right all along about the fundamental deviance of his philosophy from at least *their* kind of Marxism (Gauvin, 2018:17), but perhaps not least of the criticism levelled at Garaudy was his alleged use of language more appropriate

to literature than to philosophy, where conceptions may be irreconcilable and where the adversary must be defeated. The relationship between Garaudy and language became itself a symbol of revisionism for his more orthodox Marxist critics (Sève, 1969; Martelli, 2017).

Garaudy as Marxist philosopher

His earlier work was reviewed by academics as serious philosophy. Garaudy was therefore a target of anti-Marxist criticism: his relational definition of human individuality — from which he never swerved — the target of particular criticism (Massenet, 1952:89). On the other hand, his *La Liberté* (Garaudy, 1955) earned one reviewer's tribute as: 'the most systematic and detailed analysis of the concept of freedom and its related problems which has yet been produced [within Marxism–Leninism]' (Somerville, 1956:272). Somerville was in evident sympathy with Garaudy's view of freedom: embracing materialist causality, and recognising the operational, ideological meaning of freedom in history, yet holding out hope that fear, hatred, prejudice, bigotry, ignorance, and selfishness can eventually be driven out of the list of causes that determine human action. Others were prepared to praise 'a work that is overall, instructive, and written with evident sincerity'²³ (Lhomme, 1959:804.).

An equal sympathy was evidenced for Garaudy's subsequent study of French philosophy (Garaudy, 1959 [1969]), which pointed to two competing directions, existential and Marxist, arguing that Man becomes something, somebody, in his collective context, and that only the unity of theory and practice can lead to a meaningful future for Man (Riepe, 1961:127). It was evident to at least one reviewer that in envisaging the future of Marxism, Garaudy did indeed take very seriously the analytical transition from society to the individual, and the existentialist standpoint on both (Ehrard,

²³ Ouvrage au total instructif une évidente sincérité

1961:821). Garaudy subsequently turned his attention to Hegel, keen to demonstrate not only that Marxism owed much to the Hegelian dialectic, but that Hegel himself could be explained from a study of his life and times, conclusions which, it was asserted, 'are sufficiently convincing to warrant belief that Hegel's intellectual career, like that of Wordsworth and Coleridge, was at least a faithful barometer of the time' (Hodges, 1963:623), although a later critic remained unconvinced of Garaudy's purely Marxist explanation of the Hegelian dialectic (Barthélemy-Madaule, 1972:365).

Destalinisation also provided a cover for several position changes, such as Garaudy's public divergence from the position of the Soviet leadership in the Ilchev affair of 1962, where he refuted the argument that it was not possible to combine religious faith with adherence to the Party (Gauvin, 2018:22), in line with the conviction of their compatibility that Garaudy had held all his life. That Garaudy was an unconventional Marxist had therefore been recognised at the time he wrote, e.g. in relation to *Marxisme du XX siècle* (Garaudy, 1966), 'What Garaudy sets out to do is to provide a *restatement of Marxism* [my italics] which is at the same time faithful to Marx's own intentions and in keeping with the progress in knowledge that has taken place since Marx's time' (Cranston, 1970:12). This new methodology, which one author explicitly connects with the work of Roger Garaudy, 'presupposes that the major problems of contemporary philosophy are similar both for Marxist and non-Marxist philosophy, only their solutions differ' (Kovaly, 1971:289).

Not all Marxists were delighted with this unconventionality, however. Garaudy's Marxist critics came in waves. First, there were those from the extreme Left in France, 'students or former students of Louis Althusser'²⁴ (Gauvin, 2018:33fn), such as Etienne Balibar, Guy Dhoquois — who pointed to 'The eclecticism of Roger Garaudy who juxtaposes contradictory ideas, without realising that they are, and who cannot solve anything because he does not pose any real question'²⁵ (Dhoquois, 1969:164) and Jacques Rancière (1974 [2011:36–7]), who already regarded him as a

²⁴ élèves ou ex élèves d'Althusser

²⁵ L'éclectisme de Roger Garaudy qui juxtapose des idées contradictoires sans s'apercevoir qu'elles le sont, qui ne peut rien résoudre, car il ne pose vraiment aucune question

revisionist. These critics followed Althusser, at least at that time, in his insistence on the crucial political need to demarcate between proper Marx and ‘humanist interpretations’ which included ‘objective idealistic’ readings of Marx (Lefebvre, Cornu, Garaudy) which ‘hold that history is the journey of the human spirit to end its alienation; and also ‘subjective idealisms’ like Sartre and Merleau-Ponty which hold that the dialectic describes the individual’s attempt to end his alienation by realising freedom in the human community’ (Lewis, 2005:165). Althusser and the structural Marxists held the opposite: that the alienation of individuals and its opposite, freedom, was a function of primarily — but by no means exclusively — economic activity giving rise to social relations. Humanist language concealed revisionist, ultimately reactionary intent: ‘‘Man’ is a notion employed in order to mask the class struggle’ (Althusser, 1966 [2007:165]). The ultimate conclusion of their view was expressed by Althusser: the concept of the individual as advanced by their opponents was unnecessary for Marxism (Althusser & Sève, 2018) — they had equally little time for Garaudy’s subsequent opponents within the mainstream of the PCF, it should be noted, even if both groups agreed on attacking Marxist humanism (Matonti, 2005).

These more mainstream PCF critics however became in turn the second wave, which started as internal criticism within the PCF led by Lucien Sève and Guy Besse. Sève’s criticism is worth especial attention, as he first became a leading critic of Garaudy at the famous Argenteuil Conference of 1966, where the PCF sought to determine its line on philosophy, in particular on Marxist humanism vs structuralist Marxism (see *inter alia*, McLaughlin, 1966; Geerlandt, 1978; Sève, 2000; Lewis, 2005), and always remained so, such was the ferocity of the contest. Certainly, this was initially politically brave (Lévy, 2017), for at the time of its writing, Sève was far junior in the Party hierarchy to Garaudy. Sève knew Garaudy well and his sustained attack on Garaudy is worth careful examination, especially given that Garaudy’s achievement at Argenteuil (Courtine, 1981:75; Martelli, 2017) was only ‘a superficial victory’²⁶ (Gauvin, 2018:23), which was quickly followed by retreat, e.g. criticism from leading PCF

²⁶ victoire de façade

member Antoine Casanova that forced Garaudy into specific criticism of the Catholic Church's failure to engage more positively with efforts to combat poverty (McLaughlin, 1966: n.p.).

Sève first noted that in the ten years after 1945, Garaudy published a number of works in which the humanism of the young Marx held no place. Sève however observed that in painting a quick picture of the birth of Marxism, Garaudy did not even mention *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (Marx, 1844 [1975]) among the works of the young Marx until much later, when he stressed the connection with Hegel (Garaudy, 1963a), following instead the well-known Marxist–Leninist position that ‘Marxism attains maturity’ in 1847–48 with *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Marx, 1847 [1976]) and *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 1848 [1972]) (Garaudy 1955: 165 *et seq.*). For those such as Sève who were eventually to try to hold the line between Garaudy and Althusser within the PCF, this was not to be commended. Sève complained even decades later that Garaudy had long adhered to Stalinism:

‘Yet in *Humanisme marxiste* [Marxist Humanism] in 1957, *Perspectives de l’homme* [Prospects of Man] in 1959 and all the publications that follow, Garaudy poses all of a sudden as a champion of humanist Marxism and, according to him, the analysis of alienation in the Manuscripts of 1844 having prefigured the major theses of *Capital*’²⁷ (Sève, 2008:522).

Two objections may be raised here. The obvious one is why it is not permitted to Garaudy to change his mind, as Sève himself eventually did politically, if not philosophically, especially given ‘The accidents in the history of communism, which pressed with all their weight on Garaudy's trajectory’²⁸ (Goulon, 1983:10). The second is whether Garaudy really ever did adhere to an uncritical philosophy of dialectical materialism: repeated attention to liberty (Garaudy, 1950, 1955) is surely a striking choice of subject if so, but unlike Somerville (1956) neither Sève (1969 [1978], 2008) nor any other of Garaudy's critics seemed to be interested in examining what he actually had to say in any of his earlier work.

²⁷ Mais dans *Humanisme marxiste* [Marxist Humanism] en 1957, *Perspectives de l’homme* [Prospects of Man] en 1959, et toutes les publications qui suivent, Garaudy se pose tout d’un coup en champion d’un marxisme humaniste, et les Manuscrits de 1844 passeront même selon lui pour avoir préfiguré dans leur analyse de l’aliénation des thèses majeures du *Capital*

²⁸ Les accidents de l'histoire du communisme, qui pesaient de tout leur poids sur l'itinéraire de Garaudy

Rather, the question of what constitutes the Marxist conception of man, and whether Marxism is a humanism, has underlined and continued to underline²⁹ the acerbic polemics of the international communist movement (Geerlandt, 1978:7–8). As Geerlandt pointed out, successive leaders of the French Communist Party had associated Marxism with humanism (Thorez, 1937 [1954:168]; Rochet, 1966; Marchais, 1973:209–210). This ideological dominance was not assured, however. One critic of Althusser proposed to drive a theoretical wedge into the variant of Marxist humanism promoted by those dismissed as repentant former Stalinists such as Garaudy and Adam Schaff, interested only in dialogue with all those of good will (Löwy: 1970:124) through the revolutionary humanism of Mao and Guevara, which, it was claimed, can accommodate the kind of flexibility in economic laws advocated by Ernest Mandel and denied to the anti-humanists (Löwy: 1970:125).

Sève, too, argued that Garaudy and other Marxist humanists, such as Schaff (1965 [1970]), to which one could add Norman Geras (1983) tried to twist readings and interpretations of Marx to justify an unchanging ‘human nature’, which he argued was not only erroneous, but also an essential, flawed ingredient of Marxist humanism. The problem, as Sève saw it, was that Garaudy fixated on the 1844 Manuscripts and refused to accept that in the later Marx there was much more than ‘an adaption of speculative concepts’ (Garaudy, 1968b:73), cited in Sève (1969 [1978:158]) but rather:

‘a real reversal of perspectives, a theoretical revolution . . . To emphasise this untenable aspect (among others) in the interpretation of Marxism which Roger Garaudy has developed since 1959, is not to degenerate into a minor matter of Marxological erudition: it is the very meaning of mature Marxism which is involved here’ (Sève, 1969 [1978:158fn]).

For Sève, the early Marx saw the human essence as ‘species man’, i.e. inherent in a still abstract individual, and therefore in pre-scientific form. For Sève, and indeed for Althusser also, Marx needed to upend this concept, which he did initially in the *VI Thesis on Feuerbach* and then in the *German Ideology* before the fully developed version of humanity is seen in *Das Kapital*. This is that the human essence is collective, and the form of human individuality is not an abstract human essence. It is

²⁹ soulever

therefore no longer possible to engage in the kind of philosophy with 'Man' as a subject, in which Garaudy delighted, as the concept has been superseded. Indeed, Sève claimed that misrepresenting the crucial importance of the distinction between human essence and individuality, Garaudy continually revived the philosophico-humanist myth of 'Man' in general as the subject of history (Sève, 1969 [1978:158]).

And this *mattered*: 'All this, 'cast like a single block of steel', in Lenin's words, gradually breaks up in Roger Garaudy's works' (Sève, 1969 [1978:159]). So Sève says that whilst Garaudy is right to criticise theoretical anti-humanism' as non-Marxist, he says his argument is no better because it is developed from an even less acceptable view of Marxist humanism which is reduced to certain of its pre-scientific aspects of 1844 and which is, moreover, for him at least distorted in a spiritual direction (Sève, 1969 [1978:159]). Hence, Garaudy's simplification of the *VI Thesis*

'... which replaces the materialist definition of the individual with a mere relational conception of the individual, brings us back from the science of history to a philosophy of 'inter-subjectivity' which, after all, is banal and which, detached from a materialist basis, is perfectly acceptable to a spiritualist and in fact is inevitably led into spiritualism' (Sève, 1969 [1978:160]).

The route back is, perhaps, not quite so straightforward as Sève believed, but it is noteworthy that one of the characteristics of the majority of attacks on Garaudy is the accusation that in some way he fails to appreciate the great depth and sophistication of whatever opposing position is advanced.

Sève suggested that Schaff had made the same error of interpretation of the *VI Thesis*, although Schaff rejected the association, agreeing that Garaudy's interpretation was 'mistaken' (Schaff, 1965 [1970:265]), as 'several works of Roger Garaudy and all of his interpretation of Marxism in recent years are based on an obvious distortion not only of the spirit but the letter itself of the VIth Thesis on Feuerbach'³⁰ (Sève, 1971:264). These famous words are usually translated as 'the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social

³⁰ plusieurs ouvrages de Roger Garaudy et toute son interprétation du marxisme dans ces dernières années sont fondés sur une déformation patente non seulement de l'esprit mais de la lettre même de la VI^{ème} Thèse sur Feuerbach

relations' (Marx, 1844 [1975:423]). Garaudy's error, Sève felt it worthwhile to explain again almost four decades later, was to site the 'real' Marx not in *Das Kapital* but in the *1844 Manuscripts*, which was to misinterpret the VIth Thesis on Feuerbach:

'as if it placed an equals sign between the individual and social relations, to pass in silence over the radical historical materialist critique of "man" in favour of an intersubjective hominism that that critique discredits, to see nothing of the central anthropological innovations presented here while extolling the individual as "creator of himself," communism as "realization of man," and Marx as champion of a "modern humanism" — these ways of viewing the matter are more or less common to all of those cited above — are, in relation to the actual Marxian anthropology, a miscomprehension in the guise of recognition' (Sève, 2008:103–4).

Sève encapsulated what he continues to regard as Garaudy's theoretical errors in his principal text, *Marxism and the Theory of Human Personality*. It is worth citing from a later edition of this book at length, as a summary of his criticism of Garaudy:

'He again assigns to Man essential human properties from now on inevitably conceived abstractly ("the creative project", "dialectical surpassing", etc.) and above, all, once again turning the relations between men and social relations on their head, again setting up typical idealist views against historical materialism ... It is he who 'produces' the social relations (Garaudy, 1968b:105) and through him that "the meaning of history originates" (Garaudy, 1968b:298). In a word, "specifically human activity [is] the act of creating values" (Garaudy, 1968b:232). "'Man' is 'a creator in the image of God'" (Garaudy, 1968b:378)]. At the extreme, every difference between Marxism and spiritualism is obliterated. At the same time, it is the class basis of communist politics which is directly at stake in this reconversion of scientific socialism into philosophical humanism.

In the autobiography with which his book (Garaudy, 1968b) begins, Roger Garaudy reveals certain personal motivations for this spiritualistic attraction to which he never stops subjecting Marxism. What he now feverishly strives for from book to book is the point where what he calls "'the subjective moment" of the communists' historical initiative and fight might link up with the Christian faith" (Garaudy, 1968b:388]) and the message of Jesus (Garaudy, 1968b:379). But one cannot help but see that it leads him constantly to slide from dialogue between men and from a confrontation of 'values' to the search for an impossible convergence of doctrines. Are there really 'irreducible philosophical differences' between Marxists and Christians? he asks (Garaudy, 1968b:386) which in actual fact, from the theoretical and practical point of view, beyond liberties with texts, inexorably mean a fundamental deformation of Marxism. For while it is a correct expression of Marxism to pursue a policy of making friendly overtures, Marxism is nonetheless unwilling to accept this spiritualistic 'addition of soul' with which one claims to enrich it. Anyone wishing to 'save' the soul of Marxism destroys it' (Sève, 1969, [1978:160–161]).

At the risk of re-igniting the debate (Held, 2009), I argue that the problem with Sève's criticism is that it uses the distinction between the particular and the general, an important point closely identified

with Sève's own work, to do too much theoretical work. Garaudy does talk about 'Man' in general, for sure, but he need not have done. If one were to replace 'Man', with 'Real, historical men (and women)', Garaudy's message would surely be no less clear. Surely all Sève has achieved is to eliminate a form of shorthand, not won a theoretical victory? Still less has he proved that there is any necessary connection between the use of the singular instead of the plural and the distinction between spiritualism and Marxism, between idealism and materialism.

Sève's attack could also be wrong more fundamentally, because perhaps Marxism could live with a conception of 'Man' after all (Geras, 1983), which would at least include the benefit of dispensing with the Marxist anti-humanism and structuralism associated with Althusser and his supporters. Or it could be that Garaudy never intended to commit the crime of which he stands accused. Unfortunately, Garaudy's response to Sève was studiously to ignore him, which is unhelpful to rooting out what he actually thought about the criticism.

There is something worth pursuing here though, which Carl Shames put well by observing that for Sève, we are the commodity form (Carl Shames, personal communication, 23 September 2017). The real criticism of Garaudy implicit in Sève, which discussion of the correct meaning of the *VI Thesis* rather occludes, is that he does not explore the extent to which human beings are influenced by socio-economic conditions, the truth of the argument that human beings are essentially social, and the compatibility of socio-economic determinism at the individual level with individual self-determination, creativity and existence in the image of God. But these potential criticisms and their specific, detailed implications for such concepts as free will, sin or individual responsibility are as noticeably absent in actual criticism of Garaudy — and Marxist humanism in general — as in the work of the critics themselves, almost as if a tacit agreement existed not to trespass on detail, but rather, to pursue the debate only at a high level of philosophical generality, emphasise radical ideological differences (e.g. Pieper, 1977 [2001:39–40]) and debate over the meaning of texts.

Nevertheless, it is a comprehensive and powerful attack eventually sustained over many decades: Sève never accepts Garaudy's claim to be a Marxist. However, one is entitled to ask: is this criticism entirely fair? Especially given the fact that if Garaudy was no Marxist, nor forty years later was Sève himself: we are exhorted only to *think with Marx*, no longer to *be Marxists*, and certainly not even to belong to the Communist Party (Sève, 2004, 2008). It is hard not to see Sève as having moved at least part of the way towards Garaudy's own previous position, much as he strove to deny it in his later work. In Chapter Seven I aim to show in relation to the 'turn to religion' by Marxists that Sève has been far from alone in this trajectory.

The Marxist–Christian dialogue

For those others who engaged with Garaudy in the decades before his conversion without descending into abuse, he was first identified as amongst the 'few volunteers' for Marxist–Christian dialogue in the sense of Dean (1976), that is to say, of those who were prepared to countenance change in opinion on both sides of the divide, including those Christians such as Girardi who engaged with atheism in general (Girardi, 1967) and Garaudy and other Marxists in particular (Girardi, 1968). The question of the relationship between Marxists and Christians, a recent commentary observed, 'joined that of "realism" for which [the French poet] Aragon, solidly supported by Garaudy, had been fighting for some years' (Martelli, 2017:4).

Christian reviewers were largely sympathetic in the period when Garaudy confined himself to working for, and writing about, *dialogue*, which he began soon after the PCF embraced destalinisation (Garaudy, 1957a, 1957b, 1958). Hence one reviewer singled out Garaudy's contribution to a seminar as a valuable contribution to the dialogue (Isambert, 1965). Commentary in *Le Monde* at the time of the publication of *De L'anathème au dialogue* (Garaudy, 1965) called it 'one hundred and twenty-eight

clear, well-documented, ardent pages'³¹ (*Le Monde*, 10 December 1965), whilst another reviewer declared that 'Garaudy's book [Garaudy, 1965] is a significant contribution to a better understanding between Marxism and Christianity' (Doherty, 1967:386). As one later reviewer observed, 'the various aspects of the creative act of Man which Garaudy sought to emphasize are accepted by Girardi as the premises from which to begin' (Banks, 1974:139). 'His [Girardi] acknowledgement of Garaudy's plea that Marxism's emphasis upon personal initiative and praxis be taken seriously, and his suggestion that the concepts of freedom and alienation most clearly illumine the degree of convergence and divergence it possesses with Christianity, are distinct advances over the attitude to Marxism expressed in the pre-dialogue encounter' (Banks, 1974:141).

Still more specific support for Garaudy's version of the dialogue came from those who believed in the social mission of the church and were prepared to stand up for the kind of theology represented by Moltmann (1965 [2002]), Balthasar (1968) and others (Hitz, 1972:683). Not only is consistency between Marxism and Christianity evident, but *the origin of the later mutual dependence of the two within the project is clearly identified*. Garaudy presents us, one Scottish reviewer suggested,

'with much that essential Christianity and Marxism can share: both face the infinite, open completely to endless possibility for the humanisation of creation, both question death and meaning in life, both are rejuvenated by a recent return to sources, both are in true form not rigid and both wish to transform. And each deeply questions the other: Marxism, a Christianity favouring only the establishment that offers itself security and privileges; Christian faith, Marxist illusions about religion or methods of transforming creation' (Williams, 1968:113–114).

This goes some way to explaining why 'Some consider Christianity to be both a humanism and an anti-humanism, because of its establishment leanings. Yet, Christianity first presented the idea of a universal human essence' (Geerlandt, 1978:14). So 'According to Garaudy, Christ is the founder not of the church, but rather of the party'³² (*Der Spiegel*, 1970:147), which was paralleled by the comment that 'There is a Marxism open to dialogue, that of men; and a Marxism that is closed to it, that of

³¹ cent vingt-huit pages claires, bien documentées, chaleureuses

³² Nach Garaudy ist Christus der Gründer nicht der Kirche, sondern der Partei

institutions'³³ (Girardi, 1966:307; Torrealdei, 1975:120). Hence one analysis of Garaudy's views concluded that Garaudy had merely decided to choose one type of Marx over several kinds in existence (Shinn, 1967). A similar but more critical view was that of Vree (1976), which was that Garaudy, with his stress on the young Marx, on historical initiative, and his call for a re-evaluation of the Marxist critique of religion, could never be representative of 'normative' Marxism. Vree was not alone: five years earlier, Garaudy had been accused of a definition of Marxism so broad that it

'seems to share some common ideas with positions which are by no means derived from Marx or other Marxist thinkers — including, for instance, certain non-dogmatic religious conceptions. Garaudy is fully aware of this fact, which does not embarrass him in the least, as we can see — among others — from his positive view of Teilhard de Chardin' (Koecher, 1971:391; Garaudy, 1965c, 1967e, 1975a).

This was mirrored by the pessimistic conclusion that 'A dialogue with such a limited number of men representing such a small number of Christians, is certain to meet with limited success' (Hughes, 1970:59). The dialogue may have been between like-minded individuals, but the tribes from which they had sprung remained obstinately apart, at least for the then foreseeable future. This view became easier to criticise as time went on, rendering it clearer that many Marxists viewed Marx's method and commitment as the real essentials of Marxism, whilst many Christians also challenged traditional explanations of dogma and morality (McGovern, 1977:556).

³³ il y a un marxisme ouvert au dialogue, celui des hommes ; et un marxisme qui lui est fermé, celui des institutions

More detailed commentary from Christians on Garaudy's own views did emerge. At the Salzburg Dialogue in 1965, Metz asked, even when the Marxist total Man is achieved, will he have answers to all human questions? If he does, will he not be less human, for he will have lost his capacity for an ever-expanding future? It was to be a persistent objection: a subsequent reviewer asked rhetorically: 'Can the Marxist Man who has become a god deny his work? Will this new god not be the victim of a new alienation, chained to his own creation?'³⁴ (Reix, 1975:368). Garaudy replied to Metz that the fully developed, Marxist Man will still be a questioner, for that communist future, marking the end of class war, will be filled with questions which transcend anything we can now ask about the future.

Metz then claimed that Marxism harboured a desire for 'more-being' which surpassed the possibilities and empirical reality of any given project. In his view this could only be God. In an answer that became famous, Garaudy first declared, 'My thirst is no proof of the existence of a spring' (Garaudy, 1966c:411). Metz went on to define the negative capability of Marxism as absence and exigency rather than the Christian ideas of presence and promise. He finally claimed that the Marxist hope of emancipation is necessarily a project of alienated men and not a future with its own redemptive power (in Christian language, God) surging toward man.

Christians and Communists may come to greater understanding about that future, but, as a Marxist, Garaudy cannot name its power (Lischer, 1968:37–38). Metz then added: 'I would like to criticise the idea of the 'total man', by which M. Garaudy characterizes the Marxist concept of the future, as a problematic abstraction and at the same time an exorbitant demand on the quest concerning the future' (Metz, 1967:230). This was despite the fact that Metz recognised that 'the

³⁴ L'homme marxiste devenu dieu pourra-t-il renier son œuvre ? Ce nouveau dieu ne sera-t-il pas alors victime d'une nouvelle aliénation, enchaîné qu'il sera à sa propre création

demythologisation' of Christian apocalyptic–eschatological symbols had 'drawn their sting', had dissolved their power to elicit and sustain a hope for a better world in the future (Ashley, 1998:107). Finally, Metz insisted that 'the alternatives developed by M. Garaudy between promise and demand, between expectation and struggle, so to speak between Christian eschatology and revolutionary world-planning, do not or must not exist for the Christian' (Metz, 1967:227). Notably, Metz was prepared to continue his debate with Garaudy only so long as Garaudy remained at least superficially only Marxist, and not Christian as well.

Archibald Cox asked wider questions relating to the Christian–Marxist dialogue, pointing at Garaudy in the first instance. He suggested that Garaudy's conscious effort to shift the dialogue onto the territory of Chapters Four and Five — transcendence and subjectivity — obscured the real differences between Marxism and Christianity, enabling him to 'win theological friends too easily' (Cox, 1968:25). Noteworthy was that 'In particular, there has been a tendency to evade discussion of the biblical emphasis upon the "fallenness" of Man and the cosmic dimensions of evil, an omission which leaves the dialogue with a certain degree of imbalance' (Banks, 1974:147). For Cox, this silence on important points of potential disagreement obscured the benefit of an historical materialist approach for Christians. But he sounded a note of caution: in Gaullist France, no less than for liberation theologians and the Left in a Brazil then governed by a military dictatorship, cooperation between Communists and Christians had weighty political significance. Garaudy was 'certainly not unaware of the larger connotations of this dialogue, but I wonder how carefully Christians have thought about the political overtones and implications of the same matter' (Cox, 1968:25).

Dissenting voices opined sternly, if somewhat precipitately, that: 'Cooperation will not be effected by a synthesis of Christianity and Marxism' (Lischer, 1968:2). So too the suggestion was made that the theses of Togliatti (1966) on Marxist–Christian dialogue were the core, or even the jewel in the crown, of Garaudy's own work, although the dialogue itself ran the risk, the author noted, of merely repeating the unfruitful dialogue between 'isolated scouts' of Marxism and Christianity, mostly

mistrusted within their own communities (Desroche, 1966:182). Hence the observation that a review of Garaudy's own work in the dialogue (Cottier, 1967) focused too greatly on the 'horizontal' perspective of institutional dialogue, thereby failing to appreciate the significance of Garaudy's aesthetic perspective, let alone the 'vertical' dimension which 'Being Christian without Christianity'³⁵ (Cottier, 1967:95), involved, which could be counterposed to the 'Christianity, without Christians'³⁶ of Saint-Simon (Desroche, 1968:183). Late in the day came Russell Norris, whose book, *God, Marx and the Future* (Norris, 1974) was an extended dialogue with, and commentary on, Garaudy's Marxism from a Christian perspective. Unfortunately, Norris' work supposes that Garaudy was still a Marxist and an unbeliever, albeit that 'he personifies a special kind of Marxism' (Norris, 1974:9). At no point does he seem to recognise that Garaudy had already moved beyond dialogue, as he would have had to do had he had written even just one year later, by which time Garaudy had declared himself a Christian (Garaudy, 1975), even if, as one critical reviewer of the book asked: 'But has Norris, like Garaudy, moved beyond the relative safety of critical polemic and engaged in . . . dialogue . . . I think he has not' (Dean, 1976:186).

Perhaps the last word on a constructive dialogue should be left to those who rejected it. Many of these critics wrote in the Marxist journal *La Nouvelle Critique*. Their interest in the purity of Marxist thought led them to scepticism of any dialogue with Christianity, especially given Garaudy's insistence that a real dialogue involved change, or at least the potential for change, on both sides. Contemporary observers recognised this, suggesting that Garaudy — and later Machoveč (1965, 1972 [1976]) 'are not interested simply in recruiting Christians for Communist causes. They are concerned to facilitate a dialogue which could alter the content of both of the traditions in question' (Cox, 1968:21). This was a point picked up for especial criticism by *inter alia*, Sève (1969), and in an exchange of views between Garaudy and other senior PCF figures — Guy Besse, Garaudy's successor as chief PCF ideologue, and

³⁵ un christianisme sans chrétienté

³⁶ sans chrétienté sans christianisme

Antoine Casanova, both of whom complained about Garaudy's apparently equal ideological treatment of the church community and the Party (Brunet, 1966:464–465; Casanova, 1966:6–7).

A Marxist no longer?

Most welcome however in terms of this thesis are critiques of Garaudy during what Gauvin (2018) called his the 'prophetic' phase, during which he developed and promulgated what he himself describes as his project, albeit that it is in the hands of his readers (Garaudy, 1976:217–218). He was finally free from the constraints of PCF politics and doctrine, as commentators noted (Merad, 1981). Both his Christianity and his Marxism were of at least initial interest to some commentators, albeit that they swiftly lost interest as the failure of the project in practical terms became painfully apparent as the decade wore on and critics were to wonder that: 'The French Marxist, Roger Garaudy, though his expulsion from the Party diminished his role as a spokesperson for Marxism, has gone so far as to call for a rejection of atheism and to speak of "Christian Marxism" as a needed alternative vision' (McGovern, 1980:82). Undoubtedly part of the problem was that as Garaudy moved away from convincing comrades to persuading the wider public, his style of writing changed, as he was aiming, very successfully, at a mass audience and exhibiting less concern with philosophical niceties. One student admitted in his PhD thesis on Garaudy to being 'always seduced by the music of his prose'³⁷ (Goulon, 1983: 10).

So too the fact that Garaudy claimed to remain a Marxist (Goulon, 1983:11) throughout — at least until his conversion to Islam — led to the suggestion that 'Much more interesting than his recovery of Christianity is Garaudy's discussion on the contemporary conditions and future possibilities of the Communist and Capitalist worlds' (Mayrl, 1978:86). Three factors had led Marxists

³⁷ toujours séduit par la musique de sa prose

such as Garaudy to examine the very foundation of their movement: the amazingly rapid development of science and technology, the superficiality of apparent socialism in one-third of the globe, and the growth of national liberation movements in developing countries (Hughes, 1970). Garaudy's resultant emphatic rejection of the Soviet and Eastern Bloc was after all noteworthy for someone who had, after all, once been a firm adherent of the PCF. Until the Illichev affair in 1962, when he had publicly opposed the idea that it was only possible to build communism after the suppression of religion (Illichev, 1964), and then the Prague Spring of 1968, he had more or less followed the PCF line on the Soviet Bloc. He nevertheless eventually departed from that line, arguably very sensibly at a time when the PCF has been described as 'a party which had very few clues as to what was going on' (Ross, 1992:48). Interest too surrounded his evaluation of capitalism, where Garaudy's view on the increasing pace of the scientific and technical revolution and its consequences for humanity sat easily within a review of the potential emergence of a new, more broadly defined working class (Adam, 1972:527) and the post-industrial society (Coste, 1976:388), albeit that this 'soft Marxism' certainly did not find favour with every Marxist. Marxist criticism of Garaudy was directed at the apparent priority of any alliance between the working class and students or intellectuals, together with denial of any reduced role for the proletariat (Mandel, 1970; Bensaïd & Artous, 1977) and scepticism over the likely differentiation of interests between different components of the proposed alliance (Poulantzas, 1972:42–43). This was especially so given that Garaudy's Marxism began to diverge from the PCF line to include more speculation about the role of youth, the importance of co-operatives, or the creation of a new 'historic bloc' for change; even contemporary commentators were not necessarily in complete agreement (e.g. Jakubec, 1972:302; Kovaly, 1973:125), or came to his latest work at the end of their analysis of Marxism and Christianity, rather than at the beginning (Coste, 1973:38). From the extreme Left came the predictable accusation that he had confirmed himself as 'a good-natured reformist'³⁸ (Bensaïd, 1970:2).

³⁸ un réformiste bon teint

There was more criticism, including accusations of self-plagiarism: one commentator in a piece on theology of hope observed that:

'In his work "The Hope Project"³⁹ as in all his previous work, R. Garaudy calls for the achievement of a society freed from savage economic growth and social injustice'⁴⁰ (Masset, 1977:323).

Or failing that, unoriginality:

'Readers who are familiar with the extensive studies of technological culture carried out by Herbert Marcuse and Theodor Adorno and with the detailed analyses of the revolutionary potential of intellectuals and technicians done by Serge Mallet and Andre Gorz, among others, will find little that is new in Garaudy's book (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]). Indeed, by comparison its analyses are superficial'. (Mayrl, 1978:87).

Garaudy's view that 'self-management is 'more than ever the future of true democratic socialism'⁴¹ (Goulon, 1983:281) is criticised as an impossible third way between the market and centralised planning (Mandel, 1975:5), granted that it 'was developed and discussed long before Garaudy stopped fighting for the dictatorship of the proletariat' (Mayrl, 1978:87). Another reviewer, late in the project, even lamented the absence of understanding of international relations (Jacob, 1981). For one reviewer, the project was political narcissism: 'this moment certainly is legitimate, we must believe what we do, and what we say. What seems dangerous to us is to make narcissism into a political theory'⁴² (Brunelle, 1973:72).

Another critic, in a history of debates within the PCF, noted in a footnote informed that: 'Garaudy's first intellectual mentors were the German theologian Karl Barth and the Danish pastor Søren Kierkegaard. A Christian, he joined the PCF aged 20, and then adopted the materialist and atheistic politics of Marxism'⁴³ (Geerlandt, 1978:30fn; Goulon, 1983:19). The none-too-subtle implicit criticism is of course that by borrowing from these sources, and by failing to perceive assumed

³⁹ le projet espérance

⁴⁰ Dans son ouvrage *le projet espérance* comme dans toute son oeuvre antérieure, R. Garaudy prône l'avènement d'une société libérée de la croissance économique sauvage et des injustices sociales

⁴¹ L'autogestion est, plus que jamais, l'avenir d'une véritable démocratie socialiste

⁴² Ce moment certes est légitime, il faut bien croire à ce qu'on fait, à ce qu'on dit. Ce qui nous semble dangereux, c'est de faire du narcissisme une théorie politique

⁴³ Les premiers maîtres à penser de R.Garaudy ont été le théologien allemande Karl Barth et le pasteur danois Kierkegaard. Chrétien, il adhère, au PCF à 20 ans, puis fait sienne la politique matérialiste et athée du marxisme

contradictions between them and Marx, Garaudy did not achieve, or perhaps even did not seek, any kind of Marxism that could conceivably be dependent on Christianity, or indeed, anything original at all. One intense critic of his later anti-Zionism dismissed the entire project as 'a meandering journey' (*Le Monde*, 31 January 1996), another as 'a decade of wandering'⁴⁴ (Godin, 2011:215). Others with little sympathy for the Left were even more critical. One Christian critic noted 'the way in which Garaudy has sought to measure up to his own standards for human initiative and freedom, and the distance he has travelled from normative Marxism in so doing' (Vree, 1976:152). This in turn led to an alleged contradiction in his thought between man's ontological freedom, that Man alone is the creator of his history and destiny, and that Man is not the alienated servant of either God, history, or Party and Marxist language of lawful historical necessity. 'Garaudy is dimly aware of his dilemma and has great difficulty in fighting his way free of it' (Vree, 1976:153). Nor was his Marxist–Leninist past always forgiven. As a result of his isolation from his captive audience, one critic noted smugly that 'Now he will be read only by people who are already free' (Cranston, 1970:18).

After his expulsion from the PCF, Garaudy also came in for a third wave of attack from the Soviet philosophical establishment, which generally agreed with the sentiments of these Western critics. Less than a decade separated Velikovich (1965), who had mentioned with approval Garaudy's participation in the dialogue, from Mitrokhin (1972), who criticised what he described as the mistaken position of Roger Garaudy in taking the dialogue into theological areas of transcendence, subjectivity and love, rather than leaving it in the sociological and political fields of class struggle and revolution (Read, 1973:12). It is certainly possible to conclude that the CPSU, and with it the Marxist–Leninist Parties of Eastern Europe, intended only joint activity, not parallel, or convergent, beliefs, and certainly not a belief in God. It was therefore to lead to significant criticism from Soviet writers (e.g. Trapeznikov, 1972:88–89). The title of a book published in Moscow by the official Soviet publishing house, Progress Publishers, and devoted entirely to criticising Garaudy, encapsulates this critical

⁴⁴ une décennie d'errance

viewpoint: *Marxism and the Renegade Garaudy* (Momjan, 1974). Its author, Hachik Nishanovich Momjan, held no less a position than head of the department of Marxist–Leninist philosophy at the Soviet Academy of Social Sciences, a position of great importance in Soviet philosophy.

For Momjan, Garaudy was a revisionist, in the same category as Ernst Fischer and Franz Marek, guilty of ‘overestimation of the strength of capitalism and underestimation of the limitless possibilities of socialism’ (Momjan, 1974:10). Guilty, too, of much more: of altering his negative view of existentialist philosophy, of wrongly portraying Marxist philosophy as sclerotic and dogmatic, of trying, and failing, to prove the idealist origins of Marxism in the work of Kant and Fichte, an emphasis noted even amongst contemporary Marxist scholars in the West (Rockmore, 1980:84), of misunderstanding the importance of extracting the dialectic from Hegel, and of introducing the erroneous and unnecessary ‘old idea of the pluralism, multiplicity of truth’ (Momjan, 1974:35) together with the equally erroneous idea that all scientific propositions are mere hypotheses (Momjan, 1974:4). Garaudy’s ‘revisionist programme’ came under attack for its eschatological concept of consciousness, emphasis on subjectivity at the expense of objective laws of development, allegedly incorrect and idealist formulation of the nature of man, and perhaps above all, its alleged rejection of the leading role of the Party and even of revolution. For Momjan, Garaudy, along with Marcuse and many others, had abandoned Marxism altogether, not revised it, further evidence of which was provided by Garaudy’s defence of the Czech rebellion against a Soviet–style regime in the Prague Spring of 1968 (Momjan, 1974:113, 141). When Garaudy was eventually expelled from the PCF, Christians remembered that defence, and held it against those who had expelled him (Lauer, 1971:18).

It is entirely consistent with this third wave of criticism to attack Garaudy for misrepresenting the Marxist–Leninist position on religion, for confusing political collaboration and joint action with the ideological drawing together of communism and Christianity (Momjan, 1974:168). For this official philosophical voice of Soviet Marxism–Leninism, ‘communism and Christianity advocate mutually exclusive philosophical principles and here no dialogue can remove their irreconcilable contradictions’

(Momjan, 1974:180). No escape for Christianity from its historical fetters can be permitted, even after Vatican II, nor any definition of God that allows for the identification of transcendence with secularity, nor the superficial appeal of the death of God in the hands of Rudolf Bultmann or John Robinson (Momjan, 1974:199), nor even the supportive position taken towards Marxism of Girardi (Momjan, 1974:202). All must be rejected in exactly the same terms as Lenin in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, [Lenin, 1909 [1947]] or else risk ‘the complete ideological disarmament of the Party’ (Momjan, 1974:191). And there must be no compromise with the ‘pitiful and degrading love for everyone’ (Momjan, 1974:219) advocated by Christianity, and supported by Garaudy. People, Momjan says in one admittedly powerful observation, ‘cannot be forced to love’ (Momjan, 1974:219). As for Garaudy himself, ‘Having crossed the Rubicon, the “Marxist” Garaudy has appeared before us in a cassock holding a New Testament’ (Momjan, 1974:224) — an echo of the name by which Garaudy was often known in the PCF: *the Cardinal*.

Reading this impassioned and forceful text, with its *ad hominem* attacks on Garaudy, it is impossible to avoid the feeling that, for Momjan even at the time, Garaudy’s ideas are a dangerous virus that must be combatted. He had taken his direction from CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev himself, who singled the renegade Garaudy out by name at the XXIV CPSU Congress as a leading anti-Soviet, and thereby a servant of bourgeois ideology and propaganda (Brezhnev, 1971:10). The possibility that Garaudy’s approach might represent the only way forward cannot ever even be contemplated. As one senior Kremlin adviser readily conceded in his diary ‘nobody dared to put questions the way Garaudy puts them (or even in a different form), though perhaps it is impossible to put this question in any other way’ (Chernyaev, 1973: n.p.). The eventual collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact governments proved Soviet suspicions of danger correct; yet it also renders Soviet criticism of Garaudy poignant. There is scarcely any practical observation of Garaudy’s that is presented critically that has not come to pass. He correctly foresaw the centrality of energy to politics (Garaudy, 1976:10), the increasing importance of safety considerations in transport policy (Garaudy, 1976:28), and the central importance of computing throughout society (Garaudy, 1971a:171). If

philosophical and religious convictions had to pass a test of accurate political forecasting, then Garaudy emerges the winner in this contest with Marxism–Leninism. With one exception, however, changing and frequently more positive attitudes towards capitalism of the Church, both Roman Catholic and Protestant (Poole, 2010:32). Momjan was accurate in that, at least: ‘for Christians, the dialogue [with Marxists] is not an occasion for ideological disarmament’ (Momjan, 1974:202).

It was little wonder, though, that Garaudy ended up being a political target as much as a philosophical one in the West as much as in the East, as:

‘Roger Garaudy articulates a position now increasingly accepted, in its general form, by neo-Marxists. The contradictions of capitalism are such that they cannot be resolved without socialism. Therefore one can think of an “external necessity” or inevitability about the effects of capitalism. But if we are not “conscious” of the necessity for socialism (an “internal necessity”), the contradictions, crises and wars generated by capitalism could continue unresolved’ (McGovern, 1980:33).

Such beliefs ensured that there was equally never any shortage of Western Marxist critics for whom his defection from the Communist Party was proof of what they had believed all along. David McLellan, for instance, talked of:

‘so much muddying of the waters by such as Roger Garaudy when it was difficult to spot the difference between progressive Communists and left-wing Catholics’ (McLellan, 1987:5).

Hence the sarcastic comment that:

‘after having professed himself an atheist for many years, he had the "overwhelming experience" of discovering that "there has always been a Christian inside him". Who, after all, would be in a better position than Garaudy to take as a labour of love the bringing together of these two great humanistic systems?’ (Mayrl, 1978:86).

For his Marxist critics, Garaudy was not, and perhaps never had been, a ‘real’ Marxist.

Not a Christian either?

On the other hand, and perhaps naturally enough, Christians were encouraged by any interest in Christianity, especially when they perceived a chance to be in the ascendant and organise themselves in relation to Marxists: ‘It is, in particular, highly important to note at this point that the

figure of Jesus has fascinated — and still fascinates — such Marxist thinkers as Bloch [1959], Garaudy [1975], Lombardo-Radice [1968], and Machoveč [1976], etc.⁴⁵ (Coste, 1979:167). Notwithstanding Garaudy's insistence on the reality of Jesus' example for the human future (Garaudy, 1969a; Beloso, 1975:10), 'perhaps in respect of his concern for the figure of Jesus, the truth is that we find in his writings less evidence than that which might have been expected in a man of such openness and trajectory'⁴⁶ (García, 1988:143), and, García argues, what we do find appears to conform to the view of Bloch. Christian critics suggested that Garaudy was proposing the absorption of Christianity into Marxism, or at least of those parts that he deems worthwhile, love in particular. In one sense they were right that:

'Roger Garaudy does not consider *détente* the proper heir of the Christian–Marxist dialogue. Indeed, he is even willing to announce himself a Christian in order to get on with the serious business of developing a revolutionary coalition. The history of Garaudy's own development, in this regard, is interesting because it shows that even if a Marxist capitulates on issues of belief, he still poses a dilemma to the Christian. In fact, in many ways the dilemma becomes more complex' (Mayrl, 1978:85).

So too another Christian critic cautioned against Garaudy's promotion of Marxism as the terrestrial conscience of Christianity, as 'a significant number of Christians did not need to wait for Marxism to strive to make the world a more just and fraternal place'⁴⁷ (Coste, 1979:176) and even suggested that 'neo-Marxists' such as Garaudy and Kolakowski saw Christ 'only as the initiator of a revolutionary movement in favour of the poor and disinherited, to which Marxism can have an interest in rendering more dynamic'⁴⁸ (Coste, 1979:182). Rather, 'Christians would do well to apply to their attitude towards Marxist analysis the famous Pauline directive, although it was given in a completely different context:

⁴⁵ Il est, en particulier, hautement significatif de constater à quel point la figure de Jésus a fasciné — et fascine encore — certains penseurs marxistes tels que E. Bloch, R. Garaudy, L. Lombardo-Radice, M. Machoveč, etc.

⁴⁶ En cuanto a su preocupación por la figura de Jesús, la verdad es que encontramos en sus escritos menos expresiones de las que hubiera cabido esperar en un hombre de semejante apertura y trayectoria

⁴⁷ un nombre non négligeable de chrétiens n'ont pas attendu le marxisme pour s'efforcer de rendre la terre plus juste et plus fraternelle

⁴⁸ seulement l'initiateur d'un mouvement révolutionnaire en faveur des pauvres et des déshérités, dont le marxisme peut avoir intérêt à recueillir le dynamisme

check everything: what is good, remember; beware of every kind of evil (First Epistle to the Thessalonians., 5, 21–22)' (Coste, 1973: 38)⁴⁹.

An almost symmetrical line of attack to that of Garaudy's former comrades in the PCF and the Soviet Marxist–Leninists was that, according to another of his persistent Christian critics, he had equally misinterpreted Marx's view of religion, as purely a damaging ideological illusion: 'Garaudy's personal position is fortunately different and welcoming. But, unfortunately, this was not that of Marx'⁵⁰ (Coste, 1974:920). He is duly criticised for failing to explain exactly what he means by 'God' (Da Costa Pinto, 1976:277). Nor can he appeal to some impersonal Nature or Matter, as Masset (1977) suggests Bloch and Engels can do. Garaudy is left only with a reflexive turn to Man himself. Masset's criticism, as that of Sève, is that it is precisely Garaudy's anthropology that constitutes the weak point of Garaudy's conception of the world, and in particular of his conception of hope. According to this critical analysis Garaudy's belief in Man, in his creativity, and in the future, is built on sand. He can neither turn to the experience of the past, either for Man or history generally, nor to divine power, 'which cannot find a place in the Garaudyen universe' (Masset, 1977:323) as it does in, for example, that of Nikolai Berdyaev's criticism of Marxism (Andelson, 1962:279).

The Christian attack on Garaudy did not rest at that. For one traditional Christian, Garaudy had hijacked words such as faith and resurrection, stripped them of their supernatural meaning, and applied them to purely natural phenomena. Without a personal God, the immortality of the individual soul — not any collective soul — and an individual resurrection — it is suggested the most important points of all, there is no Christianity (Desnoues, 1979). As another critic complained, 'The symmetry Garaudy institutes [between Marxism and Christianity] is false, because what is essential dogma for

⁴⁹ Les chrétiens, croyons-nous, feraient bien d'appliquer à leur attitude par rapport à l'analyse marxiste la célèbre directive paulinienne, bien qu'elle ait été donnée dans un tout autre contexte : vérifiez tout : ce qui est bon, retenez-le; gardez-vous de toute espèce de mal (Thessalonians., 5, 21–22)

⁵⁰ La position personnelle de Garaudy est heureusement autrement accueillante. Nous nous en réjouissons. Mais ce n'était malheureusement pas celle de Marx

Christianity is a misguided and wrong for Marxism'⁵¹ (Caveing, 1973:6). Fernández agreed, arguing that Garaudy's intention is 'to reinterpret Christianity in the Marxist terminology of earth-bound immanentism'⁵², and that for Garaudy any personal commitment to Christ and the acceptance of the Christian message completely overshadows the role of faith in the world. A very similar criticism emerges from the Francosphere: notwithstanding his Christian faith, Xavier Dijon was evidently an admirer of Garaudy's courageous stand against numerous ills of society, whether the school system, scientific positivism, or capitalism itself (Dijon, 1975:970). None of this, however, prevents him from questioning whether Garaudy has reduced Christianity to just another theory, a way of looking at the world that may have appeal for many, and asserting that for Garaudy to call himself a Christian was, in fact, an abuse of language (Dijon, 1975:970). This criticism also comes from the Hispanic world:

'It is clear that for G. there is something in Man that goes beyond Man himself; and it is the others who help us to perceive it. But our unease persists when we ask ourselves if G. really believes in a "totally Other" of numinous and divine character — as Rudolf Otto defined it after studying about thousands of religions of the world [so that] By emptying God of his real transcendence and emptying Christ of his divine essence, phrases of Garaudy's last essay sound hollow, and romantic Christian "horizontalism"⁵³ (Fernández, 1975: n.p.).

Not therefore, *contra* Garaudy, *amamus*, but *amamur*, should be prior (Fernández, 1975, n.p.).

Garaudy was also quickly accused of viewing all alternatives to European cultural hegemony through rose-tinted spectacles, for example idealising 'the land of Africa'⁵⁴ (Luneau, 1976:39). The resultant level playing field between religions, eventually, would not have seemed so eclectic or unusual, perhaps, if reviewers had read others on the same subject, such as René Guénon (1931), Ananda Coomaraswamy (1947) or perhaps especially Frithjof Schuon (1948), but Garaudy was never placed by his critics in the same category, perhaps because of his Marxism.

⁵¹ La symétrie qu'institue Garaudy est fautive, parce que ce qui est essentiel dans le christianisme, le dogme comme tel, est avatar et malformation dans le marxisme

⁵² de reinterpreter el cristianismo en términos marxistas de Inmanentismo terreno

⁵³ Es claro que para G. hay en el hombre algo que desborda al mismo hombre; y son los demás quienes nos lo ayudan a percibir. Pero nuestro malestar persiste cuando nos preguntamos si G. realmente cree en un "totalmente Otro" de carácter numinoso y divino —como lo definió Rudolf Otto tras estudio sobre miles de religiones del mundo. ¿... Al vaciar a Dios de su real trascendencia y al vaciar a Cristo de su esencia divina, frases del último ensayo de Garaudy suenan hueco y a romántico horizontalismo 'cristiano'

⁵⁴ la terre africaine

But what therefore should Garaudy be allowed to call himself? Despite Garaudy's sensational proclamation of Christianity, should Christians believe him? At root the criticism was the same, that Garaudy was really neither Marxist, nor Christian, but something quite different: 'in fact, for Garaudy, there is no personal God but the great whole of the Universe which will be lost and confused after death, whether all living beings realize it or not. This ideology is as old as the world: it is called pantheism.'⁵⁵ (Desnoues, 1979, n.p.). This was a view shared by a later critic who suggested that as a Christian, Garaudy had espoused a 'Hegelian pantheism of love' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.), although it would be unusual to point to love as a central concept for any depiction of Hegelian pantheism. The criticism is anyway surely off the mark: Garaudy certainly could have described himself as a pantheist, had he so wished, but he did not, and for good reason — as a humanist he spent much of his time trying to emphasise the distinctive importance of every human being, not their identity with inanimate objects or the universe in general. Both as a Christian — and later sometimes even as a Muslim (Garaudy, 1992) — he sought to emphasise Jesus' Gospel of love. More broadly, Desnoues does not explain what he means by a 'personal' God, nor from where he concludes that Garaudy's God is any different from his own. This style of criticism has changed little over the years, however, and Garaudy has been far from the only target of attack by conservative Calvinists, for example, who have had 'Pelagians' of every stripe in their sights in the new millennium as much as in the old (Sproul, 2001). Garaudy's main distinction was to be attacked on both sides, as much as for his Marxism as much as for his Pelagian Christianity.

⁵⁵ En fait, pour R. Garaudy, il n'y a pas de Dieu personnel mais le Grand Tout de l'Univers où viendront se perdre et se confondre après leur mort tous les êtres vivants conscients ou non. Cette idéologie est vieille comme le monde : on l'appelle le Panthéisme

Sympathy for the project

There were some commentators on Garaudy who recognised that neo-Marxists were capable of much deeper analysis than simply wordplay on who was entitled to call themselves a Christian, or a Marxist. One notes the prophetic tradition within Christianity: 'Throughout the history of Christianity, a tension has always existed between the prophet and the priest' (Hornosty, 1976:7), with Garaudy placed firmly in the former category, pointing to his stress in *L'Alternative* on the revolutionary potential of the 'prophetic spirit' in contrast with 'positivism' (Garaudy, 1972, [1976:122]). Academic criticism which came close to suggesting that Garaudy was making himself the project (Bourdieu, 1984) ought therefore to be tempered, as some was, with comments such as

'there is something about this book which makes it worthwhile reading. The fact that it offers a familiar analysis and a borrowed vision is compensated by its highly personal and passionate mode of presentation. *The Alternative Future* should be read as an episode in the biography of a remarkably durable and surprisingly flexible revolutionary thinker' (Mayrl, 1978:87).

Much later in the itinerary of the project, a reviewer of *Pour un dialogue des civilisations* (Garaudy, 1977) feels able to conclude that 'the study of the attempts at synthesis already suggested by non-Westerners must bring additional light to the elaboration of a plan of life and a project of hope on a global scale'⁵⁶ (Henvaux, 1978:209), whilst another concluded merely that it was 'a book well worth consideration'⁵⁷ (Keller, 1981:176).

One of the most sympathetic commentaries was that of Perottino (1969, 1974), which combined analysis with a selection of Garaudy's own works, though largely ignoring the philosophical

⁵⁶ L'étude des tentatives de synthèse déjà suggérées par des non-Occidentaux doit apporter un surcroît de lumière dans l'élaboration d'un « plan de vie et un projet espérance à l'échelle planète

⁵⁷ Livre considérable...

and political changes wrought by the project, as does a reviewer (Baufay, 1977). For Perottino, Garaudy is right on every count, the exceptions being singled out by Baufay (1977) that sometimes his thought perhaps goes beyond the acceptable, at least for orthodox Marxists, in relation to 'conscience–reflection', where Garaudy argues that work is an act of transformation of nature and of oneself, but preceded by the consciousness of its ends (Perottino, 1974:152); and that the consciousness of purpose precedes the work done (Perottino, 1974:94). So too Garaudy's reflections on love, death, and religion were sympathetically drawn, even noting that he was 'striving to respect the spirit and the letter of Marx'⁵⁸ (Baufay, 1977:715) at a time when others in recognising Garaudy's call for revolution noted that 'violence and the sacred have been drawn closer together'⁵⁹ (Ries, 1974:515). For García, however, Garaudy goes a little further, using the historical figure of Jesus to underpin an anthropology of revolutionary action, in which faith in the resurrection takes on an individual, human dimension rather than expressing an epistemological relation. Not what happened, says García, but its effects on human life, is what matters for Garaudy (García, 1988:145). What was radically new in Christianity was the opposite of renouncing the world — 'it was its transition, through the central experience of the Incarnation, of the God-man and the man-God, from the love of love to the love of the other' (Garaudy, 1967b:216).

Even more positively, in one review the argument is made that it is 'likely that many of the doctrines which separated the two camps would be exposed as myths which grew up in response to unique historical circumstances' (Mayrl, 1978:86). Commentators from outside the Anglosphere have also occasionally lent support, even after Garaudy's conversion to Islam and in apparent isolation from it. Hence:

'Roger Garaudy holds a special place among French Marxists for his interest in religion. He went through various phases of spiritual transformation from dogmatic Marxism to Christianity and finally Islam. In his Marxist phase when he had already surpassed his dogmatic position, he was driven to better understanding of the humanistic essence of Marxism, surpassing naive and realistic comprehension by noticing some positive characteristics of

⁵⁸ en tâchant de respecter l'esprit et la lettre de Marx

⁵⁹ on a rapproché la violence et le sacré

Christianity. Garaudy claimed that Christian humanism first of all is a positive characteristic of Christianity, manifested in Christian treatment of subjectivity and radical affirmation of Christian love as a general human possibility. He points out that in real human life subjectivity is expressed in latent and subtle forms of consciousness and spiritual states, such as care, love, and the experience of transcendence. (Skledar, 1989:18).

Garaudy did find other isolated sympathetic commentators. In Portugal, Da Costa Pinto contributed articles sympathetic to Garaudy to the *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*. His review of Garaudy's work to date quoted Garaudy's assertion of the role of Christianity in social transformation: that the resurrection of Christ inaugurates a new existence, a rupture with and surpassing of individualism, and the conviction of the good news that 'everything is possible' (Da Costa Pinto, 1982:738). Unfortunately, the delays involved in academic publication meant that Garaudy converted to Islam in the same year.

There were very few book-length treatments of Garaudy's project, or even articles. This was surely not because of a failure to recognise that Garaudy 'proved himself more eager to exchange ideas than to impose his views on others; he was willing to learn, and he spoke of the conversations as a dialectical exercise which would result in an enrichment of Marxism itself' (Cranston, 1970:12). As early as *De L'anathème au dialogue*, (Garaudy, 1965) 'Garaudy in his book says that Marxism itself must now learn something from Christianity, especially concerning the problems of what he calls 'subjectivity and transcendence' (Cox, 1968:21) — the subjects as noted above of Chapters Four and Five. There were however three contemporary doctorates written about Garaudy's Marxist-Christian thought, either wholly or in part: Charles McClain's *From Ideology to Utopia: the Marxist Careers of Ernst Fischer and Roger Garaudy* (1972), Salim Bustros' *Socialism, Christianity and Human Liberation in the Thought of Roger Garaudy*⁶⁰ (1976) and Robert Goulon's *The Spiritual Itinerary of Roger Garaudy in his Written Work*⁶¹ (1983). The three wrote from widely different perspectives: whereas McClain wrote in the History Faculty of Stanford University, Bustros was in the Theology Faculty at Louvain and

⁶⁰ *Socialisme, christianisme et libération de L'homme dans la Pensée de Roger Garaudy*

⁶¹ *L'itinéraire spirituel de Roger Garaudy dans son oeuvre écrite*

Goulon was in the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences at Lorraine. Both their academic heritage and their time of writing can be seen to influence the narrative of each thesis.

McClain's thesis is entirely concerned with Garaudy (and Ernst Fischer, also singled out by Brezhnev as a renegade) as Marxists. He begins with the PCF and why 'The Christian vision gave a deep significance to the sufferings of the poor and helped him for a time to bridge the gap between the two worlds. Yet this proved to be only a temporary solution to his dilemma' (McClain, 1972:163). He continues with a description of Garaudy's career, in particular his sympathy with 'all that was valuable in the French past' (McClain, 1972:179), from medieval Catholic thought to eighteenth century rationalism, notwithstanding what is described as Garaudy's 'sovereign disdain' (McClain, 1972: 185) for the aesthetic decadence he saw pervading post-war French culture (Garaudy, 1947). Yet in describing Garaudy's role in the criticism levelled by the PCF against André Marty and then Henri Lefebvre, we learn that 'His Marxism burned with the fire of religious faith' (McClain, 1972:217).

The biographical approach then leads to Garaudy's Marxist humanism, the emergence of which is characterised by comparison with Perottino (1969) as 'very gradual' (McClain, 1972:226fn). This leads McClain to examine the course of Garaudy's exchange of views with Sartre (Garaudy, 1960; Remley, 2012:19), his emphasis on the Hegelian dialectic within Leninism, engagement with Christianity, positive evaluation of the work of Louis Aragon and prominent artists, reform of the PCF in the context of a pluralistic evolution of the French Left (McClain, 1972:295) and the creation of a new 'historic bloc'. But the conclusion is that however heterodox their opinions, 'Both men [Fischer and Garaudy] have remained convinced Communists through every phase of their careers' (McClain, 1972:333). The parting of ways between Garaudy and the PCF is the conclusion of McClain's thesis; it is the start of this one.

Bustros' project derived from a very different starting point: a practical wish to investigate the compatibility of socialism and Christian belief, for an answer to which he turned to Garaudy, for whom he evidently had a high regard as a messenger of hope amidst all that he had seen of the chaos of war

and its consequences (Bustros, 1976:ix). Bustros intends to present Garaudy's theoretical work as a contiguous, homogenous, if not entirely immobile, body of thought. Hence the starting point of the self-identification of the working class as collectively capable of transformation (Garaudy, 1975:95) and the need of the PCF to incorporate the best in Christian morality (Garaudy, 1975:96). Hence the argument that 'The Christian cannot but question the dependability and stability of a morality which is vague and subject to various interpretations according to how the particular leader believes humanity can be made more fully human' (Hughes, 1970:59) can be set alongside quotes from Garaudy's dialogue with Quentin Lauer and biographical information from his youth. Bustros' quotes from Garaudy are arranged functionally for his case, not biographically. From then on, he argued, his philosophical quest tended towards emphasising within Marx what, in his opinion, led to a convergence between Marxism and religion, and in particular an affirmation that Christian faith could form the basis of revolutionary action — although clearly there could be others.

Bustros found that Garaudy sought consistency between Marxism and Christianity in a re-evaluation of Marx's atheism on the one hand, and analysis of the development of Christianity on the other. (Bustros, 1976:225). For Bustros, Garaudy's project will succeed if he can satisfy himself that Marxism should not be understood as atheist, either theoretically or practically. If Marxism is a humanism, as Garaudy contends, then the question of atheism need not arise. Bustros identifies Garaudy's distinction between a metaphysical atheism in Marx and a methodological one, only the latter really being the case. He cited Garaudy's distance of Marx from dialectical materialism, from any purely materialist ontology. For Garaudy, like Marx, God cannot intervene in nature, hence a rejection of the God of the gaps. This 'methodological atheism', Bustros avers, Marxism brings to Christianity. Marxism is a middle way between idealism and mechanism. Religion is protest, from the Levellers in England through to Hobbes the materialist autocrat. Garaudy is also critical of the repression of Christians in Soviet Bloc countries, which he said had no theoretical basis in Marxism, but rather, could be explained by the Church's identification with reactionary politics. Not belief but organised religion disappears under Communism. Nevertheless, for Bustros, Garaudy still represents

a minority, revisionist tendency inside Marxism; he doubted whether these views of Garaudy's were shared by the majority of communists (Bustros, 1976:238). This was a reasonable supposition even as late as when Bustros wrote, even if as we shall see it no longer is.

On the other hand, Bustros picked up from *L'Alternative* (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]) three social trends that were, Garaudy claimed, bringing Christianity into line with Marxism. First, he noted the end of empire as indicating the existence of alternatives to the Western model of growth — highlighting a distinction between religion, in the sense of established churches, and individual faith. Marxist criticism of Christianity aims at the religion, not the faith. Bustros noted that Garaudy picked up on Bultmann's essence of the kerygma, an intimate dialogue with God, not a Christian ideology, and on Teilhard de Chardin's elimination of the concept of original sin as a legacy of a pre-evolutionary, primitive world. The end result: no more God of the gaps, a view to which Bustros was evidently sympathetic. Others were not, expressing scepticism about Garaudy's Marxist credentials once he had published *L'Alternative* (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]) and suggesting that 'It will then be important to define them carefully and diagnose if they are still in the line of Marx and Engels or if they already express a contradiction with some of their essential positions. The question may arise, for example, for some points of the doctrine of Roger Garaudy at its current stage⁶² (Coste, 1973:38). No conclusive answer to this question, however, is provided anywhere, most obviously because there is no one who could provide one authoritatively, any more than for Christianity.

Goulon (1983), by contrast, presents an almost exclusively historical conception of Garaudy's thought, recounting it bereft of any critical analysis of any potential contradictions. For Goulon, historical developments alone appear to suffice as both an explanation for Garaudy's change of views, whether from Stalinism to Marxist humanism, in favour of dialogue, or his decision to leave the PCF, and a justification for them. 'Men of faith are interested in Garaudy'⁶³ (Goulon, 1983:202) he says,

⁶² Il importera alors de les définir avec soin et de diagnostiquer si elles se situent encore dans la ligne de Marx et d'Engels ou si elles expriment déjà une contradiction avec certaines de leurs positions essentielles. La question peut se poser, par exemple, pour quelques points de la doctrine d'un Roger Garaudy à son stade actuel

⁶³ Les hommes qui intéressent Garaudy sont des hommes de foi

without indicating exactly why they ought to be, or indeed who exactly 'men of faith' may be. Goulon too notes the influence of Bultmann, Cox, Hromádka, Robinson and Teilhard de Chardin, all contributing to a 'new theological conception'⁶⁴ of God in the world, not outside it, but which can safely remain unexplained, or contrasted with others (Goulon, 1983:228). He also includes Garaudy's aesthetics and the role of love without comment. Perhaps his most telling remark is in relation to Garaudy's expulsion from the PCF: he was crucified⁶⁵ (Goulon, 1983:279).

Commentary after the conversion

Fast forward to more than a after Garaudy had declared his adherence to the Muslim faith, and Garaudy's work is again the subject of sympathetic commentary (Da Costa Pinto, 1994). We are again led to believe that there is consistency across the years: an attack on purely quantitative measures of human existence, a rejection of Cartesian philosophical assumptions, a denunciation of economic growth, and an insistence on transcendence. What Garaudy assimilates from Islam is his introduction of the term 'prophetic philosophy' counterposed to 'Western philosophy' (Garaudy, 1985c:169), and differences in the direct perception of God, the only reality, the pathway to God, and the realisation of that pathway through human action. Islamic commentators were unimpressed with his failure to adhere to conventional Islam, *Les Fossoyeurs* (Garaudy, 1992) in particular coming in for criticism: 'In a most un-Islamic fashion, he stresses the importance of Jesus' crucifixion for our understanding of God' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.).

Christian sympathisers, on the contrary, are more inclined to argue that Garaudy speaks with one voice *throughout* his work. The question of any inconsistency between on the one hand his suggestion that multiple religious sources of 'wisdoms' could lead to 'unprecedented encounter

⁶⁴ Cette nouvelle conception théologique

⁶⁵ Il est "crucifié"

between faith and politics that allow Man to rediscover his lost dimensions' (Da Costa Pinto, 1994:313) and on the other the derivation of the inspiration of prophetic philosophy from Islam never arises. Others may need to concern themselves with requirements to accept the full consequences of a particular set of ideas, but Garaudy, at least for Da Costa Pinto, always appears to rise above such awkward choices, so that even his Islamic faith flows naturally from his spirituality. His Marxism, and his Christianity, let alone his pariah status, are all allowed to fade away without comment as the decades pass (Da Costa Pinto, 2017).

Ad hominem, no ad rem

It is worth observing that throughout his career, Garaudy attracted criticism from many quarters. Not just criticism of his ideas: is very noticeable that one of the main methods of engagement with Garaudy's thought has been *ad hominem* arguments, frequently descending into abuse. Examples are very easy to find:

'Garaudy exaggerates and sentimentalizes the fashionable humanism of Marx. The result reads more like a personal testament than a judicious assessment and presentation of Marxism' (R.J.B., 1967:158).

Or this:

'Garaudy always wrote tactfully, even perhaps with a certain sly cunning' (Cranston, 1970:13).

Or this:

'One finds attempts to explain Garaudy's behaviour by his personal traits: his inability to hold firm, consistent views, his frequent departures from strictly scientific thinking, his tendency to be governed by emotion rather than logic, and his passion for new ideas, regardless of whether they are correct (Momjan, 1974:8).

Or this:

'there are Marxists — the Frenchman, Roger Garaudy, for example — whose engagement in dialogue has been a prelude to a surrender of their belief system' (Vree, 1976:4), although

this does not prevent him from “setting up straw men”, and has either deluded himself or attempted to delude his audience with empty rhetoric’ (Vree, 1976:155).

Or this:

‘Unfortunately, the reader who takes the subtitle seriously and expects to find a sequel to *From Anathema to Dialogue* will be disappointed. The present work fails to achieve, much less to go beyond, the level of sophistication found in the earlier book which, by the author's own admission, had been intended only to establish a framework for discussions between Marxists and Christians’ (Mayrl, 1978:86).

Garaudy’s subsequent career, especially his prosecution for Holocaust denial, did nothing to enhance his evidently precarious pre-conversion reputation. Hence the observation that ‘although Garaudy was among the best-remembered of advocates of Marxist–Christian dialogue, he was far from being the most sophisticated’ (McBride, 2016:7) a view that was based on Sartre’s alleged view of Garaudy as not a brilliant intellect, the fact that Garaudy’s dissertation centered on the discredited reflection theory of consciousness, and a negative evaluation of *From Anathema to Dialogue*. ‘I just don’t see Garaudy’s work as offering a lot of new insights, although... it constituted an important contribution at the time, and perhaps had more influence than most (or perhaps any) of the others’ (William McBride, personal communication, 1 December 2017).

As to his conversion, there were critics of his Islamic writing even beforehand — some were evidently bemused, others perhaps felt contemptuous of his ‘passing from a shabby Marxist–Christianity to a no less problematic adherence to Islam’⁶⁶ (Paquette, 1992:100), whilst one of those who had many years previously staked his reputation, almost, as an esoteric Christian theorist, on Garaudy’s thought throughout the decades seized enthusiastically on Garaudy’s temporary re-engagement with esotericism (Garaudy, 1992) as proof that after his conversion he had abandoned a dogmatic Islam (Da Costa Pinto, 1994).

But especial vitriol was reserved for Garaudy after his identification with Holocaust denial, not least, but by no means exclusively only, from those deeply concerned with his anti-Semitism — ‘Despite his obvious turn to the French extreme Right, the favourable reaction to Garaudy in Arabic

⁶⁶ en passant d'un scabreux christianisme-marxisme à une non moins problématique adhésion à l'islam

newspapers and magazines was overwhelming' (Nordbruch, 2001:4). At his trial in 1996, the prosecutor opening the case began by arguing: 'Roger Garaudy is the man of perpetual denial. He has approved all of the great impostures of the century, the two totalitarianisms, passing from the red plague to the black' (Lorach, 1996, n.p.), a view repeated in the powerful words of one of his most prominent liberal critics many years later, that he wished to put his philosophy in the service of successive totalitarian systems of thought, first 'communism', then Islam (Taguieff, 2012). As a result of this, together with more general socio-economic factors that have shifted collective attention away from Marxism, little of his pre-Islamic work has been discussed since his conversion, even in a country like Cuba where Marxism has at least until very recently enjoyed state support (Cortés Sánchez, 2007:133). A sympathetic review of his argument that Islam and the West should make common cause against capitalism, for example, even called him 'a former Communist, who became active in Marxist-Christian dialogue and embraced Islam after being expelled from the party in 1970' (Nottingham, 1996:560), as if the Garaudy of the project in between did not exist. Likewise, critics and supporters alike have also chosen to ignore it, suggesting that he 'disappeared from public view' between his expulsion from the PCF and conversion to Islam (Yakira, 2009:47) or fostering the illusion that Garaudy converted directly from secular Marxism to Islam (e.g. Chelain, 1996:5).

The absence of recent commentary is even more striking in relation to Garaudy's publications immediately before and after he was expelled from the PCF. In recent years some critics have also been able to take advantage of Garaudy's total fall from grace in France as a justification for avoiding active engagement with his thought and to deliver even more aggressively critical commentaries. Hence this, in relation to Garaudy's desperate attempt to wean the PCF off its dogmatic dependence on a tightly defined and fast disappearing French industrial proletariat: 'it appeared that the best Garaudy and his fellow Communist Party thinkers could offer in terms of a challenge to Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy was an anaemic approximation of Lefebvre's theory of alienation coupled with a willingness to admit anyone, including all Catholics and middle managers, into the workers' struggle' (Lewis, 2005:156). Or that he used:

‘questionable sources (for example propaganda documents from Moscow to support one of his two doctoral dissertations, the seriousness of which is undermined), a counterfeit use of quotations, plagiarism, recourse to a thunderous but hollow phraseology, and frequently changed his opinions like a weather-vane’ (Prazan & Minard, 2007:174).

Or this:

‘As philosopher, politician, and agitator, Garaudy’s utter mediocrity is instantly apparent to anyone who reads a few pages of his œuvres’ (Taheri, 2007: n.p.).

Even the very volume of his output was criticised (Sève, 2000), and even his earlier Marxist humanist work (Garaudy, 1959 [1969]) was dismissed as ‘crypto-religious neo-rhetoric⁶⁷’ (Sève, 2004:134). For his critics, he could do, or think, no right.

Some commentators have equally been prepared to write as if his conversion to Islam and everything that followed did not exist, either uninformed about how his thought had itself evolved, deliberately disinterested, or re-writing history. For example, a history of religion and the Cold War, where Garaudy features only as ‘the PCF religious specialist and philosopher’ (Hainsworth, 2003:147), or a retrospective evaluation of his philosophical contribution to Marxist–Christian dialogue that concluded: ‘All this is rather stunning stuff, coming as it did from a Marxist philosopher and French Politburo member of such prominence and profundity’ (Swider & Mojzes, 2000:40), his views on transcendence by comparison to that of Marx (Paulose, 2000), an evaluation of his Marxist humanism which was the subject of sometimes favourable comparison to Althusser or Sartre, but quite independently of *any* of his subsequent published work (Boey, 1980; Gil Claros, 2008), a penetrating analysis of his philosophical contribution to the Marxist–Christian dialogue (Boer, 2019:123), the way his Christian views were extensively drawn upon decades later by one Colombian writer on Teilhard de Chardin (Fernández, 2013), or the dismissal in one phrase of the entire project as ‘a heterogenous Christianity’⁶⁸ (Gugelot, 2009:291), a mere postscript to the Marxist–Christian dialogue. By way of complete contrast, however, from an Islamic perspective his thought is seen as a continuous evolution towards Islam, with his prophetic phase subject to especial criticism. One Islamic writer, Neal Robinson

⁶⁷ la néo-rhétorique crypto-religieuse

⁶⁸ un christianisme hétérodoxe

(2004: n.p.) went so far as to argue that ‘he was never particularly at ease in that capacity [i.e. as a Christian]’, an argument to which the subsequent Chapter is intended as a response.

Only very recently has a glimmer of ‘revisionist’ literature on Garaudy begun to emerge, of which the most significant individually is probably Didier Gauvin’s doctorate, *Un intellectuel communiste illégitime : Roger Garaudy* (2018). Gauvin, who like Goulon and Da Costa Pinto knew Garaudy personally, is a magnificent source of sympathetic political biography, but for this very reason his concern with the underlying philosophy of Garaudy’s project is understandably tangential. His own view closely parallels that of Goulon (1983) in promoting an essential continuity in Garaudy’s thought. Quite different in structure, though again similar in conception, is the French website, *Roger Garaudy à contre-nuit*, a title derived from one of Garaudy’s poems (Garaudy, 1987a), which is meticulously maintained by Alain Reynaud, and which contains an invaluable, almost comprehensive, collection of articles by and about Garaudy’s work, including the period of the project. Reynaud explained: ‘Without subscribing to every idea, I want to contribute to rediscovering a work which is today boycotted, truncated, deformed, and to enable it to contribute to resistance [to the current world order] and the construction of alternatives to the tendencies of today’⁶⁹ (Reynaud, 2018). Similarly, there is a German text (Polat, 2018) and website (Polat, 2018a) although in this case, diametrically opposite to my own, the focus is entirely on Garaudy after he converted to Islam.

⁶⁹ Sans en partager toutes les thèses, je veux contribuer à faire redécouvrir une oeuvre aujourd'hui boycottée, tronquée, déformée, et à l'inscrire dans la résistance et la construction d'alternatives aux dérives du présent

Conclusion

Garaudy made intellectuals jealous, and they barely took care to conceal their contempt for his mass appeal (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984). This was not surprising, surely, given the publishing success of his books and his ease of access to the media (e.g. *Le Monde*, 7 November 1980). Equally, for senior members of the *Centre catholique des intellectuels français* who worried that people would follow his ideas and they lacked anyone of sufficient calibre to oppose him, ‘there was an especial fear of Garaudy . . . they were scared to death of him’⁷⁰ (Tavares, 1981:56).

One reason was that he straddled politics, philosophy — and culture — readily and with apparent ease. Another was that in a pre-internet age, his global influence was enormous: in terminology familiar today, we might say that he was a master of marketing, and created his own brand. Attitudes to his work depended significantly not only on the subjective standpoint of the reviewer or commentator, but also on changes in the wider socio-economic environment. The evolution of commentary on Garaudy’s work is therefore quite striking: so long as he swam with the intellectual tide — not necessarily with wider social trends — he was applauded by reputed intellectuals. His work on Marxist–Christian dialogue, on Marxist humanism, his Hegel scholarship, and even in the West his criticism of the Soviet Union and the PCF establishment were all favoured by sympathetic reviews or intelligent criticism. As he veered away, however, and the decade of the 1970s proceeded, he lost support, and when he entered the mass market, academics paid less and less attention. Of those who did, the Marxists looked at his Marxism and found it derivative and wanting, whilst the Christians did exactly the same for his faith.

There was an underlying logic to later criticism of Garaudy’s Marxism, his Christianity, and then his eventual project of mutual dependence, a theme that tied them together. They mostly

⁷⁰ Il y avait une espèce de peur panique de Garaudy . . . ils avaient une peur bleue de Garaudy

emerged from the liberal West, where with the alleged end of history (Fukuyama, 1989), academic and popular opinion alike felt increasingly less need to engage with Marxism, and in many cases, with Christianity either. Those who remained on the Left, especially in France, owed their allegiance more to structural rather than humanist Marxism, whilst Christians felt progressively less need to engage with Marxism. Either way, there was therefore certainly not much perceived need to take seriously any attempt to span the two poles of Marxism and Christianity, especially from someone who subsequently abandoned both and, after his conversion to Islam, associated with anti-Semitic institutions and people and eventually descended into ignominy. I beg to differ.

Chapter Three: Garaudy's project

Introduction — recapitulation and purpose

There have been three central objectives in the preceding two chapters. First, to introduce Roger Garaudy, to examine his long and varied life, his intellectual and political journey from Marxism and Christianity to Islam, and to argue for the continued significance of his thought in the 21st Century. Secondly, to identify and define a specific period within that journey, the 1970s, when Garaudy sought to develop a particularly close relationship between Marxism and Christianity. I have followed his own nomenclature (Garaudy, 1976:217) in describing this attempt as Garaudy's *project*. Third, to identify and review what others thought and commented about Garaudy, especially during the period of his project.

This chapter now seeks to build on those thoughts and commentaries to explain the theoretical basis of the project, its content, and its trajectory. For the most part, I have not sought to exercise critical judgement over Garaudy's project at this point. Although I believe this task to be essential, I am delaying it until Chapter Seven, for three reasons. First, because Chapters Four and Five focus on two particular components of the project, subjectivity and transcendence, a focus I believe necessary before engaging in critical analysis. Second, because of the need to incorporate Garaudy's conversion to Islam, which I examine in Chapter Six. And finally, because in the decades since Garaudy ended his project, the relationship between Marxism and Christianity has been treated by other authors (e.g. Eagleton, 2011, 2018; Žižek, 2000, 2003), contributions which I have included in my own critical judgement of Garaudy's project in Chapter Seven. This Chapter, then, presents a largely descriptive, contemporary overview of Garaudy's own project.

From consistency to mutual dependence

As others have noted, conceptual taxonomy is important in considering the relationship between two sets of ideas, especially in respect of intellectual traditions or ‘belief systems’ such as Marxism and Christianity. No doubt the definition of either an intellectual tradition or a belief system is not easy: both terms are much more frequently employed than explained. One definition to which I am sympathetic envisaged an intellectual tradition as a set of families of previously produced which serve as models or points of departure. Specifically, ‘An intellectual tradition is a set or pattern of beliefs, conceptions of form, sets of verbal (and other symbolic) usages, rules of procedure, recurrently and unilaterally linked with each other through time’ (Shils, 1972:23). Further, a Western intellectual tradition — such as Marxism or Christianity - has at its centre ‘the need to define, confine and manipulate ideas’ (Stringer, 2008:1). Such a definition certainly fits well with the descriptions of both Marxism and Christianity employed in the literature surrounding their encounter (Vree, 1976, 1978:395; Turner, 1975:244, 1977:192–193; Rourke, 1991:27).

My argument for the distinctiveness of Garaudy’s project rests on a difference between *consistency* and *mutual dependence*. I therefore set out working definitions of both, which I believe are relatively straightforward, and I hope are uncontroversial.

Two or more sets of intellectual traditions as defined above may be said to be *consistent* when it is possible to claim without logical contradiction to hold the contentions, methodology and practice of both or all of them concurrently. Where traditions do not themselves contain contradictory ontological, epistemological, ethical, teleological or any other kinds of beliefs, it is possible to establish complete mutual consistency. Only partial consistency is possible where either this is not the case, or where consistency is possible only between some of the contentions, beliefs or practice of the two

intellectual traditions. Provided he is not simply judging one on the basis of the other, MacIntyre put his own partial consistency between Marxism and Christianity well in writing the revealing autobiographical words that form the frontispiece to this thesis (MacIntyre, 1953 [1968:vii]). How individuals act with regard to their belief of consistency can in practice range from an entirely introspective silence to an attempt, such as that of Garaudy during his Marxist humanist phase, to persuade others of the truth, and usually of the importance, of the belief in consistency.

For two or more intellectual traditions to be either wholly or partially *mutually dependent*, on the other hand, it is *necessary* to hold some or all of the contentions, methodology and practice of both or all of them concurrently. Mutual dependence is furthermore a causative relationship, closer even than that described elsewhere as 'strong compatibility', for example the claim that 'Christians are compelled to accept the basic claim of the Marxist critique of religion' (Turner, 1977:193). Mutual dependence likewise may range from introspective to communicative.

What then distinguishes Garaudy's project from his Marxist humanism period? In both, it may be said that Marxism and Christianity share *common ground*. Hence in referring to Garaudy's analysis of Marxism, (Garaudy, 1966 [1970]) it has been observed that during the Marxist-Christian dialogue, 'Again and again, one encounters efforts to identify the core of both Marxism and Christianity' (Boer, 2019:119). I argue however that there is a crucial difference. In the former, Marxism and Christianity were partially consistent: Garaudy argued it was possible to believe in certain aspects of Marxism and remain a Christian, and *vice versa*. In the latter, they become mutually dependent: in order to be a Marxist, it is necessary to hold some beliefs derived from Christianity, and *vice versa*. Garaudy's project principally concerns those beliefs.

Against *intégrisme*

Finally, where mutual dependence becomes complete, all beliefs of each tradition must be held by both, and there may be said to be a *synthesis* between the two traditions. Either mutual dependence or synthesis are candidates for the ‘convergence’ that Sève derides in Garaudy’s Marxism (Sève, 1969 [1978:158–160]) and to which the language used by liberation theologians occasionally gives rise. As, for example, Dom Helder Camara writes to Garaudy, ‘the revolution is not bound with an essential but purely historical tie to philosophical materialism and with atheism, but that, on the contrary, it is consubstantial with Christianity’⁷¹ (Garaudy, 1977b:11). This is a step well beyond the argument that for synthesis it is sufficient to take ‘positions and approaches which, on the basis of either assumption or argument, interweave or combine Christian and Marxist concepts or arguments in one analysis . . . using the concepts and methods of both systems of thought without compromising the integrity of [the other]’ (Rourke, 1991:23).

In response, Garaudy could point to decades of argument against dogmatism — ‘which separates out one aspect of the whole experience and seeks to explain all by reference to one element of it’⁷² (Garaudy, 1938:15). Both as a Marxist humanist, and in the project, this argument was aimed at what he named ‘*intégrisme*’ (Garaudy, 1971:32, 1990). By *intégrisme*, Garaudy meant more than dogmatism — it incorporated much of what has been defined as fundamentalism, by which the word is usually translated, for ‘it is a conception of the organicity of values, by virtue of which one cannot accept certain values without accepting all, or at least at the most fundamental level’⁷³ (Girardi, 1966:282). In practice *intégrisme* was frequently identified by an attempt to demand that a group of ideas or practices should be manipulated to bring them into complete compatibility with another group of ideas or practices, a charge laid at various times against both Marxism and Christianity (Girardi, 1966).

⁷¹ la revolución no está atada con un lazo esencial sino solamente histórico, con el materialismo filosófico y con el ateísmo, y que ella por el contrario es consustancial al cristianismo

⁷² qui détache un aspect de l’expérience totale et veut expliquer le tout en fonction de l’une des parties

⁷³ c’est une conception de l’organicité des valeurs, en vertu de laquelle on ne peut se rencontrer sur certaines valeurs sans se rencontrer sur toutes, ou du moins sur les plus fondamentales

Garaudy himself argued as a Marxist humanist that any attempt to enforce one single system on human thought and endeavour was doomed to failure. This was a view subscribed to by others: 'One of the more unfortunate legacies of Bolshevism is what Berdyaev (1937) called 'integral' Marxism — the idea that Marxism is a total world view which must be accepted all or none (Collier, 2001:125). Even as a Marxist humanist, Garaudy not only denied that truth was the prerogative of Marxism, but also argued *as a Marxist* that truth was both absolute and relative: absolute in the sense of all our current knowledge, but relative in the knowledge we have that in the future, that truth will be superseded by a greater, more comprehensive truth (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:43]). Marxists should not, therefore, 'regard ourselves as possessing a truth given once and for all, definitive and ready-made' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:155]), for 'once we claim to be the interpreter, the spokesman and even the agent of the absolute, we are on the direct road to the Inquisition or to Stalinism' (Garaudy, 1973b: 65). Garaudy's criticism of *intégrisme* may therefore be juxtaposed with a contemporary, and surely *intégriste*, viewpoint from his premier critic inside the PCF: 'Marxism is not a voice, not even the bass, in the speculative polyphony of an ecumenical humanism' (Sève, 1969 [1978: 126]).

Total mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity was not ever, therefore, Garaudy's aim, even before the project. The distinction is a sharp one and one firmly maintained in Garaudy's project, both politically and in relation to Christianity and other religions.

There is a further important analytical consequence of the rejection of *intégrisme*. Throughout his development of the project, Garaudy adheres to the principle of levels, what Collier (2001) calls 'regions': in particular, psychological, social and political, as well as within economic analysis (Bartolomé, 1970:243; Garaudy, 1975:216–217), but in particular the distinction between the natural and the supernatural (Cuschieri, 1977:289). Hence for Garaudy, as for a later proponent of the same theory, historical materialism should be considered as 'a local theory, not a total theory' (Collier, 2001:125). The way to religious belief is thereby already laid open.

Trajectory of the project

The project begins with Garaudy's reaffirmation to himself, immediately after his final fateful speech to the PCF Conference in February 1970, of 'the obscure but invincible certitude that to be true to itself socialism needs this divine dimension of Man'⁷⁴ (Garaudy, 1989:233). Garaudy is far from alone in the broader aspects of this mutual dependence, sharing it not only with Marxists such as Bloch (1959), but also a range of authors who were loosely grouped as 'political theologians' on the Left, (e.g. Gutiérrez, 1973; Miranda, 1972, 1978 [1980]; Moltmann, 1965 [2002]; Metz, 1968 [1969]) who were convinced that 'politics that does not also meet man's deeper aspirations must fail. Conversely, a theology which does not have tangible political effects is likewise sterile' (Schall, 1975:28).

Amongst this distinguished company, the distinctiveness of the project is that amongst Marxists, Garaudy eventually declares himself a Christian — in both French and Spanish (Garaudy, 1975:265, 1975b), and develops a project principally surrounding the relationship between Christianity and religion. 'The other prominent Marxist thinkers of the dialogue [Kolokowski, Machoveč and even Bloch] 'remained faithful to Marxism and atheism'⁷⁵ (Winling, 1981:269). Yet we should also remember that when he joined the PCF in Marseille in 1933, Garaudy unequivocally indicated that he was Christian and intended to remain so (Sève, 2008:398; Garaudy, 1989: 34–35). As he himself said when looking back as a Muslim, 'Between faith which gave sense to life, and a method which rendered my actions effective, I saw no antagonism but, on the contrary, saw them as complementary'⁷⁶ (Garaudy, 1983:57). He added shortly afterwards that he had been: 'Christian, in an

⁷⁴ la certitude obscure mais invincible que le socialisme avait besoin, pour être lui-même, de cette dimension divine de l'homme

⁷⁵ les autres penseurs entendent rester fidèles au marxisme et à l'athéisme

⁷⁶ Entre la foi qui donnait un sens à la vie, et une méthode qui donnait une efficacité à l'action, je ne voyais pas d'antagonisme, mais, au contraire, une complémentarité

absurd world, to give sense to my life. Marxist, in a world of violence, to render my actions effective'⁷⁷ (Garaudy, 1985:250).

The spiritual dimension of the project leads Garaudy to a broadened perspective, which was prefigured in his Marxist humanist period: 'Garaudy's book [Garaudy, 1963], with its advocacy of an "open realism", [is] capable of incorporating both classic realism and the avantgarde' (Bates, 1997:60). Now, within the project, Garaudy asks himself why he had for so long ignored non-Western thought (Garaudy, 1989:264), a question to which the answer is eventually to prove destructive to the project that gave rise to it. His neglect also suggests to him the importance of aesthetics, as expressed through dance and art, which is now no longer just a question of tolerance or positive appreciation *within* Marxism, but much more: 'There [Garaudy, 1974] he shows that the great works of art of each epoch demonstrate the relationship that Man establishes with his environment, with his fellow human beings and with God'⁷⁸ (Collès, 2013:123). The emphasis Garaudy places on art within the project enables him to recapture the mystic view of his youth, that when reviewing Rabindranath Tagore had led him to conclude that:

'Beauty, which symbolises the fraternity between our soul and the whole world, calls us to the ideal and liberating union of Universal Man, and, by the intensity of its Apollonian joy, in no small degree marks the fulfillment of our spiritual destiny'⁷⁹ (Garaudy, 1935:76).

What then does the project entail in practical terms? Plunged into the void of a daily routine that had involved not only writing and lecture tours but also Politburo and other PCF meetings, Garaudy adopts a self-imposed routine of writing in the mornings, and meetings with political and spiritual leaders in the afternoon (Didier Gauvin, personal communication, 6 June 2019). The project looks outwards, to an unspecified humanity at large, but at its centre — Garaudy himself.

⁷⁷ Chrétien, dans un monde de l'absurde, pour donner un sens à ma vie. Marxiste, dans un monde livré à la violence, pour donner une efficacité à mon action

⁷⁸ Il y montre que les grandes œuvres d'art, à chaque époque, manifestent les rapports que l'homme établit avec son environnement, avec ses semblables et avec Dieu

⁷⁹ La beauté, qui symbolise la fraternité de notre âme et de toute chose, nous appelle à l'union idéale et libératrice de l'Homme Universel, et, par l'intensité de sa joie apollinienne, degré d'accomplissement de notre destin spirituel

The output of books continues, as listed in Chapter One, but now directed at a general rather than academic audience. Work advances in different directions at once. For example, in 1973, Garaudy launches a journal, *'Alternatives Socialistes'*, which he plans to publish quarterly (Le Monde, 27 December 1973). The project also involves Garaudy in extensive travel — to Japan, to China, and to Africa. He directs a film, *'Dionysos Noir'*, which aims at demonstrating the contribution of African culture to universal civilisation, as well as the 'lost dimensions' of white Europe (Perottino, 1974:197). The year after his African visit, in 1974, Garaudy creates an international institute for the dialogue of cultures, insisting that the West should open up to other great traditions: Islam certainly, but also Hinduism and others, with the objective of the spiritual unity of the world, yet opposing fundamentalism, as in the past (Garaudy, 1996:7). How it is to achieve its objectives he does not explain.

In 1978, Garaudy launches an *'Appel aux vivants'*, which is shortly accompanied by the best-selling book of the same title. He tells us that within a year, over a million French people had read it (Garaudy, 1989:287). The book becomes part of the project itself, rather than the loose separation of political and theoretical work that characterised Garaudy's Marxist humanism. The royalties of 12m francs (approximately £1.2m, perhaps five times that in 2020 terms) he uses to create an international Association, again of the same name. He intends it to be a 'new 'resistance', non-violent, to struggle against the overwhelming 'occupation' of institutions and spirits by the ideology of 'growth' and the anaesthesia of souls'⁸⁰ (Garaudy, 1989:288). This in turn leads him back inexorably into the electoral politics that he had abandoned two decades earlier. Politically, it may be said that the project both culminates and is extinguished by Garaudy's bid for the Presidency of the Republic in the 1981 election, in which he fails to make it into the top ten (France-Politique, 2019), but where the first victory of the Left in the Fifth Republic sees the socialist François Mitterrand elected, after a collapse in the Communist vote (Goldey & Knapp, 1982:3). After the defeat, no more is heard of the

⁸⁰ Une nouvelle « résistance », non violente, pour lutter contre l'écrasante « occupation » des institutions et des esprits par l'idéologie de la « croissance » et l'anesthésie des âmes

Association, or the museums established around the world at the same time. Within a year, the project ends altogether. *It is political failure which ends the project, not any perception by Garaudy of philosophical inconsistency.*

The legacy of Marxist humanism in the project

So much, then, for the structure of the project to which Garaudy gives a decade of his adult life. What more can be said about it in terms of its theoretical content? Garaudy believes he can retain important aspects of humanist Marxism virtually without change in the project. First, the defence of Marxism in general that he had advanced during the period of the Marxist–Christian dialogue. He noted then the strength of objections to the possibility of Marxism ‘integrating in its concept of the world and of man, the essential element in Christianity’s contribution to the figure of man’ (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:144]), but asked: is the Marxist conception of praxis and revolution as absolute value reconcilable with the principle of the absolute value of the person? (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:145]). Yes, he answered, Marx’s conception of the human species should not be confused with Hegel’s absolute spirit, first because Marxist praxis is a collective, historical, and above all human history, and secondly because for a Marxist, revolution is a necessary means, not an end. None of this argument alters in the project: Garaudy continues to promote Marx as a humanist and stress the importance of his early writing, notably in his review of Marxism (Garaudy, 1977a). That he should still be publishing such analysis relatively late in the project indicates the continued centrality of Marxism to the project. The world changes, Garaudy can say to his readers, and I am only adapting to it, not jettisoning any fundamental tenets of my beliefs.

Second, the argument against existentialism that individuals reach self-consciousness only through engagement with others, primarily through work, the prime epistemological and indeed moral category (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:97]) is maintained. The transformation of the engines of social and economic change, together with explanations of historical development, is not meant to be in the direction of existentialist reliance on a personal relationship with God. Similarly, both Garaudy's compromise position with regard to free will between Marxist–Leninist determinism and existentialist indeterminism, as if either extreme were ever really held by anyone, and his rejection of a positivist science that ignores values (Cranston, 1970:14–16) are carried forward to the project.

Third, Marxist epistemology had already also been transformed, and was virtually project-ready. Garaudy had declared that 'the major portion of the theoretical misunderstandings between Christians and Marxists result from the great confusion about the word 'materialism' (Garaudy, 1965:61), which probably goes some way to explaining Garaudy's persistent desire to temporise over materialism. This had not been a necessarily straightforward journey. Whilst Garaudy had entered the PCF as a committed Christian, his subsequent adoption of metaphysical materialism entailed a commitment not only a reflective understanding of knowledge, but also to Engels' materialist view of religion. Such overt materialism remained his standpoint until the commencement of the project. As a Marxist–Leninist, he had asserted that 'Matter is not in need of any spirit in order to exist' (Garaudy, 1953a:1), and concluded that 'Within this immense and eternal reality the human species is only a link in the chain of infinite development of matter. Humanity only slowly begins to realise what may be the fullness of its historical consciousness' (Garaudy, 1953a:298). Whilst Garaudy's Stalinism may have been exaggerated by his political opponents, there is certainly a real difference between this materialism and his subsequent Marxist humanist view that Marx had discovered 'a materialist conception of human work as a creative act' (Garaudy, 1965:63) which allowed Garaudy to depict Marxism as 'essentially a methodology of historical initiative' (Garaudy, 1965:64). Whilst a vital step away from any identification with determinism, and neither uncondusive to dialogue nor even partial

consistency, such a position in itself it entailed no rejection of materialism, and certainly provided no grounds for mutual dependence.

Fourth, even before the project began, it was evident to one observer, and I agree, that in Garaudy's conception of Marxism, the moral categories of socialism were more conspicuous than the economic ones (Cranston, 1970:17). 'The final objective is socialism, alone capable of making every human being a person, that is to say, a creator, a centre of initiative and responsibility at all levels'⁸¹ (Garaudy, 1971:81). Denying that Marxism could be reduced simply to an economic system equally was a key step in the project (García, 1988:128). This denial Garaudy shared with others who had participated in the Marxist–Christian dialogue such as Hromádka (1965) and Machoveč (1976) as well as with liberation theologians such as Gutiérrez (1973), Miranda (1972, 1978 [1980]), and Boff (1978 [1988]), and fed into the debate over the extent to which the economic enjoys primacy over social, cultural and ultimately ideological causes for social behaviour. This may seem a quite commonplace step in the 21st Century, but not then. This much had already become evident by the time of his expulsion from the PCF in 1970, placing Garaudy in the chronological forefront of the change.

But finally, the reconfiguration away from materialism in turn led Garaudy to a re-evaluation of religion within Marxism. He had already started as a Marxist humanist, certainly, by observing that atheism had been a positive force in the destruction of feudal relationships and absolute monarchy (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:106]). Religion is only an expression of alienation; Man takes refuge in the fantasy world of the beyond because he is profoundly frustrated in his earthly existence (Dupré, 1968) and ultimately because of his alienated labour (Marx, 1867 [1976:990]; Fromm, 1961). There was even value in the 'scientist' atheism of the 19th Century in rejecting the superstitions that nourish the appetite for mystery, the readiness to accept man's impotence and accept the miraculous (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:107]). But the limitation of this traditional Marxist analysis was that 'it saw in religious

⁸¹ L'objectif final est le socialisme, seul capable de faire de chaque homme un homme, c'est-à-dire un créateur, un centre d'initiative et de responsabilité à tous les niveaux

practice nothing but an arbitrary intervention, without asking either what human needs it met or what human values had been created in this arbitrary form' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:107]).

For Marx and Engels, Garaudy said, religions were both the reflection of real distress and protest against it. For Sève, citing the 1844 Manuscripts, the speculative, unscientific nature of religious thought is there in the questions themselves, and he has been comfortable to remain in this conviction (Sève, 1969 [1978], 2008:377). Garaudy however was far from satisfied. There is in religion 'no longer just a way of thinking, but a way of acting: no longer an ideology but a faith, a way of confronting the world and behaving in it' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:109]). For Engels in particular, Garaudy reminded his readers, in primitive Christianity:

'Here we have neither the dogma nor the morals of later Christianity but instead a feeling that one is struggling against the whole world and that the struggle will be a victorious one; an eagerness for the struggle and a certainty of victory which are totally lacking in Christians of today and which are to be found in our time only at the other pole of society, among the Socialists' (Engels, 1894 [1957:7–8]).

For primitive Christianity, Garaudy argued, 'The world is seen no longer as the inevitable unfolding of a rational law, but as a gift of love' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:130]).

'From this new conception of the world is derived a new conception of man: his goal is no longer the grandeur of being equated, by knowledge, with the eternal order of the cosmos and the sovereign law of the city. His infinite value is that he in turn is, in the image of God, creator with the capacity for gift and love, facing an absolute future which is not a logical extension of the past or a phase in a given totality, but the possibility of a new life: to this he is called by a God who is no longer totality, nor concept, nor harmonious and completed image of the human order, but both a personal God and a hidden God, whom no knowledge can give us, and to whom only faith can open the road — always, however, in suffering and uncertainty' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:131]).

Garaudy's criticism of an all-powerful God, as evidenced within the Old Testament, of which Feuerbach has disabused us, leaves no room in the project for the re-introduction of a God of control separated from, let alone controlling, the lived experience of humanity, however little this may chime with a traditional Christian view either (Dean, 1975:22). Religion is an opium, says Garaudy, when 'the relations that it establishes between Man and God are relations based on the type of relation between

master and slave in Hegel'⁸² (Garaudy, 1973a:383). Yet for Garaudy the Marxist humanist, the end of Marxism–Leninism already entailed the need for a replacement, so notwithstanding this risk he came close to earmarking religion for the purpose, specifically Christianity. His chapter on 'Marxism and Religion' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:106–163]) echoed Mark Antony, and really quite blatantly. Garaudy claimed he comes to bury Christianity, not praise it, but we may expect a very different reaction from the reader from a chapter that starts by lauding the benefits of atheism and ends by calling for a common conception of what it is to be human between Marxism and Christianity, albeit at the expense of a transcendent God entirely distinct from the material world. This crucial step taken, Garaudy the Marxist humanist had already satisfied himself of mutual consistency between Marxism and Christianity. The view of Man and of God that this entailed is substantially carried over into the project. But this is not yet mutual dependence. *The politics of the PCF prevented it.*

The politics of the project

Garaudy had always been prepared to engage much more closely with contemporary non-Marxist thought, whether existentialism or Catholicism. than many of his PCF contemporaries. He was:

'In fact, open to dialogue, picking up the idea of subjectivity from Sartre's existentialism and from Christian philosophy the idea of transcendence, all whilst continuing his adherence to the philosophy of Marx. From these two springs he derives his "humanist" anthropology, free from the doctrinaire inhibitions of a dogmatic and denunciatory Marxism and always against any devaluation of man, whether through praxis (Stalinism and the totalitarian regimes of Eastern countries) or through theoretical discourse (the anti-humanism of Althusser)⁸³ (García, 1988:143).

⁸² elle est un opium lorsque les rapports qu'elle établit entre l'homme et Dieu sont des rapports conçus sur le type de rapports du maître à l'esclave chez Hegel

⁸³ De hecho, abierto al diálogo con el existencialismo de Sartre recogerá la idea de subjetividad, y de la filosofía Cristiana la idea de trascendencia, todo ello desde su adhesión nunca desmentida a la filosofía de Marx. Desde esos frentes se alza su antropología «humanista», desembarazada de las inhibiciones doctrinarias de un marxismo dogmático y denunciadora siempre contra cualquier devaluación del hombre, tanto si acontece por la vía de la praxis (stalinismo y regímenes totalitarios de los países del Este) como por la vía del discurso teórico (antihumanismo de Althusser)

He devoted numerous articles (e.g. Garaudy 1966c, 1967b, 1967c), and an entire book to this engagement (Garaudy, 1965) and participated in others (Garaudy, 1965 [1967], 1965a, 1965b, 1965d, 1965e, 1967d; Garaudy & Lauer, 1968). But it was the experience of the Czech Revolution against Soviet authority in the ‘Prague Spring’ of 1968 that brought Garaudy to a stark conclusion (Garaudy, 1968c) He came to acknowledge that only in the context of a socialism that involves liberation from below can there be consistency, let alone mutual dependence, between Marxism and Christianity. This in turn, once he was free of the constraints imposed by his senior position within the PCF, led to a fundamental recognition: *it would not be possible to incorporate every twist and turn of Marxism into the project — and in particular, not the state socialism of the Communist Bloc.*

The Soviet Union specifically to be excluded: he criticises in particular the refusal to recognise ‘the legitimacy of the search for new forms of socialism, adapted to national traditions and to the degree of development of each country’ (Garaudy, 1971:10). Holding nothing back in his denunciation of central planning, he points out brutally that agricultural production at the time of the death of Stalin in 1953 had not surpassed its level in 1913 (Garaudy, 1971:18) and that Soviet economic growth is less than that of Japan (Garaudy, 1971:21). He also notes the increasing relative failure of the USSR in the utilisation of peaceful nuclear power, for example, anticipating the nuclear power plant explosion at Chernobyl by a decade and a half (Garaudy, 1971:25). In a far later review of the Soviet experiment, his criticism remained trenchant: three fundamental perversions underlay Marxism–Leninism — of the laws of growth of capitalism, of confusing socialisation with nationalisation, and of confusing planning with total economic control (Garaudy, 1994:123). It is no wonder to hear him insist that as *‘The socialism we want to establish in our country is not that which is today imposed by military force on Czechoslovakia’*⁸⁴ (Garaudy, 1971:10).

⁸⁴ le socialisme que nous voulons instaurer dans notre pays n'est pas celui qui est aujourd'hui imposé militairement à la Tchécoslovaquie

But as the project emerges from behind the veil of party discipline, the evolution of Garaudy's political thought, from his sympathetic response to the events of 1968 in France and above all in Czechoslovakia (Garaudy, 1968c), his final speech to the PCF in February 1970 (Garaudy, 1970a) and his published article on the 'historical bloc' (Garaudy, 1971a), criticised by Poulantzas (1972), to that advanced in *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979) is certainly both identifiable and striking. In that final speech to the Conference of the PCF, he appeals for the Party to shake off its dogmatism and identify with the forces that had brought about the protests in France in 1968, and indeed also with the attempt by Czechoslovakia to introduce 'socialism with a human face'. His public front is still that of a revolutionary, and the working class as originally defined by Marx is still at the forefront of his conception of revolutionary change. But Garaudy now emphasises that the working class should no longer be confined either analytically or politically to an industrial proletariat, given the new role of science as a productive force (Garaudy, 1970a:157, 1971:57). In its place stands a new 'historic bloc', in which, he specifically notes, Christians participate in as workers, as engineers, or technicians (Garaudy, 1970c:193). It is a radical update of the 'outstretched hand'⁸⁵ of the PCF under his mentor Thorez in the pre-war years (Murphy, 1974:255), but is nevertheless to be distinguished from it. In the past, dialogue and cooperation between Christians and Marxists, however engaged and fruitful, was between two separate groups of people. In the project, the distinction breaks down: there is now only one unified, inclusive political grouping. He later makes particular reference to Gramsci as a proponent of the 'historic bloc', pointing to the radically different conception of socialism shared by students and other youth by comparison to the utopian yet essentially nationalist dreams of his generation (Garaudy, 1971a). The PCF rapidly adjusts its own line towards more inclusivity — but too late, Garaudy is gone from its ranks.

Garaudy follows the same line in *L'Alternative*, (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]) except that now, two years outside the CPF, Marxism–Leninism or even Eurocommunism is no longer even a subject for

⁸⁵ La Main Tendue

discussion. Garaudy decides that party politics in a conventional, Marxist–Leninist sense, already had been thrown out of the window, or if not, it should be. This was a perspicacious decision, taken well before the reality of electoral decline and oblivion for the PCF was apparent. It was to take Sève until 2010 to do the same thing when he too left the PCF.

Look forward to 1979, and the same disregard of party politics remains within the project. Now however there is mention of a series of collaborations between different elements of what Ken Livingstone in the UK at the time called the ‘Rainbow Coalition’ (Garaudy, 1979:392–3; Cooper, 1998:485), including students as well as revolutionary movements in developing countries (Garaudy, 1979:388–397). This perspective is reinforced by the feminism of the project: ‘The most radical change must come from women’⁸⁶ (Garaudy, 1979:393; 1981b), although Garaudy, it should be carefully noted, *never* mentions anything like LGBT issues during the period of the project (Didier Gauvin, personal communication, 21 December 2018). In terms of means, therefore, what is most obvious is the very idea of revolution has been abandoned at worst, transformed at best. The emphasis has moved entirely to non-violence (Morales & Garaudy, 1975:26), with Gandhi cited in support (Garaudy, 1979:364). Not pacifism, however: asked whether a future socialist state should have an army, Garaudy is explicit in equating occupation by the USA and Soviet Union. He turns to the experience of the peoples of Vietnam, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and replies:

‘It seems to me that the guarantee of an effective defence lies today in the work of a conscious people, in which each citizen is responsible for the fate and future of the freedoms of which they have been deprived’⁸⁷ (Morales & Garaudy, 1975:26).

But even the political *objectives* of the project are radically different from those of his preceding Marxist humanism. There is therefore something almost poignant about the review of Garaudy’s project by Da Costa Pinto (1982). By the time it had been published, Garaudy himself had moved on. But the article itself is interesting as representing something very akin to the purpose of this chapter,

⁸⁶ Le changement le plus radical doit venir des femmes

⁸⁷ Me parece que la garantía de una defensa eficaz radica hoy en el trabajo de un pueblo consciente, en el que cada ciudadano sea responsable de la suerte y el futuro de las libertades conquistadas

an attempt to present Garaudy's project as a coherent body of thought, with a focus on political ends. Da Costa Pinto starts by presenting Garaudy's view of economic growth as a tyrannical master of 'the West', although in contrast to his Marxist humanism he is now prepared to dismiss socialist countries as equally under the entropic spell of the same master. The second consequence of international competition and growth, Garaudy says, is institutional violence. Competition has become internalised at the individual level, too, effectively dominating both psychology and society with the demand that we all become consumers, whilst with Faust as its archetype, science itself has degenerated into positivism, which Garaudy had long viewed as 'the most tyrannical of all dogmatisms' (Garaudy, 1956:235).

The response is not to be confined to any one nation or culture, as this response indicates, Garaudy's prophetic phase necessarily involves 'a planetary project, fertilised by an authentic "Dialogue of Civilisations"' [Garaudy, 1977 [2012:12]]. This dialogue is intended to forge a new relationship between all oppressed people and with the divine, within society and between society and nature. The emphasis on rejection of Western values in the project, or at least the incorporation of others, is demonstrated by the previous 'dialogue of civilisations' that Garaudy had originally promulgated when still a PCF Politburo member (Garaudy, 1968e). He now argues, however, for its much greater importance, as in the project, relations between civilisations must precede and dominate economic and political relations — culture first, because the determination of ends and goals necessarily precedes and rules the human organisation. 'By the absence of a goal for humanity, Garaudy wants to make clear that profit alone has become an end in itself in modern society'⁸⁸ (Jakubec, 1972:302). Only in this way can we recover the lost dimensions of Man and build our future according to a goal for humanity' (Garaudy, 1973c).

⁸⁸ Par absence de finalité humaine, Garaudy veut signifier que seul le profit tient lieu de but dans la société moderne

It is at least arguably utopian, albeit sharing with Marx a refusal to be drawn on specifics (McLeish, 2016:86), a fluid concept with no single delineating category (Adorno, 1964 [1989:8]). But in Garaudy's view, not at all: the success of the project will necessarily involve each national economy passing from quantitative measures such as GDP, which will no longer be a measure of progress, towards qualitative ones, although Garaudy does not say what they will or even might be. Statistical and anonymous democracy will give way to participatory and associative democracy (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:451). This will be accompanied by the rejection of contemporary forms of economic organisation in favour of 'a new type of modern enterprise which will be neither private nor state' (Garaudy, 1979:37). Garaudy argues that this will represent a rejection of Western economic values, despite the fact that the co-operative has long and honourable roots in Western society as much as elsewhere, for example in England through the work of Robert Owen (Podmore, 1905). But it will rejuvenate Marxism, which otherwise runs the risk of becoming a provincial ideology in a globalised world (Garaudy, 1973a:394). What he leaves unanswered is the timeframe in which all this is to transpire, a weakness which he himself eventually makes the Achilles heel of the entire project.

He further argues that there is a need to redefine basic principles after the failure of the Soviet system (Garaudy, 1977b:16). Garaudy's three main political objectives were now 'that of the abolition of *the nuclear energy monarchy*, that of the elimination of *institutional waste*, and that of the means of *new and sane growth*'⁸⁹ (Garaudy, 1979:324). For 'It's our whole way of life that we have to change, not just our political structures'⁹⁰ (Garaudy, 1980:9). The entire ecological movement and the future of the Left is presaged in these objectives.

In the project, rather than seek to refine the analysis of class, above all based on work, as did other writers writing at a similar time (Gorz, 1982), Garaudy progressively devalues the concept of class and the ability of any class to effect revolutionary change altogether. Technology is berated

⁸⁹ celle de l'abolition de la *monarchie énergétique du nucléaire*, celle d'élimination du *gaspillage institutionnel*, et celle des moyens d'une *nouvelle et saine croissance*

⁹⁰ c'est tout notre mode de vie que nous avons à changer, pas seulement nos structures politiques

almost as much as economic growth and progress. Garaudy sees with absolute clarity what is only in the 21st Century is becoming practically the case, that the loose talk of cybernetics, computers and systems that characterised the early 1970s would eventually require, and be closely connected with, human transformation and political action (Garaudy, 1970d), the political implications of which the CPSU and the PCF alike appear to him to ignore (Dupleix, 1971:43). In Garaudy's project, Marx is almost relegated to the sidelines, one prophet amongst others: as he says, 'Prophetism is a fundamental aspect of humanity'⁹¹ (Garaudy, 1979:201); yet he aims to preserve within the project what Garaudy considers 20th Century Marxism to be, the most powerful explanation of social change (Garaudy, 1977a).

From the politics of the project, the conclusion must surely be that the emphasis in any mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity is not a question of short-term politics. It is rather the fundamentals of Marxist analysis with which Garaudy wants Christians — and the whole world — to engage: class, an eventual end to capitalism, and capturing the forces that govern historical change, forces which had themselves changed radically during the twentieth century.

Christianity in the project

As a Marxist humanist, Garaudy had been instrumental in the Marxist–Christian dialogue. But the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia satisfied Garaudy that, whatever it had achieved, the Christian–Marxist dialogue had had no reason to go on. The temporary triumph of 'order' was reflected in the fact that:

'Any possibility of cross-fertilisation of Marxist action and Christian faith has, for the moment, been rejected, as a result of the Stalinist conditions created by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. This dialogue is now confined principally to small minorities within

⁹¹ Le prophétisme est une dimension fondamentale de l'homme

church and state, or, when necessary, outside them. We are at an impasse' (Garaudy, 1973c:39).

From Garaudy's perspective, there is therefore a political demand to go beyond dialogue towards a project that encompasses 'interpellation' between Marxism and Christianity, and that will prove more efficacious and just than the Marxist–Leninist experiment that Garaudy could see failing. Be it said that none of this differs much from neo-Marxists such as Erich Fromm, who also recognises that Christians already formed part of a similarly ill-defined movement, which he argued had arisen as a reaction to what both he and Garaudy perceive as ever-increasing:

'the threat of nuclear extinction and the threat to all that is specifically human: independence, aliveness, creativity, and most of all, to man's being an end in himself and not the means for institutions or purposes outside of himself' (Fromm, 1970: xi–xii). Critical Marxism was just one name for 'the stance of neo-Marxist 'intellectuals' rather than any determinate social movement. It is represented by dissident individuals within Communist Parties [and] by independent Marxist thinkers (e.g. the Frankfurt School, Ernest Bloch, Roger Garaudy) and it claims Marxist intellectuals of the past (e.g. Lukács, Gramsci) as forerunners' (McGovern, 1980:50).

Thus far, Garaudy was in good company.

Garaudy's solution was distinctive in that its roots lay rooted in religion: take back Christ, fuse the church with the world's problems, and not just question priestly celibacy, but revive the idea of a priesthood of all believers (Eastwood, 2009) and overthrow the priestly caste. Nothing in this is new in Garaudy's thinking: whilst still a CPF Politburo member, he had written: 'Christianity stimulates historic creativity by its indication of the merely provisional character of every historic present, and participates with all its power in the full realisation of man, because it is through this full realisation that Man can encounter God' (Garaudy et al., 1967:10). And again: 'what is important is that the completely human faith in our task should not rob Man of any of the dimensions historically conquered from the starting-point of faith in God, and that faith in a transcendent Deity should never limit or put brakes on faith in the human task' (Garaudy et al., 1967:13).

But within the project Garaudy goes further. He now implies that Christians can pass beyond a theology of resistance inspired by Bonhoeffer's view of Christ (Marsh, 1994:143; Garaudy,

1973a:384), — which although he does not himself suggest it, has been linked to the specific historicity of resistance to the Third Reich, described by even Bonhoeffer himself as ‘silent witness’ (Mengus, 1992:S137) — to a theology of radical change suitable to combat global capitalism. This perception of a connection between alleged failures of both the Church and theology to confront fascism has been suggested in relation to political theology more widely (Jeanrond, 1992:S201). In contrast to a purely economic approach, and certainly not laying the blame with religion, Garaudy now explains that it is philosophy to blame for all failures of this kind, and in particular a form of dualism that is at root responsible, that between body and soul, which, via the primacy of the ‘spiritual’, leads to ‘a marked preference for ‘order’, considered to be on the side of the ‘spirit’, as opposed to rebellion, which smacks of chaos and ‘matter’ (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:27]). Such dualism, Garaudy explains, extends to all levels — the division of class society, cultural and social life (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:28]). The whole history of the Church is informed by this internal dialectic, by this opposition within it of two traditions, a position which Garaudy had long held. First, the Constantinian tradition, in which the accent is on the fact of sin, and which serves as a justification for a providential and legitimate state of authority leading otherwise incapable men to liberty (Garaudy et al., 1967:9). Hence the long relationship between the Church and political power in the West, at least since Constantine. Second, the apocalyptic tradition, which re-appears whenever the masses of the populace become aware of their strength, which places the accent on the fact that God incarnate as Man has triumphed over sin, and which undertakes to inscribe this apocalypse into history (Garaudy et al., 1967:10). Nothing again in this is new, in Garaudy’s thinking. Whilst still a CPF Politburo member, he had written: ‘Christianity stimulates historic creativity by its indication of the merely provisional character of every historic present, and participates with all its power in the full realisation of man, because it is through this full realisation that Man can encounter God’ (Garaudy et al., 1967:10).

In Germany as in France, the report of a widely-read article prefigures his project and provides evidence of its gestation: ‘An ever-greater role in Garaudy’s philosophy is played by the idea that socialism is of religious origin. In *‘L’Evangile aujourd’hui’* Garaudy addressed his words to the clergy

and asked them to give Christ to the communists. According to Garaudy, Christ is the founder not of the Church, but of the Party. In memorable words, he [Garaudy] called out: 'You, the traducers of great hope . . . you people of the Church, give Him back to us'⁹² (*Der Spiegel*, 1970:147; Cruse, 1992:126). Garaudy is not alone in believing that 'Jesus is the criticism of the Church from inside' (Moltmann, 1974a:422), but his twist on 'render unto Caesar' is sharp — Caesar is a God, so the remark is even more subversive than it at first appears (Garaudy, 1979:164). Jesus of Nazareth is the first witness of a faith that inflexibly refuses any kind of totalitarianism'⁹³ (Garaudy, 1980:5). Garaudy says explicitly that it is only since the rise of Marxist humanism, with the liberation theology of Latin America and with Eurocommunism, that this current of thought has recovered actuality and vitality. Eurocommunist politicians are in agreement: for example, in 1970 Santiago Carrillo, Secretary-General of the Spanish Communist Party, says to the French daily *Le Monde*: 'Without the unity policy with Catholics, the opposition would not have been able to emerge. You know, we have often said that Spanish socialism marches forward with a hammer and sickle in one hand and a cross in the other!'⁹⁴ (*Le Monde*, 4 November 1970).

Garaudy willingly accepts what de Lubac (1978, 1980) derides: the remarkable conception of Joachim de Flore, of three moments of time — the Father's, the Mosaic law; that of the Son, that of Christ; and that of the Holy Spirit, the moment in which there is a secular Kingdom without a state, without classes, without property and even, he says, without a Church, since the Spirit will be present in each one of the members of Christianity (Garaudy, 1977b:13, 1980:5). These same ideas, it has been argued, politically inspired John Hus, then Thomas Müntzer (Bloch, 1921; Packull, 1977), and then all revolutionary thought in Europe (Garrigues, 2013:71). In criticising Zionism, therefore, Garaudy

⁹² Eine immer größere Rolle in der Philosophie Garaudys spielt die Vorstellung, daß der Sozialismus religiöser Herkunft sei. In "L'Évangile aujourd'hui" richtete Garaudy seine Ansprache an der Klerus und forderte ihn auf, Christus an die Kommunisten herauszugeben. Nach Garaudy ist Christus der Gründer nicht der Kirche, sondern der Partei: "Ihr, die Vehementer der großen Hoffnung...Ihr Menschen der Kirche, gebt ihn uns zurück"

⁹³ Jesus de Nazareth est le premier témoin d'une foi qui refuse inflexiblement toute espèce de totalitarisme

⁹⁴ Sans la politique d'unité avec les catholiques, l'opposition n'aurait pas pu faire surface. Vous savez, nous avons souvent dit que le socialisme espagnol marcherait avec la faucille et le marteau dans une main et la croix dans l'autre !

advances the familiar argument that Christianity, in proclaiming the 'New Covenant' that is, the individual's personal relationship with God, goes beyond any ritualism. The apostle Paul, himself born a Jew, says clearly:

'For he who is in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision nor lack of circumcision is effective, but faith acting through love' (Epistle to the Galatians V, 6). It is not the rite but union with God which purifies hearts. St. Paul says again (Galatians III, 8): 'Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the pagans, announced in advance to Abraham: All nations shall be blessed in you' (Genesis XII, 3). It is in the name of this universalism which excludes all racism that he concludes: 'There no longer exist either Greeks, or Jews, or slaves, or free men' (Galatians III, 28). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (VIII and IX) breaks radically with the pretensions to exclusivity of the chosen people; God belongs to all peoples' (Garaudy, 1977c:43).

The change in focus from Marxist humanism is very clear. Then, Garaudy made the distinction between the Christian promise of a redeemer, who 'sheds a glow on the first page of human history', and 'The hope of a universal city [the light on the hill], reconciled in labour and love maintains the effort of the proletarians who fight for the happiness of all men' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:114]). In the project, these two alternative perspectives are reconciled.

Where the project differs from its preceding Marxist humanism is not, therefore, in any characterisation of the capacity of Christianity for revolutionary change, and still less in the division within Christianity that Garaudy believes has been directly caused by a philosophical dualism. Rather, the role now allocated to religion is much broader, that of a solution for the ills of the world and the failure of Marxism–Leninism to avert them. If Man has become 'one-dimensional' (Marcuse, 1964), then 'the problem of growth is not only an economic and political problem, but an essentially religious problem'⁹⁵ (Garaudy, 1979:20) and 'The politics of socialism ... cannot exclude a fundamental problem: that of the confrontation of its goals with those of philosophies and religions'⁹⁶ (Garaudy, 1971:108). In contemporary France, Garaudy says, he will confine his analysis of what he calls an 'interpellation of Marxism' to 'the conception of Man and his future that, in our country, is the oldest and the most

⁹⁵ le problème de la croissance n'est pas seulement un problème économique et un problème politique, mais un problème essentiellement religieux

⁹⁶ La politique du socialisme...ne peut donc écarter un problème fondamental : celui de la confrontation de ses visées avec celles des philosophies et des religions

deep-rooted — Christianity'⁹⁷ (Garaudy, 1971:108–109). According to Garaudy, the contemporary reality is that 'The young reject all that separates the churches from society, that makes them alien and superior' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:25]). This is a political disaffection, but it is neither explained nor expected to be solved entirely in economic terms. What is different in the project is that change could be expected to be a gradual, *and essentially religious* process. 'Of course, when I take this [Marxist] option I will have to instruct myself in scientific technique, for strategy, tactics, economic organization, etc., all at the service of science. But faith is a postulate, and there is an act of faith to be an atheist as there is for a Christian' (Garaudy, 1977b:16). In relation to this assertion, it has been suggested that 'Insofar as the future is concerned, both Marxism and Christianity constitute a faith and a hope rather than science or knowledge ... As proposal, hypothesis and wager, the two are one and the same' (Fierro, 1977:422).

As the project evolves, Garaudy suggests that both faith and politics have changed since the time Marx wrote, and the issue of their relationship needs to be remodelled. Garaudy refers to two separate issues, relations between Church and State, on the one hand, and between faith and politics as two dimensions of man, on the other (Garaudy, 1979:1). Any attempt to resolve the 'choc' between Marxism and Christianity must involve an acceptance of the correct 'sphere of influence' for both — an erroneous conflation of levels happens in respect of both eschatology as well as epistemology when a church wants to turn itself into a political party or a party attempts to transform itself into a faith and formulate a religion (Garaudy, 1979:12). Garaudy's positive attitude to original Christianity, distrust of the Church, and openness to other traditions is picked up by strands of modern Christianity, for example Celtic Christianity (Mitton, 1995), and others who have stressed that 'Marxism and Christianity can each learn something from the other about secularity' — to reject totalitarianism and 'religion' — we should never identify devotion to God with devotion to the church (Collier, 2001:126). And we must unify faith and politics in a new communal life, Garaudy says, because it is not possible

⁹⁷ celle des conceptions de l'homme de son avenir qui, dans notre pays, est la plus ancienne et la plus enracinée: le christianisme

to separate, in a fatal dualism, a faith confined to the interior life, any more than a politics that is complete outside the inner individual. The conclusion is inevitable: 'Religion is not a private affair'⁹⁸ (Garaudy, 1980:12).

It is a difficult path to tread, for he also insists that, 'The crucified Christ is the opposite of these images of power'⁹⁹ (Garaudy, 1979:3). It is perhaps not surprising that Garaudy especially identified with Jesus' allocation of duties between God and Caesar. He was always seeking to do the same. This he shares with contemporary radical theologians (Moltmann, 1974; Pannenberg, 1973). The project may well be profoundly subversive, a living current of faith whose inspiration is both Marx's vision of human emancipation and the life of Jesus, but Garaudy still needs to explain much more to us about this faith and hope, and how it will translate into effective action.

Garaudy's selection of material for the project

Garaudy makes no apology in drawing on what he perceives to be the most useful insights from what he has read, which may reasonably be described as cherry-picking for the project. He makes immediately explicit that he owes this assertion to Hegel: 'Hegel, I believe, showed in his Philosophy of History a profound grasp of this decisive moment of history when he discerned in Christianity the source of every vision of the world which acknowledges in Man his active interiority, and which makes Man the mainspring in the evolution of reality' (Garaudy, 1975:74). He adds to the debt to Hegel by citing him further: 'Christ, he [Hegel] writes, the man who in his human existence showed by his death and throughout his life, the eternal history of the Spirit'¹⁰⁰ (Garaudy, 1975:243). Yet this is far from the full extent of the claims Hegel actually makes for Christ, which he envisaged as at least essential to

⁹⁸ La religion n'est pas affaire privée

⁹⁹ Le Christ crucifié, c'est le contraire de ces images de la puissance

¹⁰⁰ « Christ, écrit-il, l'homme en tant qu'homme dans lequel est apparue l'unité de Dieu et de 'l'homme, a montré par sa mort et son histoire en général, l'histoire éternelle de l'Esprit »

demonstrate the unity of divine and human nature, even if the extent of Hegel's Christian orthodoxy and the precise nature of his view of the Incarnation has been much debated (e.g. Küng, 1970:380; Altizer, 1991:77; Hodgson, 2005:155–177; Bubbio, 2014, 523–524). For the Garaudy of the project, Hegel is evidently there to be plundered, and appropriated only up to the point required, not to be debated with, let alone accepted wholesale. This is particularly the case in relation to Hegel's treatment of the universality of the divine Spirit. For whilst Garaudy might agree with at least the interpretation of Hegel that 'Divine essence recovers its universality when the universal presence of divine Spirit replaces the individual presence of God in Jesus' (Jamros, 1995:286), Hegel goes on to argue that the living Christ is to be found in the Church which He founded, and in the doctrines of the relation of God and Man of which the Church is the earthly symbol, a view to which Garaudy was diametrically opposed.

From Bloch, Garaudy derives the importance of hope, which has been central to his Marxist humanism and is carried across into the project. 'Hope is the key to Bloch's system of 'meta-religion', a vast attempt to inherit from religion — above all the Jewish–Christian religion — a revolutionary hope which has the courage to live for the future and a new world' (Collins, 1968:261). For Bloch the contemporary picture of Christianity was bleak, as the rightfully messianic fire of Christianity has been extinguished, to be replaced with a torpor congenial to capitalism. Yet theologians, notably Metz and Moltmann, still drew on Bloch for inspiration, crossing and re-crossing the supposed divide between Marxism and Christianity. Garaudy joins them in enthusing about hope, which he sometimes appears to believe is the prerogative of those in support of the project.

Hence for example he writes that the youth — as one part of the historic bloc — oppose this [capitalist torpor] with 'what theologians call eschatology, Christian hope' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:27]). In cherry-picking from others, Garaudy says that Bloch rediscovered 'the essential foundation of all living Marxism — what he calls "the principle of hope"' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:95]). It is no doubt welcome for Garaudy to have discovered the essential foundation of something as important to him

as Marxism, and Garaudy's explicit assertion is that the politics of the project will be fuelled by this kind of hope — although he might equally well have added, courage, discipline and other virtues familiar to the Hellenic world as well. This project of hope will involve new relations with nature, new economic relations based on qualitative not quantitative criteria, new relations between the individual and society — a participative, not elective, democracy — between East and West, and between Man and God (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]). But how is this expected to work in practice? None of this is actually explored.

It is reasonable then to ask, apart from his *assertion* of Christian faith, does Garaudy say anything different to Bloch's formulation of 'Religion as protest, the Bible as biased towards the poor, the Church as open and free, God as truly human — an impressive doctrinal system that has proved to be a positive catalyst in Marxist-Christian dialogue' (McLelland, 1988:182)? Yes, in my view: and especially in retrospect the difference is important. Over three decades later the trajectory of both Marxism and Christianity suggests that despite its doctrinal originality Bloch's thought really was a blind alley, for at least two principal reasons.

First, for Bloch, the absolute rejection of Christianity by vulgar Marxism is not the right critique of religion. Rather, it is to subject Christianity to a class, and by extension an ethical, rebuke. What emerges from Bloch's Marxist criticism is, at least potentially, a Christianity purified of oppression generated by class. As noted above, however, Garaudy refuses to allow class to be the only filter for his project. In his *Pour un dialogue des civilisations* (Garaudy, 1977), for example, there is already both a political imperative and an implicit recognition of the value to be extracted from every religion, a recognition later made explicit and described in detail (Garaudy, 1979).

Secondly, Bloch's dance on the edge of faith has been echoed by other more popular advocates, notably those in the Protestant tradition, the first at least specifically acknowledged by Garaudy (e.g. Robinson, 1963; Hick, 1977; Holloway, 1997; Spong, 1998, 2001; Cupitt, 1997, 2006). But Bloch and others who followed in the same Marxist tradition (e.g. Gardavsky, 1967; Machoveč,

1972) blazed a trail that few eventually followed. When Garaudy hesitates to answer yes to the question of whether he has Christian faith, on the grounds that 'it would be vain to claim it before having verified it in action that matches its power' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:98]), he does both himself and the project a millenarian injustice that he would soon, as noted above, both recognise and remedy (Garaudy, 1975:265).

Thirdly, there is a much more fundamental distinction to be made between Bloch and Garaudy. In the very next paragraph from his confession that 'the Christian inside him has always been there' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:202]), he says that it is agonising 'to have to doubt the very conception of this Party precisely in order to hold on to the hope that it brought to life' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:202]). As the project develops, Garaudy makes explicit the inescapable connection at a personal level between acceptance of Christianity and the rejection of the central role of the Party. At the core of the project, therefore, is the transformatory *political* significance of Christianity.

Moltmann is next in line for incorporation within the project — not arguing against Bloch, Garaudy is careful to say, but responding to his insight (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:95]). From Moltmann's insistence that 'Hope finds in Christ not only a consolation in suffering, but also the protest of the divine promise against suffering' (Moltmann, 1964 [2002:7]), Garaudy extracts a causal link between faith and impatience with the idolatries and alienations of the world (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:96]). From Moltmann too he cites a representation of Christ as 'the fully human man whose every action teaches us to look to ultimate objectives' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:96]), even though 'to be a Christian is not to believe that the resurrection is 'real' (in the sense of positivist history and science); it means believing it is possible . . . The Resurrection is every day' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:97]). More than that, 'The Resurrection is the challenge to entropy, to the forces of death, to all the powers which destroy human beings' (Garaudy, 1976a [1980:10]). In the name of a false idealism that considers that there is an immutable human nature that prevents our salvation, it is no more utopian to believe in a Christian renewal than in Marxist one (Garaudy, 1977:17). I suggest that this remark is significant. Even if

references to Jesus are less frequent with Garaudy or Kolakowski than for Bloch or Machoveč, and the Resurrection figurative, 'Jesus' historical existence is not denied' (Winling, 1981:265).

Any theorist seeking to demonstrate the mutual dependence of two traditions must surely indicate what politely to leave behind and what to include in the relationship. Garaudy acknowledges that beyond science there are questions to which it has no answer. For the time being, these are delegated to the realm of myth and philosophy (Hughes, 1970:30). This would appear to be a similar view to that of Bultmann and of process theology more generally, particularly of myth (Hughes, 1970:42). But whereas Garaudy the Marxist humanist could argue that Bultmann's demythologising was consistent with Marxism, he tactfully remained silent on those aspects of Bultmann's work, such as his quietist view of hope (Collins, 1968: 260) that met with less approval from more radical theologians such as Moltmann. So too Bultmann's insistence on the primacy and immediacy of Revelation, an allegedly existentialist picture of the Gospel as ahistorical, at the expense of eschatological interpretation, eventually disavowed even by Karl Rahner. 'This preoccupation with the present has meant that the existentialist theologians have individualized and spiritualized eschatology' (Collins, 1968:263), so Garaudy no more than Bloch, Moltmann or Rahner can accept it.

Three pillars on which the project rests

In successive articles and books, Garaudy claims that the project rests on three premises, asking rhetorically whether the premises on which revolutionary action is based are the same as those of the Bible (Garaudy, 1973:14). Always three — but they vary somewhat.

Faith and Revolution (Garaudy, 1973b), although it predates his actual announcement of Christian faith, represents a synopsis of Garaudy's view of the relationship of religion and revolution within the project. Here, the first premise of revolutionary action is transcendence. 'We posit the

premise that it is possible for us to liberate ourselves from a given natural order and to shape our own future' (Garaudy, 1973:34). So too in *Parole d'Homme* (Garaudy, 1975), the first premise is again transcendence, that 'the aims of revolutionary action cannot be derived only from the past or the present'¹⁰¹ (Garaudy, 1975:231). As an aspect of faith, transcendence is at the core of all escape from determinism in history, the incarnation of God in Man, his revelation and continued creation in and through Man (Garaudy, 1975:236). There is little change in this premise throughout the project. Chapter Five explores this pillar of the project in detail.

The second premise is relativity: it 'asserts the possibility of a radical break with all forms of social alienation' (Garaudy, 1973:68). This 'prophetic' premise is designed to show that no achievement is permanent, no goal final. As for a paradigm, it is artistic creation, Garaudy says, that 'may perhaps provide both revolutionary action and the Christian faith with the example they need' (Garaudy, 1973:68). In Garaudy (1975), the second premise is again relativity, the prophetic premise that 'even people alienated by a society are capable of fighting against that alienation'¹⁰² (Garaudy, 1975:237). So too, little change. It is this premise which places the project firmly in the category of the Marxism and Christianity that has been variously described as revisionist and heretical respectively, or, in a term to cover both intellectual traditions, closer to each other than to their own doctrinal versions, 'dialogical' (Vree, 1976:176).

Garaudy claims that both these premises rest on a third, that of openness, 'the eschatological premise, following on the utopian and the prophetic, or again, if you like, the premise of hope' (Garaudy, 1973:72). This premise, he further argues, 'may perhaps be identified with the very foundation of faith, namely, faith in the Resurrection of Christ' (Garaudy, 1973:72). But this is the English translation. In the original article (Garaudy, 1973c) and in Garaudy (1975), he goes further, beginning with identical language: the premise of openness not merely may be, but *is* 'identified with

¹⁰¹ Les fins de l'action révolutionnaire ne peuvent être déduites seulement du passé ou du présent

¹⁰² même les hommes aliénés par une société sont capables de combattre cette aliénation

the essence of faith: faith in the Resurrection of Christ' (Garaudy, 1975:242). Shortly, we learn that the basis of the love that is true freedom is 'hope in the Resurrection.'¹⁰³ This is because 'The Resurrection is *par excellence* that defiance of entropy, of the forces of death, of all the destructive powers of Man'¹⁰⁴ (Garaudy, 1976a:12).

It is a persuasive suggestion, as part of an appeal to Christians, as the faith required here is surely not just in the future, it is in the premises themselves, which other than this comparison go otherwise without challenge. Garaudy immediately tempers this assertion with the modest denial of any attempt at theological pretension, claiming that he is only trying to explain to himself what he can understand. But he then goes on to remind his readers of the impact of that faith on the first Christians, which he asserts was to change their perception of freedom from that of necessity to participation in the act of creation.

The contribution of other religions

By the time of *Appel aux vivants* (1979) the premises for revolutionary action, at least for the politics of the project, have quietly disappeared in the wake of *Pour un dialogue des civilisations* (Garaudy, 1977). Instead, the emphasis is on the role of religions and cultures other than Christianity to the project. The mutual dependence of Christianity with Marxism in the project could only ever be partial, particularly because of the openness of the project towards other religions.

Contributions to the project from other religions are usefully indicated separately in Garaudy (1977, 1979).

¹⁰³ l'espérance de la Résurrection

¹⁰⁴ La Résurrection est, par excellence, ce défi à l'entropie, aux forces de la mort, à toutes les puissances destructrices de l'homme

From *'The Egyptian Book of the Dead'* and contemporary Africa, he takes the wish to abolish the limit, the barrier between life and death, between Man and the divine. The divine dimensions of human life, he says, entail that Man is not an isolated part of the universe, that he is responsible for it, that his life is that of a God (Garaudy, 1979:71). Africa, he tells us, has kept for us the relationship born in Egypt between Man and the world, between Man and community, and between the visible and invisible worlds (Garaudy, 1979:73). This rejection of 'the absurd dualism of body and soul'¹⁰⁵ (Garaudy, 1979:74) is the core of what he intends the project to capture from African religion and culture whereby nature is considered as a nexus of living forces, with Man at its nucleus (Garaudy, 1973d:115). So too the ideas that death is the continuation of life in other ways, that to live is to be a creator, and that work, initiation and marriage are all sacred acts (Garaudy, 1979:75). None of this rhetoric is above critical comment. What does it mean in practice to reject the dualism of body and soul? Does it mean more than to reject the dualism of a capitalist society, ultimately that between individuals? And, if all is sacred, we might ask, perhaps nothing is. The link between what we should learn from African religion and the activist politics of the project certainly seems to be absent. A critic might even suggest that the difference between accepting what Garaudy has to say about African religion into the project and not doing so amounts to mutual respect between civilisations, which is not to decry such an innovation in itself, only to query whether tribal religion is the most useful gateway to its achievement.

Next Garaudy turns to Zarathustra. Setting the historical scene, he contributes the surely interesting view that 'The cultivation of the earth showed for the first time that one could live differently'¹⁰⁶ (Garaudy, 1979:80). He goes on to suggest that it was Zarathustra who first introduced the idea of an ethical god, the human differentiation between Good and Evil (Garaudy, 1979:80). He also credits him with introducing monotheism, with the ideas of the world as a battlefield between Man and the enemies of his humanity, that Man can encounter God within himself, rather than

¹⁰⁵ L'absurde dualisme de l'âme et du corps

¹⁰⁶ La culture de la terre a pour la première fois montré qu'on pourrait vivre autrement

through rites and sacrifice, of respect for every life (Garaudy, 1979:81), and harmony with all of nature (Garaudy, 1979:83). So too Zarathustra is the first to reject any anthropomorphic conception of God in favour of a God both transcendent and immanent, the creator of human freedom, defined as the choice faced by every individual between Good and Evil (Garaudy, 1979:81–82). Life is a struggle, ‘every person is both a warrior and a mystic’¹⁰⁷ (Garaudy, 1979:82). The revolutionary prophecy of Zarathustra gives to each person the vocation of saviour of the world, through prayer, faith, directed intelligence and the complete engagement of life in the combat (Garaudy, 1979:83). If the word ‘militant’ is missing, then it is surely only because of its previous association with the Communist Party that Garaudy has left behind: the principle seems extremely familiar.

From Zarathustra to Hinduism is for Garaudy but a short migration. The central message of India he takes to be the sense of the profound unity of man, nature and the divine, which as expressed in the *Vedas* give rise to joy, liberty, and deliverance from illusions that bind our lives to partial realities and wants (Garaudy, 1979:86). It is in the rites of passage from death to life, from birth to eternal life, that Hinduism presents mysticism (Garaudy, 1979:87), but it does seem that it is Hindu technique which Garaudy seems to want us to admire, along with the other religions of Asian origin he goes on to explore (Garaudy, 1979:88), certainly by comparison with a traditional Hindu ontology replete with multiple levels of deities: devas and asuras prominent amongst them (Williams, 2008). Turning to the *Upanishads*, Garaudy again appears to find greater interest in methods of esoteric teaching, symbolism, meditation, and ‘the achievement of ‘a “Self”, going beyond any individual idiosyncrasies’.¹⁰⁸ (Garaudy, 1979:93). The existence of the caste system is put down to capitalism, although placing real power with people of sacrifice and wisdom rather than those of meekness with a favourable comparison to the elders of Plato’s *Republic*. Conquest, possessions and the control of wealth are on the lowest rank of the social scale (Garaudy, 1979:95).

¹⁰⁷ Chaque homme est à la fois un Guerrier et un mystique

¹⁰⁸ un «Soi », dépassant toute particularité individuelle

Buddhism Garaudy characterises as a reform of Hinduism, a rejection of priestly authority and ritual in favour of the practical question of human suffering (Garaudy, 1979:118). If it proves possible to escape the illusion that apart from each of the elements of being — the body, sense, ideas, feelings, conscience — there is ‘an actor behind the act, a thinker behind the thought, a “me” behind my conscience’ (Garaudy, 1979:119), the route to escape from suffering lies open. But, for Garaudy the defender of the individual against the collective, this is evidently a fine line to tread: his stress must lie on the autonomous, permanent, isolated, idealist illusion of individuality that is the subject of Buddhist ethical criticism; he cannot and does not accept any complete dissolution of the personality and recognises the continuing tension within Buddhism between ‘personal wellbeing and social liberation’¹⁰⁹ (Garaudy, 1979:122). Thus ‘The central insight of the Tao is to reject all dualism’¹¹⁰ (Garaudy, 1979:126), but this is only so that the distinction between subject and object can be unfavourably compared with the liberation provided by illumination of ‘unknowing’¹¹¹ (Garaudy, 1979:128), which ‘ends the cycle of violence and changes the concept of power and the purpose of action’ (Garaudy, 1979:129). The Tao in turn therefore opens the way to the authority of the sage, whose acts are those of being, not the acts of the possessive individual. Love becomes easy when all are part of me, and I of them (Garaudy, 1979:131). A mysticism, yes, but Garaudy chooses to derive it from the Tao rather than from Christianity to avoid any association with inertia or quietism. Instead, he seeks to distinguish it from selfish action derived from an inadequate and false conception of whom I really am. Garaudy closes his inclusion of the Eastern religions within the project by placing Zen as another renewal: its grand masters attack formality, conventions and religious myths (Garaudy, 1979:142), in order to break down barriers: between being and non-being, life and death, and between the Divine and the human (Garaudy, 1979:147).

¹⁰⁹ le salut personnel et la libération sociale

¹¹⁰ L’ituiton centrale du taoïsme découle du refus de tout dualisme

¹¹¹ Non-savoir

Then Garaudy turns to Judaism. Garaudy's equal treatment of Judaism, even its inclusion at all, is of especial significance as marking a clear distinction between the project and its Islamic successor. The initial distinction he draws is between '*a movement from Man towards God*'¹¹² (Garaudy, 1979:148) within the Eastern religions on the one hand, and '*a movement by God to interpellate Man*'¹¹³ (Garaudy, 1979:148–9) within the religions of the book. Garaudy is no doubt not oblivious of the structural Marxist use of the term in this latter phrase (Althusser, 1970 [1976:113–4]). As a result, East and West cannot be compared. The revolutionary status of the prophet in Judaism derives not from any divination or oracle, but from their judgement of each institution, each act, in relation to their ends (Garaudy, 1979:154). Judaism's essential contribution is to introduce a new conception of time, that of the promise, of hope — the time of the project (Garaudy, 1979:154). 'This message is indivisibly divine and political' (Garaudy, 1979:154).

After the treatment of Christianity examined in more detail above, finally we learn, and in view of his subsequent conversion with great interest, the particular lessons that Islam should impart to the project. Garaudy is drawn to what he describes as the '*new collective life*'¹¹⁴ to which the soul is brought through Islam, on which I will comment further in Chapter Six. But he is also impressed by the Sufist conception of union with God and by the essential message of the Quran, to awaken in Man a higher consciousness of his relationship with God, with Man, with the universe. 'Islam gives to each action all its meaning in not separating the terrestrial from the spiritual world'¹¹⁵ (Garaudy, 1979:200). It is this unifying vision which '*inspires all the aspects of Islam on earth — art, science, action*'¹¹⁶ (Garaudy, 1979:197) and creates the distinction between sacred acts are tied to and inspired by this unity and profane acts that are not.

¹¹² *Un mouvement qui part de l'homme pour aller à Dieu*

¹¹³ *Le mouvement part de Dieu pour interpeller l'homme*

¹¹⁴ nouvelle vie collective

¹¹⁵ Islam donne à chaque action tout son sens en ne séparant pas un monde terrestre et un monde spirituel

¹¹⁶ Inspire toutes les dimensions de la vie en terre d'Islam: l'art, la science, l'action

Islamic science in particular is praised for its break with the purely deductive reasoning of Greek thought, as well as the inseparability of science with wisdom. Yet Garaudy does not spare Islam (or Christianity) the accusation of decadence and *intégrisme*. He cites three particular instances with respect to Islam: defence of the established order against the poor, obstructing the progress of science with superstition, and prayer for personal needs instead of working to achieve them (Garaudy, 1979:200). But over the centuries, Garaudy contends, Islam has not been identified with fatalism. Rather, it has been a powerful incentive to action, to the change of social structures, to the development of science and to the work of builders (Garaudy, 1979:200). This contention too is addressed in Chapter Six.

A hierarchy of religions?

The cherry-picking of ideas from different religions within the project presented in *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979) may yet raise the suspicion that lurking below the surface is at least some element of Christian supersessionist thinking. The fact that it is Christianity that is to be the source of two of the most important underpins of the project, subjectivity and transcendence, to be discussed in Chapters Four and Five, might give rise to additional concern on this score.

Of the persistence of supersessionist Christian thought there can be no doubt, especially in relation to Judaism (Bibliowicz, 2013: 104; Knitter, 2009:558), even if it has not only been theologians of religious pluralism who have contested supersessionist arguments (e.g. Hick, 1980) but also religious leaders themselves. Pope Francis, for example, has followed the pronouncements of his predecessor at the Second Vatican Council (Pope Paul VI, 1965) and gone out of his way to express sympathy with Islam (Pope Francis, 2013). Garaudy adopts such an approach within the project, wherein the contribution to be made by other religions develops in tandem with the increased emphasis he places politically on the dialogue of civilisations and the contribution of developing nations. Eventually, however, in combination with the short-term political failure of the project, this contribution has a destructive effect that forms the subject matter of Chapter Six.

Notably, and in sharp distinction from what both the exclusive focus on Christianity as a Marxist humanist before Garaudy began his project, and the Islam that was to follow, Garaudy at no point during the project suggests that partial consistency of *any* of these religions with Marxism is not possible. But Garaudy's cherry-picking, even assuming the cherries are both where he claims they are, and ready to be picked, has a bias to the past: ideas should be taken from the earliest religion where they appear. Hence in Garaudy (1979) there is a broadly chronological consideration of religions. This bias is an important component of the project, occasionally finding explicit voice, as when he says that 'Hinduism gave the first model of mysticism' (Garaudy, 1979:87), evidently intending this to be a justification of its inclusion in the project, at least as represented by the work in hand. It may, however, be called out for what it is: a presentational device, with no explicit or implicit hierarchy of religions either intended or concluded.

The different role of religions is an important distinction between the project and its predecessor. There might be a strong case for Garaudy as a Marxist humanist elevating Christianity beyond other religions: his treatment of religion (Garaudy, 1966 [1970: 106–163]) concerns only Christianity, for example. It is a criticism that has been levelled against Marx as well, in particular given what he had to say about his own Jewish heritage (Fischman, 1989:757). By contrast, Garaudy's project sought to engage with *all* religions whilst yet avoiding a charge of *intégrisme*, and so Garaudy should and indeed does not reproach the philosophers for such consistency. Within the project and even after his own conversion, Garaudy explicitly rejects the idea of a hierarchy of religions. 'It's about helping the Buddhist to be a better Buddhist, the Christian a better Christian, the Muslim a better Muslim'¹¹⁷ (Garaudy, 1992:206). Mutual dependence between Christianity with Marxism within the project entails openness to consistency with other religions, especially in terms of the source of transcendence, if not of subjectivity. The same connection between religion and revolution Garaudy for example identified in Islam and Buddhism (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:27]). And as Garaudy's conviction

¹¹⁷ Mais aider le bouddhiste à devenir un meilleur bouddhiste, le chrétien un meilleur chrétien, le musulman un meilleur musulman

that the West is at fault both philosophically and politically deepens, so the tension rises between his tentative re-commitment to Christianity and his increasing tendency to attribute not only significance, or benefit, to every religion, but implicitly to assign them equal status, most notably in *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979). Equal, but separate: determined to avoid *intégrisme*, and maintain the cultural independence of every religion, he is as a result not quite prepared to admit that he intends to adhere to the approach taken by those who argue for the common origin of all religions, nor to agree with the existence of subterranean traditions of agreement and concordance (Swidler, 1988; Fernando et al., 1991), let alone to support them. This is despite his recognition of ‘the theory by which each doctrine progresses and asserts its distinctiveness, not in a state of anxiety and isolation, but open to the winds of change, accepting cross-fertilisation from other visions of the world’¹¹⁸ (Garaudy, 1979:157). Much later he did recognise that his objective had indeed been ‘this ambition to unify the world spiritually’¹¹⁹ (Garaudy, 1996:7).

Is there therefore anything connecting Christianity with the project that is distinct, however, both from its role within the Marxist humanism that preceded the project and from the contributions made by other religions? I argue yes: within the project, Christianity does still have privileged status — of a kind. Its privileged status within the project does not derive from any comparative advantage by comparison to other religions, and certainly not because of its largely European institutional adoption. No member of any religion has any more of a covenant with God than any other, nor is prevented from entering Garaudy’s Promised Land by virtue of their faith. Rather, it arises *by virtue of its relationship with Marxism*. Garaudy contends that not only is it possible to achieve a partial consistency between Marxism and Christianity, but they are *mutually dependent*. Garaudy’s project entails the assertion that *only* from Christianity can Marxism derive the necessary theoretical concepts to save not only itself, but the whole world. Yet almost paradoxically he seems concerned to establish

¹¹⁸ La théorie selon laquelle toute doctrine progresse et affirme sa spécificité non dans un isolement anxieux, mais s’ouvrant aux souffles du large, en acceptant la fécondation réciproque des autres visions du monde

¹¹⁹ cette ambition d’unifier spirituellement le monde

a parity in the relationship of mutual dependence, almost as if a barter trade were in progress. In the project, Marxism demands that Christianity accepts its own concepts of social class and equality, explanations of change within society, the role of economics, and ultimately of justice and freedom, the light on the hill that Garaudy hopes Christians will accept in order to regain their lost political and social compass. Norris recognises that in exchange Garaudy has 'come to view two contributions of Christianity as basic to any Marxist humanism: subjectivity and transcendence', which were the two ideas that Garaudy stresses in all his work for the construction of socialist society, including the project (Bustros, 1976:xv; Norris, 1974:11; Borg, 1976:332; Ratliff (1975). They are central to the definition of God that Garaudy himself provides:

'I call God that origin, inaccessible yet near, that personal and living presence, who thinks of me when I think, that is, when I conceive of new possibilities, new projects, when I realise them through my work, and which is revealed when I have a thought or act in a way that goes beyond, that transcends all of that which has made up what I have known, conceived and done until now'¹²⁰ (Garaudy, 1975:55–56)

If Garaudy is to be exonerated from a charge of Christian supersessionist thinking, therefore, it must be with this important proviso, that whatever is to be derived from other faiths, there must not only be room for the acceptance of both subjectivity and transcendence from Christianity, but that such acceptance does not of itself constitute a new form of supersessionist thinking. Such exoneration may draw not only on the difference between religion and politics, but also from the fact that, by the time of the project, the mounting challenges of Marxism are very apparent to Garaudy. So, although the project is indeed designed as a way out of the impasse in which Marxism has found itself, to claim that components of a religion are essential for Marxism can therefore hardly be regarded as much of a basis for supersessionism.

It must be conceded, however, that if the derivation of critical components of the project from Christianity *are* regarded as drawing an equivalent within the project to traditional claims of Christian

¹²⁰ J'appelle Dieu cette source inaccessible et proche, cette présence personnelle et aimante, qui pense en moi lorsque je pense, c'est-à-dire lorsque je conçois de nouveaux possibles, de nouveaux projets, lorsque je les réalise par mon travail, et qu'affleure ainsi une pensée ou une œuvre qui dépasse, qui transcende l'ensemble jusqu'à constitué de ce que j'ai connu, conçu et fait jusqu'ici

superiority over other religions, then the conclusion is inescapable: far from placing all religions on an equal plane, Garaudy is guilty of the very crime that he is so concerned to avoid.

Conclusion: A flawed project

The project represents the opportunity for Garaudy both to write his revisionist political manifesto, separate and quite distinct from that of the PCF, *and* publicly to confess his Christian faith and its mutual dependence with that revisionist Marxism. In the project we can see an unveiling of Garaudy's developing political and religious beliefs, to which he tries to make his actions conform. The populist language of the project can therefore be explained, at least in part, by the fact that the project is *polemical*, just as was its Marxist humanist predecessor (Hampsch, 1968:139), perhaps even more so. Hence for example even at the end of the project, Garaudy counterposes his view of autonomous individuals within both Marxism and Christianity with Althusser's view of individuals as mere puppets within structures (Garaudy, 1980:14). Such populist presentation reflects the political component of the project, which was largely a response to what he perceived as the ineffective sclerosis of the PCF. It has had the effect of largely shrouding it from detailed examination, in sharp contrast to the Marxist humanism that preceded and the conversion that followed it. To sketch is one of Sève's favourite verbs; he says so himself, in developing an outline of a theory of personality consistent with Marxism (Sève, 2008:390). Garaudy did no more or less: he also sketched out such mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity: perhaps a sketch was all that could reasonably be expected. This is far from saying that his views did not change even during this short period. The challenge that I have sought to meet, however, is to determine the real evolution of his views.

I have sought too not only to place the political evolution of the project in context, but also to give it its proper philosophical status. As Garaudy himself said, Lenin favoured opportunities (Garaudy,

1979:45fn) — he might have added, Lenin knew political failure as well all too well — and it would be completely unfair to force Marxism into a purely Marxist–Leninist political quandary. During the 1970s it gradually dawned on Marxists worldwide that a series of earnestly held Leninist political beliefs and forecasts were most probably radically *wrong*. It is therefore arguably to Garaudy's credit that he grapples with political reality and seeks coalitions for change, albeit that his project only comes to light after his ejection from the PCF. Whilst we might want to wonder how long he would have remained inside the PCF in the absence of the February 1970 *dénouement*, it is in fact inconceivable to imagine that given the divergence of views at the time, and in particular his clash with Marchais, let alone with Sève and his other critics, he could have stayed much longer.

Garaudy's problem, however, is that in wishing simultaneously to distance the project from a Constantinian church, an ossified Communist movement and capitalist institutions, he leaves himself with only the ineffective components of a vaguely defined 'historic bloc'. If this 'historic bloc' was something of a fantasy (let alone a distortion of Gramsci), if the women's movement in which he seemed to place such hope would lose its way, if humanity as a whole failed to accept the political and ultimately religious challenge that he posed throughout the 1970s, then he is neither alone in advocating any of these things, nor should his politics disqualify him from the Marxist label, especially as he wishes to claim it. What is missing, however, is a theory, let alone a roadmap, of how humanity is supposed to carry out the political aspect of the project, especially in the short time that Garaudy thought available before some form of catastrophe was likely to ensue. When any cohesion or transformatory change fails to materialise from this or any other source, the political aspect of the project appears, to Garaudy at least, to have reached a dead end, symbolised by the abject failure of his own candidacy for the Presidency of the French Republic in 1981.

Garaudy had for so long, during his Marxist humanist phase, been forced to defend himself against accusations of revisionism, even defending Lenin by comparison to Stalin (Garaudy, 1968a), that an assertion of political revisionism was politically impossible, even if he was prepared to offer

socialist President Mitterrand the benefit of his advice on cultural matters (Garaudy, 1981d). Politically the project presents an at times ultra-leftist position, and at all times overt revisionism would have to remain a closed book. Garaudy's own past blocked the political way forward, and with it, necessitated the *a priori* rejection of any potential opportunity to integrate the project with the revisionist Marxist tradition, however potentially consistent with Christianity.

The challenge of the project is not however confined to extensive, if idiosyncratic, political revisions of Marxism, even going beyond the limitations of its 'positivism' (Garaudy, 1973e:64). The Christian component of the project had largely been hiding in plain sight during Garaudy's Marxist humanist phase, masquerading as mere description not belief (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:131]). Consistency between Marxism and Christianity had been part of Garaudy's praxis throughout his Marxist humanist phase and even before. To hold the two ends of the chain together had been his life's aim to date. Garaudy's project can therefore be envisaged as the consequence of his return to the Christian belief of his youth combined with revisionist Marxism, but this time as prophet rather than disciple.

As a Marxist humanist, 'Garaudy adhered to two distinct communities of thought, within which the interpretation of "Reality" varies, but there are also discourses that, although they express themselves in different terms, refer to similar ethical considerations. It is in this space of common words that Garaudy builds his life project'¹²¹ (Fleury, 2004:105), The claim remained, however, that, 'in contrast with all earlier forms of atheism, Marxism can integrate all the human aspirations which are to be found, in a mystified form, among believers' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:115]).

In the project, by distinction, the two communities *merge*, and the interpretation of 'reality' therefore also becomes one. Marxism no more subsumes Christianity than *vice versa*. Free from all

¹²¹ Garaudy adhère ainsi à deux communautés de pensée distinctes, à l'intérieur desquelles l'interprétation de la « réalité » varie, mais où l'on retrouve aussi des discours qui, bien qu'ils s'expriment en des termes différents, font référence à des considérations éthiques similaires. C'est dans cet espace de propos communs que Garaudy construit son projet de vie

the restrictions imposed by his former role in the PCF, Garaudy immediately muses that when true history begins, for Christians: 'That will be perhaps their real triumph: the moment when faith will be forever integrated into a complete conception of Man. In that sense, there will no longer be any Marxism either'¹²² (Garaudy, 1970c:174). But the problem is that the project then takes on a dream-like quality. Neither Biblical nor scientific, the criticism is easy to make that it runs a significant risk, that of blocking the participation of Christians of traditional beliefs and rejecting the 'grass roots' of Christianity as much as it excluded the admittedly already diminishing number of Marxist–Leninists. Ever alert to the problem of engagement, especially in the developing world, Garaudy takes care, within the project, to try for example to moderate the insistence on the purely mythological character of Christianity, but only by ignoring this amongst other issues of Christianity in practice altogether. By the time Garaudy critically evaluated evangelical Christianity from a political perspective, for example, it was as an outsider (Garaudy, 2000).

Even though Marxism and Christianity have joined forces within the project, success is not certain: Garaudy is under no illusion that 'The problem that arises today is whether Christianity and Marxism can be living components in the construction of a future with a human face'¹²³ (Garaudy, 1977b:11). This is in part a recognition that 'religions no longer live in splendid isolation from each other' (Fredericks, 1998: 171), which results in Garaudy finding himself eventually compelled to assign Christianity the role of one religion amongst others. This result had been anticipated. In what reads almost like a very prescient debate with Garaudy himself, the young Marx asked rhetorically: 'If you presume yourself raised so high above religion that you are entitled to separate its general spirit from its positive provisions, how can you reproach the philosophers if they carry out this separation completely and not halfway, if they call the general spirit of religion the human spirit, and not the Christian spirit?' (Marx, 1842 [1975:184]).

¹²² Ce sera peut-être leur vrai triomphe: le moment de la foi sera intégré pour toujours à une conception plénière de l'homme. En ce sens, il n'y aura plus de marxisme non plus

¹²³ El problema que hoy se plantea es saber si el cristianismo y el marxismo pueden ser componentes vivas en la construcción de un futuro con rostro humano

In that sense, Garaudy's project indeed calls the general gift of religion the human spirit. Though Christianity is being asked to donate two of its most important principles to Marxism, it is yet being asked to yield any position of pre-eminence amongst religions, a position that not only Christians may find difficult to accept, but also adherents of other faiths may find difficult to believe. Equally, however, Garaudy urges Marxists to accept what he argues Christianity offers, *and which Marxism must accept to survive*: the way to Heaven on Earth through subjectivity and the concomitant possibility of transcendence. These are the respective subjects of the two next chapters.

Chapter Four: The role of subjectivity in the project

Marxism in need of rescue

Whether in a doctoral thesis (Garaudy, 1955), analysing competing trends within French philosophy (Garaudy, 1959 [1969]), defending the influence of Hegel within Marxism (Garaudy, 1962), presenting a short history of Marxism (Garaudy, 1966 [1970]), in respect of the calculation of surplus value, in political tactics, or in philosophy, where he was noted as emphasising ‘our freedom to take our cultural tradition into our hands’ (Will, 1974:329), Garaudy as a Marxist humanist always stressed Marx’s anti-dogmatic thought. Garaudy’s reading of Marx, especially the early Marx, led him to the conclusion that Marxism was a philosophy of liberty and freedom, and therefore embraced ‘the contingency of historical hegemony’ (Garaudy, 1973:40). We therefore read him insisting, as much perhaps to his former comrades in the PCF as to a wider readership, that ‘a plurality of possible ways is conceivable and realisable, that the future is not a scenario already written without us, that we are not puppets, but fully responsible for our own history and for our own future’ (Garaudy, 1973:40–41).

No doubt intending to implicate Marxism–Leninism, Stalinism in particular, as well as structuralist Marxism, Garaudy argued that in any other determinist form, ‘there is a perversion of Marxism, a dogmatism unable to integrate the prophetic dimension of Man, that of artistic creation, that of love, that of faith’¹²⁴ (Garaudy, 1971:126). For Garaudy, the origins of this perversion of Marxism lay well before its inception, in a dichotomous and false view of Man, which, although prevalent since the Renaissance, can trace its origins back to Ancient Greece, through Galileo and Copernicus onto positivism and then to ‘From Auguste Comte to Durkheim, from Pavlov to Jacques

¹²⁴ Il y a là un indice irrécusable que l’on a affaire à une perversion du marxisme, à un dogmatisme? incapable d’intégrer la dimension prophétique de l’homme, celle de la création artistique, celle de l’amour, celle de la foi

Monod, from Hegel to Stalin: none ever concealed that they were systematically applying to Man the methods and laws that had been proven in the natural sciences'¹²⁵ (Garaudy, 1979:46; Robinson, 2004). Such positivism, 'the view that science consists simply in the observation of facts and the induction of laws from the regularities discovered in nature' (Cranston, 1970:14), had unfortunately dominated the Marxist–Leninist conception of science, which had as a result become a caricature of the dialectical materialism for which Garaudy no longer saw a place in Marxism. It was a diagnosis with which others of a different philosophical persuasion concurred: Sartre has been characterised as arguing that Marxism 'will degenerate into an inhuman anthropology if it insists on founding its teaching upon a dialectic of Nature instead of a dialectic of the individual' (Carpenter, 1982:245), in particular if it failed to reintegrate Man into itself as its foundation (Sartre, 1960:250).

Despite continued vigour as a political force, Marxism therefore stood in dire need of both a remedy for its positivism, and a new mechanism to explain and then to direct history. Only a Marxism that recaptured Marx's original project, but reinfused it with a strong subjective element, could achieve both tasks. In the most well-known formulation, existentialism was advanced as the solution, as it

'intends, without being unfaithful to Marxist principles, to find mediations which allow the concrete individual — the particular life, the real and actual conflict, the person — to emerge from the background of the general contradiction of productive forces and relations of production' (Sartre, 1957 [1963:57]).

This Chapter aims to show that Garaudy the Marxist humanist also set himself the task of identifying and selecting a similar, but different solution, which he claimed derived from Christianity, and how it was then carried over into the project in a greatly modified form.

¹²⁵ D'Auguste Comte en Durkheim, de Pavlov en Jacques Monod, de Hegel en Staline, on n'a jamais dissimulé que l'on appliquait consciemment à l'homme les méthodes et les lois qui avaient fait leurs preuves dans les sciences de la nature

Freedom: more advocated than analysed

For Garaudy, subjectivity, practice and freedom were always ‘the three great philosophical themes that concern Marxists’ (Garaudy, 1964 [1967:36]), even if historically Marxists had not focused on them. He early on addressed the question of human freedom (Garaudy, 1955). Here he argued that the recognition of causality, of necessity at the society level, was an essential first step to genuine liberty, a Hegelian view also taken by Marxists from Engels (1877 [1947]) on, as well as by the Frankfurt School (Hearfield, 2017) and by radical theologians, arguing for instance that the world is a realm where ‘necessity meets the possible’ (Moltmann, 1965 [2002:10]). Garaudy went on to try to demonstrate what the concepts of freedom meant in practical terms, not only in the actual patterns of practice observed in laws and customs, but as ideological tools and weapons playing roles in the struggles of contending groups (Somerville, 1956:273). He concluded that ‘Freedom road goes through the dictatorship of the proletariat’¹²⁶ (Garaudy, 1957:13). Then, in his lengthy treatise on Hegel (Garaudy, 1962), he placed Hegel in historical context, arguing that he can be seen as complementing Garaudy’s Marxist conception of freedom. Garaudy’s focus was on the evolution of Hegel’s thought in terms of the influence [upon it] of Rousseau, then Smith, and finally, ‘the theological transposition of his interests, following a loss of confidence in revolutionary ideals’ (Hodges, 1963:623), a process of change that uncannily, but perhaps not entirely accidentally, presaged the transformation of Garaudy’s own views in the project.

Garaudy’s philosophical writings may have provided a satisfactory etymological analysis of ‘freedom’, and it certainly has force, but neither his analysis of freedom itself nor his attempt to rehabilitate Hegel went to the heart of the debate between Christians and Marxists over individual self-determination, let alone moral responsibility. Both might even be taken as supporting the contention that ‘freedom and individuality are social products’ (Sayers, 1998:7), which can find no

¹²⁶ Le chemin de la liberté passait par la dictature du prolétariat

place in either the epistemology or the politics of the project. All Marxist analysis does here is point to freedom and its limits, and no one suggested that Garaudy had provided an entirely satisfactory explanation of the dichotomy between Marxist explanations of social change and individual agency.

Ambivalence towards freedom, and criticism, persisted into the project itself. Hence for example in relation to the question of individual freedom versus historical necessity, 'Garaudy prefers to delight in this mystery rather than give it a rational explanation' (Vree, 1976:155), e.g. in his remark that 'So, for Marx, Man and his history begin with the conscious purpose, the design, that has determined the chain of causality thereafter, without violating it'¹²⁷ (Garaudy, 1978a:138). Human freedom is therefore a crucial element of the project, yet Garaudy is content to be accused of an alleged looseness of thought with which neither Bloch (1959) nor Cranston (1970), no more than Sève (1978) or Momjan (1974), can have any sympathy. One can only wish that he had turned at least part of his attention more closely to the theoretical compatibility of individual freedom and self-determination on the one hand, and Marxist socio-economic analysis on the other, either as a Marxist humanist before launching the project, or at least as a parallel philosophical effort to the more polemical and popular work of his 'prophetic' period. As it was, he wrote separately on Marxism (Garaudy, 1977a, 1978a) to which some of the work of the project (e.g. Garaudy, 1977, 1979) did not refer. The role of levels of analysis was perhaps being asked to do too much work, a problem Coste suggests arises also with much of liberation theology and even the work of Christians such as Girardi (1970) engaged in the Marxist-Christian dialogue (Coste, 1973:125).

¹²⁷ So fängt für Marx der Mensch und seine Geschichte mit dem bewußten Zweck an, mit der Entwurf, der seither die Kette von Kausalitäten bestimmt, ohne sie zu verbrechen

Subjectivity and Marxist humanism

Quite early on, in *Perspectives de l'homme* (Garaudy, 1959 [1969]), he set out the objectives of his approach. Presenting Marx as a humanist, he aimed to free Marxism from a rigid determinism based on technical progress and the class struggle, thereby asserting subjectivity and human liberty. He was not alone in this: Marxist humanism was a global collection of theories (Fromm, 1967).

Mere human freedom to act, however much proven and well-integrated into a Marxist humanist framework for the understanding of social change, would not have sufficed for the project to achieve any political goals. So, from his Marxist humanist phase onwards, 'the problem of subjectivity, that is to say of human creative initiative continuing through history, takes centre stage'¹²⁸ (Perottino, 1969:6). Garaudy defined it thus:

'Subjectivity is in the first place the affirmation of the impossibility for the consciousness of being equated with itself. Even if consciousness can at times be equated with *being*, can make it transparent to itself, it cannot be equated with its own act by which it necessarily transcends and creates itself. Subjectivity, therefore, is of the order not of being but of *act*' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:85])¹²⁹.

By way of explanation, Garaudy volunteered later that: 'the subjective element of revolutionary action is not only the 'science' possessed by the theoreticians and the leaders, but also the 'historic initiative of the masses', not to be despised as 'spontaneity'' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:89]). Although Garaudy did not explicitly draw the parallel, 'Kierkegaard's insistence upon action and his denigration of abstract thought' (Garelick, 1965:1) is a distinction drawn along similar lines. Kierkegaard, Marx, Sartre — all would line up to agree with the importance of subjectivity in at least some form (Miller, 1982:174). But there are differences, at least whilst Garaudy's Marxist humanism presented a concept of

¹²⁸ Le problème de la subjectivité, c'est à dire de l'initiative de l'homme dans la création continue de son histoire, passe ainsi au premier plan

¹²⁹ L'impossibilité pour la conscience, de s'égaliser à soi. Si la conscience peut parfois s'égaliser à l'être, se le rendre transparent, elle ne peut s'égaliser à son acte par lequel nécessairement elle se transcende et se crée. La subjectivité n'est donc pas de l'ordre de l'être mais de l'ordre de l'acte (translation is by René Hague)

subjectivity as an explanation of liberty and an essential component of revolutionary change. As he set out to compare, in one of the last occasions that he would identify as an atheist:

‘If I try to find what for an atheist can be the equivalent of prayer for a believer, it seems to me that this is the moment when I realise that I am not, cannot be, only the culmination, the result, of my past, or of my instincts, of my habits, of my conformity, of my society, but where I realise that I can at each moment start again my life and my history, in conditions obviously determined in the past, but where I can take the initiative of a new departure’¹³⁰ (Garaudy, 1973a:396)

This is what he promoted as the ‘subjective’ element in Marxism. There is in Garaudy’s argument thus far a strong parallel between different subjectivities. On the one hand, there is that of the Marxist, one of self-awareness, a certain — no doubt limited, but identifiable — independence of action and thought based on class identity and political participation. On the other hand, there is that of a Christian, equally convinced that the future is not wholly determined, but lying in some way at the disposal of God, albeit that in some incomprehensible way human beings have also the capacity for self-determination. Marxist humanists were content to let the difference stand.

In the work of Marx, especially the early Marx, and even more especially now that early works were available — the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Marx, 1844 [1975]), but also *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Marx, 1847 [1976]) and *The German Ideology* (Marx & Engels, 1846 [1975]), even in Marx’s work on suicide (Plaut et al., 1999), Garaudy believed he had found ample proof of the accuracy of his characterisation of the importance of subjectivity to Marxism (Garaudy, 1963a). From this body of work, Garaudy the Marxist humanist drew conclusions on two fronts. First, that ‘Marx’s underlying thesis persists — from his first works to his last struggles’ (Garaudy, 1964 [1967:203]), a view that more recently has found support in the contention that ‘Marx’s later insights and proposals were arrived at, and in part explicated by or grasped through, his earlier ideas’ (Horowitz, 2014:455).

¹³⁰ Si j'essaie de chercher ce que peut être pour un athée l'équivalent de ce qu'est la prière pour un croyant, il me semble que c'est le moment où je prends conscience que je ne suis pas, ne peux pas être seulement l'aboutissement, la résultante de mon passé, ou de mes instincts, de mes habitudes, de mes conformismes, de ma société, mais où je prends conscience que je peux à chaque instant recommencer ma vie et mon histoire, dans des conditions évidemment déterminées par le passé, mais où je peux prendre l'initiative d'un nouveau départ

This view was in polemically sharp distinction to Althusser and those structuralist Marxists who supported him in advocating the ‘epistemological break’ in Marx’s thought (Althusser, 1965 [2005:221–247]), as well as contemporary ‘orthodox’ Marxist–Leninists (Vree, 1976:175; Miller, 1982:2), who still supported the vanguard role of the Communist Party (Vree, 1976:122). Second, that Engels was right to insist that ‘Marx’s theory of history never pretended to determine — economically or otherwise — what individuals would do. The greatest latitude was allowed for the variety of personal motivation’ (Engels, 1886 [1996:49]; Sowell, 1963:121),

For Garaudy the Marxist humanist, there was therefore ample proof of this subjectivity in Marxism within the work of the early Marx himself — only published, it must be recalled, just over two decades before Garaudy began to write on the subject. It just needed to be demonstrated and accepted by Marxists themselves so that it could be co-opted as the philosophical underpinning of politics for a socialist society suitable for the economic and political conditions of 20th Century Europe.

There were two problems with this reliance on Marx for Garaudy and other Marxist humanists that followed chronologically. First, everyone on the Left did not agree, as the well-documented *theoretical* rebellion of the structuralist Marxists started and led by Althusser against Marxist humanist ideas demonstrated (Althusser, 1965 [2005]). This was especially evident within the PCF in the contest between Garaudy and his opponents discussed above in Chapter Three. But second, at least for Garaudy after his expulsion from the PCF, the perception that Marxism had despite his efforts still not moved sufficiently in the direction of appreciating the *practical* importance of subjectivity, and indeed that the PCF appeared to fail to understand it altogether. *Philosophically*, therefore he now sought a broader base for subjectivity than the contested narrative over Marx’s own views of subjectivity. His response, as analysed below, was to seek a theory of agency that spanned Marxism and Christianity. Politically, he now sought a wider base of support, which include Christians as before, but this time bereft of Party leadership. Here already is the core of the first important role Garaudy envisaged for Christianity in enriching Marxism, of providing the missing element that had prevented

the success of revolutions in the past and lay at the missing heart of the failure of the Soviet state socialist experiment.

'L'homme' in Garaudy

Subjectivity needs a subject, just as agency needs an agent. Garaudy needed that subject, but there appeared to him nowhere within Marxism to turn. At ease with social and economic categories, especially class, Marxism undoubtedly struggled with the alleged absence of a theory of individuality from the outset — and arguably still does (De Paiva & Oliveira, 2018:1795). Questions of personality, let alone of character, were to be evaded, and psychology was treated with suspicion (Sève, 1969 [1978:11]). Even sympathetic criticism of Marxism frequently focused on its alleged incomprehension of personality and tried helpfully to develop for it a philosophy of Man, suggesting for example that Marxism is in some ways quite gender inclusive (Plamenatz, 1975) or reaching out to psychoanalysis to develop a theory of character (Fromm, 1949:54–55). There were notable exceptions: Lev Vygotsky (1927) was the inspiration for the cultural-historical school, whilst Marxists such as Georges Politzer (1928 [1994]), Henri Wallon (1951 [1972]), Jean Desanti (1947), Henri Lefebvre (Kipfer et al., 2015) and Lucien Sève (1969, [1978], 2008) all refused in varying ways and across different disciplines to concede that Marx could play no role in psychology, as have critical psychologists (e.g. Parker, 2009).

In the absence of clarity, arguments ensued between Marxists, including within the PCF. They may today seem tendentious, and even ethically inappropriate given the state of the world and the need for action. But they were very much alive at the time that Garaudy attempted to align Marxism and Christianity, and immediately beforehand, and they were perceived as having a direct bearing on the question of the status of the Soviet Union and the future of Marxism. Garaudy was a key player

within them. This was no more so than in respect of the relationship between Marxism and psychology, and the philosophy of Man within Marxism (Geerlandt, 1978:14).

Whatever the precise relationship between capitalist forms of economic relations, private property, and alienation, the socialist humanists, for example Schaff, held that 'the central problem of socialism — of any socialism — and Marx's socialism in particular — is the problem of Man'. (Schaff, 1967:129). In his most well-known work on the subject (Schaff, 1965 [1970]), which emerged while Garaudy was attempting to hold the line within the PCF, Schaff claimed that after the publication of Marx's early works, there was 'a deliberate desire to replace the scientific motivation of Marxism with an ethical, humanist one' (Schaff, 1965 [1970:15]). A limited autonomy, however, based on social relations to be specifically contrasted in turn with the solitude of existential freedom, as for example presented by Sartre (1943), whose existential cure for the ails of Marxism (Sartre, 1960; Birchall, 2005), the Marxist humanist Garaudy consistently thought as bad as the disease (Garaudy, 1947:79, 1966a). It was indeed criticised elsewhere as attempting not to fall into the errors of vulgar Marxism, which also loses sight of the individual (Schaff, 1967:131), and succeeds only in *replacing* Marxism with individual freedom (Aron, 1969:48), the end result being described as 'an odd amalgam of existentialism and Leninism that raised more questions than it answered.' (Miller, 1982: 172).

The debate was central to the question of ideology within the PCF. For both sides of the debate, individual human beings become something, somebody, in their collective context, itself explained best by Marx. In its turn, in standing for the unity of theory and practice, psychology can present a meaningful future for Man (Riepe, 1961:127). But psychology as a science, even if there were Marxists in the fold, was insufficient to resolve the debate. So, whilst socialist humanists agreed that personality was 'the defining factor of a real individual, peculiar to the individual' (Schaff, 1965 [1970:94]), their doctrinal Marxist critics tried to develop a philosophy of personality based on social labour (Sève, 1969 [1978]). For Sève, at least in his earlier writing, personality was a function of fundamentally economic relations between people (Sève, 1969 [1978:347]), in particular labour, as

for Marxists, 'work is a basic human need' (Sayers, 1998:5). The distinction had political as well as philosophical significance: even Garaudy's critics remembered that Lenin believed the Communist Party should be open to all workers, irrespective of their individual religious beliefs (Casanova, 1966:7).

For Garaudy, the question of individuality within Marxism therefore became not only philosophically central, but also politically urgent, given debates within the PCF and the rise of the Althusserian anti-humanist current. His response was to develop nothing less bold than a Marxist conception of Man. Garaudy argued that 'I am conscious of this I only through the presence of others in me' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:97]). This was not to deny individuality: 'once it has emerged, Garaudy insists that the "I" is just as real as the "We"'. Man is therefore *both* a social and an individual animal' (Cranston, 1970:16). But it was to defend against existentialist negativity: Garaudy would surely have agreed that 'Sartre (1954) got it wrong: Other people are not our hell; they are our hope' (Sampson, 2000:1431).

So far, and in such abstract, general terms, Garaudy and the socialist humanists travelled together. They believed, at least after he and so many others recognised the dead-end of Marxism-Leninism, that Marxism had lost its way. The gap at the centre of Marxism that Sartre had so pointedly identified looked all too real to Garaudy and to all of those who sided with him in the long debate against structural Marxism and even the remnants of dogmatism within the PCF. Garaudy's insistence on the importance of subjectivity, and the importance of the individual that underlay it, may have been polemical, but it was not unique, nor did he engage in war on all fronts. Subjectivity in economics, history or psychology remained untouched. For example, he never engaged with Sève over the development of the personality in adult life, except insofar as he is in agreement with him and Soviet activity theorists such as Leontiev (1979) that the personality is not present at the beginning of a human life, but rather, emerges through actions as a biography, for proof of which he does not hesitate to offer himself at length and repeatedly as an example (Garaudy, 1975). He certainly never

lost sight of his *own* individuality, regarding the disparity between the different worlds of his upbringing and education that he concurrently inhabited in his youth as ‘a binding necessity, taken up as the responsibility of a free and lonely choice’¹³¹ (Garaudy, 1957:9). Garaudy identified the importance of individual decision-making in his own early life — that he was brought up in an atheist family, yet chose to become a Christian, and that his family was politically conservative, yet he joined the PCF. As he himself wrote much later to emphasise the subjective element of political participation, not for the first time and not even the last:

‘Thrown into this convulsive universe and my heart full of thunderstorms, I made two decisions to which I was not bound by any tradition: my parents were religious atheists, yet I chose to become a Christian. My parents on the political front were traditionalist, yet I adhered, in 1933, to the French Communist Party’¹³² (Garaudy, 1985:250).

In successive books he did not therefore let others forget his far from ordinary biography, although the autobiographical component of his work was much to the chagrin of his critics, who implicitly charged him with self-absorption as well as explicitly of inconsistency. All this Garaudy provided as evidence that there is no such thing as a self-sufficient individual personality. Autobiography may be interesting, but it is far from demonstrating that a theory of subjectivity can succeed in banishing individualism in the existentialist sense, whilst at the same preserving the concept of the individual from the attack of Marxist structuralists. Even his most supportive recent intellectual biographer concurs: ‘The repetition of these self-justifying autobiographical fragments in many of his works attests to the need to respond to the equally consistent accusations of fickleness or inconsistency’¹³³ (Gauvin, 2018:44) and to ‘that eclecticism, for which he was so often reproached, an eclecticism that

¹³¹ nécessité contraignante et assumé dans la responsabilité d’un choix libre et solitaire

¹³² Jeté dans cet univers convulsif et le cœur plein d’orages, je pris deux décisions auxquelles je n’étais porté par aucune tradition : mes parents étaient sur le plan religieux athées, et je choisis de devenir chrétien. Mes parents sur le plan politique étaient traditionalistes, et j’adhérais, en 1933, au Parti Communiste Français

¹³³ La répétition de ces fragments autobiographiques auto-justificateurs dans nombre de ses ouvrages atteste de ce besoin de répondre aux accusations non moins récurrentes de versatilité ou d’inconsistance

led him to take an interest in subjects as diverse as painting, theatre, the novel or dance'¹³⁴ (Gauvin, 2018:69).

Garaudy also relied on what has been described as 'a schema of apprehension of the 'reality' which stems mainly from the thought of Blondel, Marx and Kierkegaard' (Fleury, 2004:103). From Blondel, Garaudy derived the key idea that 'Humans are not beings who only act, but are the sources of creative, original action as well' (Grumett, 2010:508). Garaudy may have *suppressed* this view during his years of supposed Stalinist orthodoxy (Garaudy, 1955) but Blondel's theory of action later became one of the constituent elements of the project. 'Blondel seemed in his eyes to resolve the contradiction between the requirement of rationality carried by philosophy, in particular Marxism, which he had begun to read at that time, and a faith intended to escape the concept'¹³⁵ (Gauvin, 2018: 122).

Garaudy's project surely runs the risk here of losing its Marxism: Sève denounced Garaudy for replacing 'the materialist definition of the human essence by a mere relational conception of the individual' (Sève, 1969 [1978:160fn). This criticism had force, notwithstanding that Sève himself moved on from it in his own later work to something closer to just that (Sève, 2008). Theologians (Shults, 2003; Shults & Sandage, 2006; Kelsey, 2009) have drawn similarly on what Moltmann (1981) recognised as a relational understanding of individuality. But there is equally nothing to isolate either Garaudy's argument or theirs as uniquely Christian. In particular, relational theorists from Macmurray (1961) to more recent contributions sited in the legal concept of autonomy (Oshana, 1988; Nedelsky 2011) see no reason to accept a specifically Marxist concept of personality, let alone one so directly and precisely tied to the division of labour as sketched out by Sève (1978:347).

¹³⁴ cet éclectisme qui lui a été si souvent reproché, éclectisme qui l'a conduit à s'intéresser à des sujets aussi divers que la peinture, le théâtre, le roman ou la danse

¹³⁵ Blondel semble à ses yeux résoudre la contradiction entre l'exigence de rationalité portée par la philosophie et singulièrement le marxisme dont il aborde la lecture à cette époque et une foi sensée échapper au concept

The alienated personality

For Garaudy the Marxist humanist, anything other than a Marxist analysis fails to grasp what is an essential point: Man is not alienated from an abstract supernatural God or from an equally abstract reflection of himself; he is alienated from other men through capitalism. Both socialist humanists such as Fromm and Marcuse, notwithstanding disagreements between them, agreed upon 'This conception of man [which] aims to make multi-dimensional man triumph over one-dimensional man, shaped by the division and endless subdivision of labour, and reduced to nothing more than the *homo economicus*, simply a producer and a consumer'¹³⁶ (Garaudy, 1976:180). Neither the Marxist humanist nor the prophetic Garaudy would disagree that:

'Man has become alienated from his work, from his fellow man, and from himself; he transforms himself into a thing, occupied with production and consumption. Unconsciously he feels anxious, lonely, and confused, because he has lost the sense of the meaning of life and the conviction of who he is and what he lives for' (Fromm, 1970:x).

For the early Marx at least (Wendling, 2009:13), and arguably as a central theme throughout his work (Held, 2009:137), as for Garaudy, alienation is not a moral but an historical category, a drama played out in the social, principally economic, relations of real individuals, in the relationship between each man and other men (Marx, 1844 [1975:281–3]). Hence for example the claim that the contemporary French education system 'destroys personality rather than creating it' (Garaudy, 1972 [1974:17]). By this Garaudy meant the socialisation of the child in relation to their future role in the production system or the State. It is equally not surprising to find that Garaudy the Marxist humanist presented this definition:

'Alienation is the opposite of creation. That is why the alienation of labour, if it is not the sole alienation, is root of all others. It is this that corrupts, at its very source, work, that is, the essence of all creative man'. (Garaudy, 1964 [1970:61]).

¹³⁶ Cette conception de l'homme vise à faire triompher l'homme multidimensionnel contre l'homme unidimensionnel, modelé par la division et la subdivision sans fin du travail, et réduit à n'être plus que « l'homo economicus », simplement producteur et consommateur

He does not find it necessary, though, as did Fromm, to locate the source of the idea of alienation in the Old Testament concept of idolatry (Fromm, 1961:39), although he does reflect that Marxism can provide historical, social and militant context to the 'desalienation' that the refusal of idolatry at its commencement represents (Garaudy, 1972a:13). There is little to distinguish Garaudy's position here, especially on the direction of causality between private property and alienation (Garaudy 1964 [1967:62]) from that of the socialist humanists, who followed Marx and before him Babeuf and others in arguing that private property denies individual development and prevents the flowering of ideal individuals, 'all-round accomplishments whose full development is not hampered by the prevailing social relations with their various forms of alienation' (Schaff, 1965 [1970:91]). This even though Marx himself was more of the view that 'though private property appears to be the reason, the cause of alienated labour, it is rather its consequence' (Marx, 1844 [1975:282]).

At root here is both an economism and an optimism that lie at the root of Marxism, including any psychology that takes Marxism as a whole seriously. The Marxist concept of alienation has therefore not gone without criticism. On the one hand it is held to account for allegedly ignoring the many relations between people that are not economic, such as family and gender (Leonard, 1984:100). On the other, it is castigated for 'systematically ignoring the possibility of an unfetishized subjectivity' (Hannay, 1995:164); Marx might simply have been wrong to locate alienation entirely, or even mainly, in the issue of labour, or even that he did not make this clear (Churchich, 1990:16). Whilst his opponents within the PCF may have been susceptible to this criticism, Garaudy himself was very much alive even as a Marxist humanist to the limitations of doctrinal Marxism in analysing and overcoming alienation, recognising early on that 'As long as the communist society has not been built up, roots of various forms of alienation continue to exist in socialism' (Novack, 1970:12). This escape from economism was later to lead to the inclusion of aesthetics (Garaudy, 1974) race, religion and culture (Garaudy, 1973e, 1978), and feminism (Garaudy, 1981) in the broad sweep of his project. Far from maintaining that only the proletariat held true knowledge about the world, 'Garaudy argued that all classes and all peoples potentially possess knowledge that may be useful to humanity in its struggle

to overcome alienation. In addition, he specified that the way to access this knowledge and to make use of it practically was through dialogue and collective action' (Lewis, 2007:144).

Historical Initiative

Garaudy's principal motivation in his identification of subjectivity as the key to Marxism was his belief that, to be true to the vision of Marx himself, and certainly to succeed politically, Marxism needed to transcend both dialectical materialism and determinist historical materialism, both provided by Marxism–Leninism through a distortion of its Hegelian ancestry. 'The ultimate end of all our actions and all our battles as militant communists is to make every man a [true] man, that is to say a creator, a centre of historical initiative and of creation on the economic and political plane, on the plane too, of culture and love, on the spiritual plane — to use an idiom that is not ours' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:146]).

As one of Garaudy's apologists put it in advocating consistency for subjectivity within the entire corpus of Garaudy's work, 'At every step it is necessary to take a decision, a historic initiative, involving risk and responsibility'¹³⁷ (Reynaud, 2015: n.p.). Garaudy therefore — despite his sympathetic critique (Garaudy, 1977a:103–114) — replaced historical materialism with historical initiative, a method derived, he claimed, from the young Marx (Garaudy, 1965:63). But for historical initiative to come alive as a real, historical force for revolutionary change, there was an urgent need for Garaudy to identify individuals to populate it, both theoretically and in practice.

No doubt in the political aspect of the project, Garaudy's ontology of class and social groups deviated very substantially from anything a Marxist–Leninist might recognise. As we have seen in Chapter Three, his faith was pinned on international 'youth', claiming that they 'are working out a great alternative' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:10]), and on a 'new historic bloc', a concept overtly derived

¹³⁷ A chaque pas il est requis de prendre une décision, une initiative historique, dans le risque et la responsabilité

from Gramsci's adaption of Sorel (Sotiris, 2018:99), the assorted agents of change analysed above in Chapter Three. For Garaudy, membership of the new historic bloc is still a collective question of occupation, but although its origins, development and membership may be objective, he stressed the subjective element in its role, not least in self-management itself (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:160]).

For Garaudy the Marxist humanist, there was therefore no doubt already that a full recognition of not only the existence of the individual, but of individual responsibility and significance in history, were necessary requirements for any kind of successful radical politics. In outlining his project, he went further to argue that 'spontaneity is an invaluable aid in banishing the illusion that Man can achieve authenticity and happiness from an outside source' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:24]). It is not going too far to suggest that for the Garaudy of the 'prophetic' period, the individual has actually *substituted* — not for Marxism itself, as in Aron's charge against Sartre noted above — but for the Party. 'Everyone can contribute to this process ... can suggest how to coordinate all these individual efforts ... This is how each individual can become a creative source of the future ... it is not a matter of creating a party, but a spirit' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:204]).

The distinction is clear between Garaudy's single-minded emphasis on the individual and the dual fidelity of a liberation theologian such as Gutiérrez's — both to Man's responsibility for his own destiny which will result in 'the creation of a new Man and a qualitatively different society' (Gutiérrez, 1973:25) and to the Bible, which presents liberation — salvation — in Christ as the total gift. The observation that 'Gutiérrez is open to the criticism that the dual fidelity brings an irreconcilable situation, a real predicament' (Rondón, 2002:45) is one of many similar criticisms of the divided loyalty of liberation theology. 'For if radical transformation and real liberation (salvation) represent 'something humans must go out and earn for themselves [then] it cannot be a 'total gift', a logical contradiction from which he cannot free himself (Vree, 1984:211). For Garaudy, however, it follows that 'Each individual must count himself *personally responsible* [my emphasis] for this new model of democracy' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:167]). This responsibility has no associated judgement: in

advocating choice and suggesting freedom of action, Garaudy was aware throughout his 'prophetic' period — it is fair to say, increasingly aware — of the distinct possibilities that outcomes may not be optimal, either from his own point of view or those adversely affected. But with neither a Party nor a supernatural God as arbiter, there would seem to be no penalty for failure beyond the individual themselves.

A universal human essence

Garaudy was to defend the Marxist humanist concept of the individual, and that of a universal human essence, against the Althusserian attack (Althusser, 1965 [2005]) and even that of Sève (1978), to the point where it became a *leitmotif* of the debate between revisionist elements within the PCF and their opponents. Both Garaudy and his critics start with a rather general concept of 'social selves', shared by other Marxists from Vygotsky to Sève (e.g. Burkitt, 1991, 2008). At the time Garaudy wrote, however, what became the flashpoint of the debate within the PCF, and more widely, was whether he and fellow Marxist humanists, such as Fromm, were relying on an abstract and ideological concept of Man, which critics denounced (Márkus, 1978 [2014:8]). In particular, an extended polemic developed between Sève, Garaudy and Schaff surrounding the precise meaning of the *VI Thesis on Feuerbach*. When Marx argued that 'the essence of Man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations' (Marx, 1845 [1975:4]), was he was engaging in metaphorical polemic (Schaff, 1971:164) or writing in deadly earnest (Sève, 2008:43–47)? All agreed that 'tying Marx's conception of history to his philosophical anthropology' (Jaffe, 2015:39) was desirable: but they disagreed on what both were.

That the Marxist humanists believed in a universal human essence is a matter of record: 'The whole concept of humanity and of humanism is based on the idea of a human nature in which all men

share' (Fromm, 1962:27); 'The ideal type of man, the image of true man, is at the basis of all aspirations in the human world' (Schaff, 1965 [1970:89]). To the fact that Garaudy too did have a concept of the essence of 'Man', independent of class or of individuality, numerous of his texts similarly attest: his advocacy of Fichte as a major influence on Marx is one example: yet this is couched in terms that any materialist might at least recognise as their own, that 'the primacy of essence was advanced vis-à-vis the a priori theological or anthropological "definition' of Man'" (Garaudy, 1964 [1967:36]). The polemical appeal being made shines clearly through Garaudy's own writing on the subject: 'No greater mistake, again, than to believe that Man does not exist for Marxism, that what does exist is a sum of social relations, that men are not the subject of history but only the effects and the props of a sum of social relations' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:148–149]). Hence, 'although he recognised the legitimacy of structuralism as a scientific method for analysing various aspects of human and social reality, he rejected the claims of Althusser and Foucault that it was a philosophy which could give an exhaustive account of both, without adhering to a poststructuralist view such as Lyotard or Derrida' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.).

Why did this matter? If the socialist humanists were right, then even if an individual were the sum of their social relations, then the human essence, whatever it might be, could be preserved from any reductionism. Individuals mattered. This might lead to greater political emphasis on the individual, as to a significant extent, the philosophical debate over Man was a metaphor for the political direction of the PCF and Communist Parties more widely. If the latter, then there was no room for a human essence beyond social relations (Turner, 2013:815). This was to be of great importance for the project, which relied on subjectivity for its agency.

It was however for Garaudy, unlike for Fromm or other socialist humanists, Christianity that first presented this idea of a universal human essence (Geerlandt, 1978:14), notwithstanding the fact that as Michel Simon pointed out at Argenteuil, this idea did not drop out of the sky independently of any terrestrial cause, it was an historical product of capitalism (Geerlandt, 1978:14). Apart from the

political implications, for Garaudy no essence independent of actual social relations would mean no opening where a soul might get in, and therefore no room for subjectivity, however much an individual may participate in distinctive sociocultural, geographical, and historically contingent relationships and environmental contexts (Turner, 2013: 813). For Garaudy, the idea of a universal human essence served as a useful shorthand for the uniqueness of humanity, the possibility of individual relationships with God and other men, and implicitly, and in sharp contrast with much Marxist–Leninist practice, the need for Marxists to treat individual human beings with respect and dignity. But for Sève (1969 [1978]) and other of Garaudy’s critics, let alone for Marxist structuralists, the invention of a universal human essence was not only entirely unnecessary, and in complete contradiction to the *VI Thesis on Feuerbach* (Marx, 1845 [1975]) and the epistemological break that he defined as Marxism, but philosophically and politically wrong: it deprived Marxism of its critical focus on economics and class, and placed an emphasis on the abstract, which could only end in abandonment of the Marxist project altogether (Althusser & Balibar, 1965; Poster, 1974:399).

Garaudy’s project, in complete distinction, grants to Christianity the capacity to transform Marxism by giving it the universal essence of man. Indeed, he can find it nowhere else. But this universal essence must be carefully regulated within the project. Garaudy himself had long been in sympathy with Hegel’s impact on Marxism in general, and in particular what has been described as his replacement of the Cartesian individual with ‘a collective subject, more or less trans-individual’¹³⁸ (Goldman, 1970:185), paralleled by the view that ‘Marxism involves a Hegelian historicist account of human nature’ (Sayers, 1998:3). Garaudy’s argument, that Marx’s conception of the species–essence is to be found in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Marx, 1844 [1975]), whilst by no means finding unanimous agreement amongst Marxists, has found significant and continued support (e.g. Mulhall, 1998:9; Czank, 2012:317). But Garaudy would still have had to give short shrift to anything resembling a conservative Hegelian psychology (e.g. Martensen, 2004:73–147). And there could still

¹³⁸ un sujet collectif ou tout au moins transindividuel

be no room within the project for any Absolute Personality as the historical realisation of divine Spirit in a personal unity of subjective will and divine will (Walsh, 2018:18), no concession that human beings are mere modifications of Substance (Thompson, 2004:230), and therefore no 'ethical life'¹³⁹ in any politically conservative sense of the term. If Christianity is to give something specific to Marxism, it could be contained within a universal human essence, but such an essence cannot include a politically conservative psychology.

Christian subjectivity in the project

Even for Garaudy the Marxist humanist, subjectivity took an historical form, inextricably linked with the origin of Christianity and the development of the idea of Man beyond that of a fragment of the cosmos and a member of a community. Indeed 'the birth of Christianity is the most powerful example of this emergence of the problem of subjectivity during the total collapse of the Greco-Roman order'¹⁴⁰. (Perottino, 1969:29). For Garaudy, St. Augustine, however much a precursor of the institutional Church he detested, was also responsible for 'the assimilation into Christianity, in a radically new synthesis, the heritage of oriental mysticism, Judaic prophetism, Greek philosophy and Roman organisation'¹⁴¹ (Perottino, 1969:30). This argument, Perottino noted, was originally developed in Garaudy (1949:273–300) and expressed again in similar form in Garaudy (1966 [1970:130]). For Garaudy, it was Christianity that introduced subjectivity:

'While for Greek humanism Man is a fragment of the universe and a member of the city, Christianity, following Judaism, emphasised the possibility for Man of beginning a new future; it stressed the element of subjectivity in man's life. Between action coming from the external world in order to deal with this threat, lies consciousness at its various levels: pain and effort, quest and dream, hope and love, danger and decision. That is what subjectivity means.

¹³⁹ Sittlichkeit

¹⁴⁰ la naissance du christianisme est l'exemple le plus saisissant de cette émergence du problème de la subjectivité lors de l'écroulement total de l'ordre gréco-romain

¹⁴¹ l'assimilation au christianisme, dans une synthèse radicalement nouvelle, de l'héritage du mysticisme oriental, du prophétisme juif, de la philosophie hellénique, et de l'organisation romaine

Christianity has accumulated a rich store of experience on this plane, from St. Augustine to Kierkegaard, from Pascal and Racine to Claudel, while elaborating, in its adoption of the neo-Platonist themes of renunciation of the external world, the doctrines of fatalism and resignation' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:134]).

It is worth presenting the counter-argument, that 'the Christian idea of freedom has very much the same features as the concept of freedom in the cities of ancient Greece' (Brinkman, 2003:11), but perhaps the limitation of this freedom to equality before the law for citizens and a denial of equal treatment for others serves to reinforce Garaudy's argument that it took Christianity to transcend a very limited Greek view of freedom. Garaudy himself never engaged in debate over the correctness or otherwise of his assertion.

Contemporaneously, socialist humanists in Poland, Yugoslavia, the Czech Republic and in the West, especially those who participated in the Marxist–Christian dialogue during the 1960s, were very prepared to debate such issues as freedom, alienation, culture, ethics, and philosophy in general. But as evidenced by the contributions by Schaff, Marcuse and others to an anthology of Socialist Humanism (Fromm, 1967) they all stayed firmly within the secular tradition of Marxism; unlike Garaudy, they found no need for Christianity to develop a theory of the individual that they, at least, believed wholly compatible with Marxism. So although Schaff, for example, argued, in language that sounds very similar to Garaudy, that:

'when the problem of the individual receives its proper place in the system of Marxist thought, it is possible to introduce this subjective element in the field of knowledge, a psychological factor in sociology and an individual factor in politics — without which all these fields might easily be treated in a mechanical and simplified manner' (Schaff, 1965 [1970:37])

his position with respect to Christianity was negative. He overtly counterposed a Marxist concept of human autonomy with the human individual as the product or emanation of superhuman forces, a 'typically religious approach' of which an example is 'Catholic personalism' (Schaff, 1967:130), insisting that 'there is no person as a spiritual unity who can be distinguished from the individual as a real being' (Schaff, 1965 [1970:95]). Thus:

'when anthropology starts from an ultra-human world — God, supernatural forces, the Absolute Idea, a world of objective values, etc. — Man is not its point of departure but a point

of arrival. It then has a theocentric character when (as is usual in traditional anthropologies) it is based on a religious faith, or, more broadly, a heteronomous one when what is implied is the influence of an ultrahuman factor that is not necessarily supernatural in the traditional sense of the word' (Schaff, 1965 [1970:101]).

Schaff therefore publicly distanced himself from Garaudy's anthropology (Schaff, 1971:161). This demonstrated a hard truth, for Garaudy: socialist humanists were not aiming to align Marxism with Christianity, let alone make them congruent, even though their attack was on something of a straw man: for Kierkegaard, for instance, 'Not for a single moment is it forgotten that the subject is an existing individual, and that existence is a process of becoming' (Kierkegaard, 1846 [2019:176]). It may have been coveted ground for all involved, but the socialist humanists believed they had no need of spiritual allies to help them occupy it. Marxists, even most socialist humanists, had therefore no need of Christianity. Existentialists such as Sartre (1946 [1955]) were equally keen to celebrate individual freedom, but with the same limitations, the end result being described as 'an odd amalgam of existentialism and Leninism that raised more questions than it answered.' (Miller, 1982: 172).

The insistence by Schaff and others that a Christian conception of individuality would always fail the humanist test therefore meant a parting of the ways. For Garaudy, as for the socialist humanists, the role of the individual was always central to the Marxist project. Yet whereas they remained as consistently secular as mainstream critics such as Sève as well as their structuralist Althusserian opponents, in Garaudy's work in his earliest theoretical publications (Garaudy, 1949:273–300) as well as later works as a Marxist humanist (1968d; Garaudy & Lauer, 1968) 'there is continuity in the appreciation of what Christianity brings to the conception of Man' (Perottino, 1969:26). And this was that 'Christianity, as an extension of Judaism — Roger Garaudy will emphasize it constantly — emphasized the possibility for Man to start a new future, that is to say has put the accent on the subjective moment of the life of Man.'¹⁴² (Geerlandt, 1978:13). This was to such an extent that his protector in the PCF, Maurice Thorez, had to forgive him his 'gaps' in orthodoxy, in particular, his

¹⁴² Le christianisme, dans le prolongement de judaïsme — Roger Garaudy le soulignera constamment —, a mis l'accent sur la possibilité pour l'homme de commencer un nouvel avenir, c'est-à-dire a mis l'accent sur le moment *subjectif* de la vie de l'homme

formulas tending to rehabilitate 'the best of Christian culture' in his writings on Christianity¹⁴³ (Gauvin, 2018:243).

Ultimately intensely problematic for the project, which was to incorporate and broaden these 'gaps in orthodoxy', would be any accusation that the principle of individuation is a philosophical *problem* unique to, or at least induced by, Christianity itself (Weber, 1906 [2001]) and then exported to colonised societies via Christianity (Bastide, 1973). In response, contemporary anthropologists suggest that distinctions, such as between porous and buffered selves (Taylor, 2007:33), and concepts such as dividuality (Smith, 2012: 51) and fractality (Bialecki & Diswani, 2015:274) may yet rescue Christian individuality from possessive individualism. If either of these rescue attempts proves a slip, there is evidently a threat to the project, as Chapter Six will discuss.

Faced with these threats, in what does this Christian subjectivity that Garaudy claims for the project consist? One possibility might be, given Garaudy's admitted debt to Kierkegaard, that Christian subjectivity could be the voice of conscience, the strong arm by which eternity takes hold of each one separately and sets each person apart as a single individual before God. For Christianity has 'made every relationship between men a matter of conscience' (Kierkegaard, 1847 [1941:110]). Sartre would acknowledge a debt of this kind, amongst others (Grooten, 1952:65). Other possibilities might be to recognise some kind of life-view, the transformation of personal experience into a confident approach to the love of God in Christ, to rely at least in part on ethics, the amalgamation of the particular and the universal as the ethical goal worth striving for in Christ, reviewed in Chapter Seven, or perhaps subjectivity could be better located in the imitation of Christ (Walsh, 2018:131).

Kierkegaard's subjectivity in particular has been characterised as containing four elements:

(1) a passionate concern for one's being, which is threatened by death, relating one at all times to the concern;

¹⁴³ formules tendant à réhabiliter « le meilleur de la culture chrétienne » dans ses écrits sur le christianisme

(2) an adherence to anything which the individual finds edifying;

(3) an isolation in freedom and an uncertainty of even possessing subjectivity;

(4) it is a suffering which is masked from the world (Garelick, 1965:27).

Was this what Garaudy meant by subjectivity? It would not seem so, as *none* of these principles finds a place in Garaudy's project, where the imitation of Christ, rather than as in Kierkegaard being a movement from 'the outward to the inward' (Welstead, 2014:815) takes on an altogether more social and therefore less existentialist form. His attitude to death is one key difference: for Garaudy, 'My own death is a constant reminder that my project is not an individual project' (Garaudy, 1975:47). This links to the second: we should understand that, 'in Christianity a man can be constituted as Man only through dialogue and communion with the other person'¹⁴⁴ (Garaudy, 1979:170). As a Marxist, Garaudy would not expect any individual choice to be acceptable, and he never suggested it. Other Marxists were more strident and criticised the Kierkegaardian vision overtly, for example responding to Kierkegaard by castigating this 'permanent carnival of fetishized inwardness' (Lukács, 1948:84), arguing in terms familiar to any doctrinal Marxist that only the shared experience of the proletariat could actually transcend that finitude (Hannay, 1995:163). So where does Garaudy stand? Agreement with Lukács in principle, in rejecting any kind of subjectivity that does not involve a collectivity, but disagreement in practice, fortified by a more nuanced perception of the possibilities of collective action than found in Lukács's dependence on the ontological categories of Marxism–Leninism. Finally, nowhere does Garaudy suggest that individuals are either isolated in freedom, characterised by a failure to believe in their own subjectivity, or that subjectivity identified as suffering should be concealed. On the contrary. the optimism which suffuses his work in the 'prophetic period', 'what the young demand' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:13]) is a denial of both silence and uncertainty. The evidence therefore suggests that Garaudy's subjectivity was quite distinct from that of Kierkegaard.

¹⁴⁴ dans le christianisme l'homme ne peut se constituer comme homme que par le dialogue et la communion avec l'autre

Love: the Christian dimension of the individual

Garaudy the Marxist humanist, keen to acknowledge the importance of the subjective element in Marxism, was equally keen to accept the 'gift' of subjectivity from Christianity, along with its underlying concepts of the individual and of a universal human essence. But once the project began, Garaudy wanted Christianity to do much more than just provide a theoretical ontology of the individual and subjectivity to balance traditional Marxist ideas of class. He sought epistemological confirmation as well. If Garaudy is to assert that Christianity brings subjectivity to Marxism, if 'even the way of approaching the problem of subjectivity is specific to Christianity' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970: 133]), what is that way?

Put another way, how are subjectivity, and the desire for change implicit in the project, actually characterised? Surely not all individual human relations count? So which ones do? In his version of Existential Marxism, Sartre suggested that it would be impossible to build the future 'on the basis of individuals largely bereft of such sociable attributes as compassion and trust' (Miller, 1982:187). And Garaudy?

With transcendence and subjectivity, Garaudy wants us to believe that despite its prevalence in classical literature, love is one of Christianity's most undeniable contributions to the figure of man. At least according to Kierkegaard, to whom as already observed Garaudy acknowledged his debt, the self-denial resulting from love is 'Christianity's essential form' (Walsh, 2018:135). Here we reach the starkest of distinctions between Garaudy's Marxist humanist phase and that of the project which succeeds it. As a Marxist humanist, he regretted that 'When the Christian speaks of the transcendence

of love, when he thinks of it . . . [he] lives it in an alienated way, that is, in terms of exteriority (as Marx showed in *The Holy Family*)' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:134]). In the project, in complete contrast, there are the calculatedly striking last words of *Parole d'homme*, which enjoin us: 'To live according to the fundamental faith of life: love. The Cross taught me to renounce the world as it is. The Resurrection, to go beyond it. I am a Christian' (Garaudy, 1975:265).

Here therefore within the project, Garaudy's belief in the congruence between Marxism and Christianity can finally be seen emerging from its chrysalis during the Marxist–humanist years. Economics, and even social class, have been left far behind, not necessarily ontologically, but certainly as engines of change. 'This new plurality will occur amidst the most basic and deepest relationship of man: love' (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:451). It is *love* that Marx missed in his own project, however capable of loving he may himself have been, even treating it in a somewhat desiccated fashion in a discourse about money (Marx, 1844 [1975:326]). And in missing it, Garaudy strongly implies, he helped create the opportunity for the distortions of Marxism that ended in Stalinism. Christian love is therefore an indispensable gift from Christianity to Marxism.

Garaudy turns to the Trinity for the source of love:

'The experience, which Greek philosophy could not express, nevertheless constituted the specific contribution of Christianity to the conception of Man and God which he carries within himself, the Trinity, and which one can talk about in very straightforward terms: unlike Hinduism, Jesus of Nazareth revealed to us that personal consciousness cannot be self-knowledge, but before that, love, that is to say, that what constitutes us fundamentally is our relationship with the other¹⁴⁵ (Garaudy, 1979:170).

Garaudy never dwells further on the Trinity — he expressly denies any claim to be a theologian — but he is not alone in suggesting it as a model for both individuality itself and human love. The Trinity finds a home within the early Church St Ignatius of Antioch (Fortman, 1972:38–40), the contemporary Orthodox tradition (Damian, 2011) as well as enjoying consistent and prolonged attention from

¹⁴⁵ L'expérience, que la philosophie grecque ne pouvait pas exprimer, constituait pourtant l'apport spécifique du christianisme à la conception de l'homme et du Dieu qu'il porte en lui, la Trinité, et qui peut se dire en termes très simples: à la différence de l'hindouisme, Jésus de Nazareth nous a révélé que la conscience personnelle ne peut pas être connaissance de soi, mais d'abord l'amour, c'est-à-dire conscience que ce qui nous constitue fondamentalement est notre rapport avec l'autre

theologians, for example Barth (1933 [1936]), Buber (1958), Rahner (1969 [1970]), Moltmann (1981), Boff (1988), LaCugna (1991), and Grenz (1994, 2001), who 'ground their discussions in social trinitarianism' (Turner, 2013:810), such that the Trinity has been described as 'the basic presupposition of the doctrine of God', (Barth, 1933 [1936:301]) and 'the innermost heart of Christian faith and worship, the central dogma of classical theology, the fundamental grammar of our knowledge of God' (Torrance, 1996:2). Trinitarian theologians conclude that 'God is eternally involved in dynamic and loving relationships within himself in the mystery of the Trinity' (Grenz, 1994: 93–102).

Garaudy evidently does not wish to engage in precise theological controversy. What is for him the stated significance of the Trinity lies not only in the relation of love, but in the fact that 'this relation cannot be closed between two terms. It is only love if he opens *ad infinitum*. It implies, as a condition of this opening, a third term by which only love can be love, that is to say, to extend this relationship "I–you" to all others who thus enter a community' (Garaudy, 1979:170).¹⁴⁶ Although 'This loving couple, not the individual, is the smallest basic unit of society, of the community' (Garaudy, 1979:170), no doubt it is crucial to Garaudy's argument that love between two people can easily extend more generally, with the Trinity as an example. In this community, the fundamental relationship of love is such only through the personal relationship between two people, opposing its model to individualism and totalitarianism. Quite the contrary, for each person, as for Garaudy on that fateful day of his expulsion from the PCF, 6 February 1970, 'the most painful and terrible ordeal'¹⁴⁷ (Garaudy, 1972a:34)), there is that same double need, which he characterised as Grünewald [German painter Matthias Grünewald, c.1475–1528] and Bourdelle [French sculptor Émile-Antoine Bourdelle 1861–1929] (Garaudy, 1975:24; Da Costa Pinto 2017:447). On the one hand, to free oneself from the illusions of having, of power, and on the other, to know how to love the Other, which at that moment, one

¹⁴⁶ Ce rapport d'amour ne peut s'enclorre entre deux termes. Il n'est amour que s'il ouvre sur l'infini. Il implique, comme condition de cette ouverture, un troisième terme grâce auquel seul l'amour peut être amour, c'est-à-dire étendre ce rapport « je–tu » à tous les autres qui entrent ainsi dans une communauté.... Dans cette communauté, la relation fondamentale d'amour n'est telle que par la rapport personnel entre deux êtres, opposant son modèle à l'individualisme et au totalitarisme. Ce couple d'amour, et non pas l'individu, est la plus petite unité de base de la société, de la communauté

¹⁴⁷ L'épreuve la plus pénible, la plus terrible

imagines was almost the entire assembled membership in the conference hall: an act of faith that is yet the moment of reason. This faith in man, this trust in hope, does not rest so only on itself. It is the result of a 'choice, irreplaceable, undemonstrable'¹⁴⁸ (Garaudy, 1976: 184]). It is one with the awareness of Man as transcendence and creativity. But It is faith, nonetheless — not historically determined, and certainly not inevitable.

But criticism could come from all sides. Garaudy never took issue with Fromm's answer to the question, now posed over many decades, as to whether in Western society love was virtually impossible in the first place, that 'To raise the question is to answer it in the negative' (Fromm, 1956:37), as 'Under capitalism, under the prevailing institutional structures of exploitation, love and freedom can only ever be ideological' (McLaren & Jandrić, 2018:603) which if true would cut the ground from underneath the entire project, at least in the West, the very countries where Christianity might be expected to exert its strongest influence. On the contrary, subjectivity for Garaudy appears to inhabit an ontological space sheltered by universal human essence and therefore quite untroubled by the storms of culture, economics, geography, history or psychology.

Garaudy seems oblivious too of the growing literature even by the time he wrote that argued absolutely to the contrary (e.g. Zaretsky, 1976), even in the PCF itself, where theoreticians expressed themselves no friends of the nuclear family (Shames, 1981:17fn). The dangers of failing to appreciate the theological implications of earthly paradigms are illustrated by even relational Christian theorists writing outside the Marxist tradition. Hence, to take just one example, it has been suggested that the stories Christians tell about the origins of humanity, particularly the existence of biological men and women and their mutual relationship, should render it impossible for us to understand persons as isolated entities (McFayden, 1990:18). This seems a perilous path to tread in a modern world of much less certain gender identities (Kaufman & Powell, 2014). The Trinity seems much less judgemental, even more radical, as the basis for understanding love, as the Garaudy of the project seems to have

¹⁴⁸ un choix, irremplaçable, indémonstrable

understood, although the Trinity fails to make an appearance in his advocacy of feminism (Garaudy, 1981). Through a modern lens, the idiosyncratic appreciation of park benches in Hanoi that ‘are made only big enough for two and only two people to sit on, so that another person would not even have the technical possibility of disturbing’ (Marcuse, 1967:82) points up potential social risks of failure external to the couple inherent in Garaudy’s formulation, including from what Marcuse himself describes as the appreciation of an incurable romantic, but the irony seems lost on them both.

Neither does Garaudy feel any need to respond to the claim, also potentially damaging to his argument, that ‘The rigorousness of the love advocated by Kierkegaard partially devaluates the beloved person...[it is] close to callousness’ (Adorno, 1939:416). It is evidently a difficult tightrope to walk, and even if it is possible, it is far from certain that Garaudy appreciated *just* how difficult.

We are surely entitled to press the issue further qualitatively as well as quantitatively, too. What distinguishes Christian love from any other love? Why is it only through Christ that we are able to relate to one another in new and transformational ways? (McFayden, 1990:5) An especially contentious argument to the contrary, given Garaudy’s emphasis on the dualism of Ancient Greek thought, is that ‘The essence of the person is relationship, the fullness of the person in a free and binding relationship with the other — this is love in the meanings of all three Greek words for love’ (Bahovec, 2015:344). A theologian can respond by asking rhetorically: ‘From where do humans get the courage to love, to surrender?’ (Brinkman, 2003:67) To this Kierkegaard can answer, from being loved by God, initially realised in contact with other people. We can love because we are loved, as a gift from God — what following St. Augustine church tradition would later call *gratia praeveniens* (Purcell, 2008:74).

For Kierkegaard, love always presupposes a strong interconnectedness between a passive, receiving and an active, giving attitude to life. Love can only be given by one who can also receive love and love can only be received by one who can also give love; not only that, but we love the other person in the same way in which God loves us (Brinkman, 2003:67). If this dialectic is the unique source

and structure of Christian love, then Garaudy fails to establish anything that distinguish Christians, nor any set of beliefs about the capacity to love which require nothing more than quite ordinary individuals, even Ancient Greeks. Even worse for Garaudy's argument, if there is anything unique about Christian love, it would appear to require the very supernatural God that Garaudy has already dismissed from the ontology of the project. It might therefore be that Garaudy would have been better served by explicitly restricting his claims for Christianity to only a paradigm *example* of love, rather than presenting it as a repository of any special potential gift, whether to humanist Marxism or to the project as its successor.

Even if we grant Garaudy that his gift can be traced back to Christianity specifically, what evidence should we seek for love? At this point Kierkegaard's view is potentially again useful for Garaudy's project, as he suggested that 'every human being by his life, by his conduct, by his behaviour in everyday affairs, by his association with his peers, by his words, his remarks, should and could build up and would do it if love were really present in him' (Kierkegaard, 1847 [1995:213]). But if these are the categories by which to identify love, how is it that love has been used to justify so many conflicting political and personal decisions? So, for example, the contention that one's soul can only be lived, not saved (Lawrence, 1928 [1968:598]), surely leads back to an existential subjectivity that Garaudy has already seen in Sartre and long wished to reject. Mere 'discipline' (Hamilton, 1998:71) will surely not suffice: discipline *to what end?*

Marxists have wished to be more discriminating than egalitarian in their love. The idea of equality before the law, that 'the law is the plan, love the fulfilment and the absolutely definite; in love the law is absolutely definite' (Kierkegaard, 1847 [1941:85]) is far from any Marxist conception of love, including that of Garaudy. For Garaudy as with the liberation theologians, because the material conditions for such egalitarianism are no more present than they are for the implementation of moral ideas, Christian ideals are 'mere alibis' (Fierro, 1977: 232). And secondly, liberation requires different treatment for different individuals. From a doctrinal Marxist standpoint, love must be class love: 'One

loves the oppressed by liberating them from their misery; one loves the oppressors by liberating them from their sinfulness' (Girardi, 1971:94). Discriminating love is no Marxist monopoly: conservative Christians as much as Marxists emphasise that love for all does not entail identical treatment for all individuals (Emerson et al., 1999). Kierkegaard is silent on the question of discriminating love, and has been portrayed as arguing that that love serves to create equality in the temporal world (Brittain, 2017:46), but perhaps in his emphasis on purely interpersonal relations Kierkegaard has not properly understood the implications of power and the reality of oppression, as was long ago pointedly suggested, that 'Instead of any real criticism of inequality in society, he has a fictitious, merely inward doctrine of equality' (Adorno, 1939:421). Yet for a more outwardly expressed alternative, 'The church as the community of faith is the personal and communal expression of the recreation of humanity's created sociality as redeemed sociality' (Schwöbel, 1991:157), such that 'Our life is not to be lived in isolation. We are a people in community' (Cameron, 2005:58). Any political action remains a mirage. It is therefore little surprise that in the revised version of the most well-known text of liberation theology (Gutiérrez, 1988), 'Marxist class struggle is replaced by a description of the progress towards unity and universal love made possible by building community through faithful action in a fragmented world' (Grumett, 2010:523).

Garaudy's project likewise aims to avoid both extremes: whilst remaining overtly Marxist to avoid this criticism, its politics at least entails less violence against oppressors (and indeed a hazier definition of who they are), more respect for individuals and a love that might therefore at least seem a little more egalitarian than any to which Marxist–Leninist might lay claim. Such a loose definition of the ends of love is as far as either Garaudy or Gutiérrez can advance an answer to the questions, without an associated political project. Garaudy certainly attempted one although did not go so far as to suggest the centrality of a community of faith, not least because of his attempt to draw in all faiths into the project, as Chapter Three has shown.

Sin and Redemption

At the frontier between the Christian ontology of good and evil and the theory of the personality lies sin. As Boer recognises, 'In societies shaped by Christianity, the understanding of human nature turns on the following question: can human beings do some good on their own initiative or are human beings unable to do good, relying completely on God?' (Boer, 2019:91). Garaudy recognised that to align Marxism with Christianity required an answer to this question. Radical Christians from Pelagius, notably in his *Letter to Demetrias* (Burns, 1981:50) to Teilhard de Chardin (1922; Grumett & Bentley, 2018:326) have answered with an emphatic insistence on the former. Pelagius refused to accept the biological transmission of original sin, asserting that 'human discipline and cultivation could achieve transformation' (Boer, 2019:92). For Pelagius, Christians are how they act, not how they are created. 'We are sons of God not by nature but through imitation' (Pelagius, *Expositiones* 372; De Bruyn, 1993). 'It was Pelagius who had seized the logical conclusions of this tradition: he is the last, most radical and the most paradoxical exponent of the ancient Christianity — the Christianity of discontinuity' (Brown, 1968:107). Stripped of intergenerational sin, human beings in a Pelagian ontology have the capacity for moral judgement, for right action. Led right, life can lead us to become sons and daughters of God (Pelagius, *On the Christian Life*, [Rees, 2004:113]). Most akin to Garaudy's thought — but also that of Marxist psychologists such as Leontiev (1979) and later is the view that the human essence is evidenced in action, not in ontology. All people, Christian or otherwise, have received the same opportunity from God, so Pelagius 'steers clear of sectarianism' (Brinkman, 2003: 116). As we have seen in Chapter Three, Garaudy too aims at such inclusivity. For Garaudy as

for Pelagius, individuals are created in God's image and are therefore free to imitate God. But for Pelagius, the route is uniquely through Christ: 'the gift of the gospel is that we are instructed by the grace of Christ, encouraged and shown the goodness of God that is within us, in action through justice, although equally, free to pursue evil' (Brinkman, 2003:115–121). Here, Garaudy is more cautious about the Christian message, suggesting only that criteria for salvation might can be provided by 'the example of Christ of the life of Christ and an intimate and personal dialogue with his way of life'¹⁴⁹ (Garaudy, 1975:239).

Traditional Christians have responded to this uplifting vision of individual capability unenthusiastically: 'ever since Augustine rejected the Pelagian optimism, Christianity has tended to look with suspicion on any over-optimistic assessment of human nature' (Carpenter, 1982:260). It is therefore little surprise to find that Garaudy sides with Pelagius thus far in the rejection of original sin and the perfectibility of individual humanity. Similarly, he wishes to relegate St. Augustine to the Constantinian church from which he sought to rescue Christianity. Garaudy would not therefore agree that 'The assertion that we are created in the divine image operates both as an assertion of the way things are — an ontological given — and as an ideal regulating personal and social conduct' (McFadyen, 1990:18). If Garaudy's project is to adopt a Christian individuality, it is one bereft of humanity as an ontological mirror of a supernatural God.

But neither would Garaudy necessarily be happy to follow the logic of Pelagianism very much further. There are crucial differences between Pelagius and Garaudy that Garaudy's mere nod to him disregards. Pelagius always recognises that although it is within human capacity, God's assistance, at least, is required to achieve the good (Boer, 2019:92; Brinkman, 2003:116). Pelagius further accepts that it is the rite of baptism, not revolution, that allows the rebirth of an individual free from sin (Brown, 1968:105). It has also been argued that for Pelagius, God's grace is the possibility that He gives us to follow not only the example of Jesus but the law in all its particulars, as 'it is never a light matter

¹⁴⁹ L'exemple de la vie du Christ et la dialogue intime et permanent avec son mode de vie

to despise God even in small things' (Pelagius, *On the Divine Law* 30:1 [Rees 2004:95]). Christians should do so under pain of excommunication (Herren & Brown, 2002:132), with the threat of hell and the desire of heaven to spur them on (Márkus, 2005:167). Garaudy might be keen on the example of Jesus supported by Pelagius (or at least by some, at least, of those identified as Pelagians) in terms of its radical emphasis on the redistribution of wealth, 'socialism of a coherence hardly to be met again before the nineteenth century' (Morris, 1965:51), but surely much less so on this importance of the law, and still less keen on a supernatural heaven or hell as motivation. As he wrote, 'Pelagius' mistake was not to assert that Man could gain salvation through his own efforts, it was to forget that there is no other immanent criterion to judge his efforts'¹⁵⁰ (Garaudy, 1975:239). Though cited favourably, Pelagius is merely a useful weapon in Garaudy's contest with 'Constantinian' Christianity, in which Augustinian conceptions of sin play a useful and essentially conservative political role.

The very partial appropriation of his doctrine, however, is the less interesting aspect of Garaudy's decision to draft Pelagius as support for his Christianity. If Garaudy is to reject original sin, then implicitly, and perhaps surprisingly, we would expect him to accept actual sin into his ontology. And therefore, given his stress on individuality and personal responsibility, this would have to be a more conventional, potentially socially conservative concept of actual sin, specifically dependent on individual responsibility (Tennant, 1925:37), rather than an exclusive reliance on contemporary concepts familiar to liberation theology and relational theorists of individuality alike that identify sin with injustice, whether class, covenant or gender (Wiley, 2002:23; Boer, 2007:298). Yet Garaudy would also surely wish to abjure a conservative definition of the kind of 'Where no law is, there can be no sin' (Tennant, 1925:38). And this is what we find: the transformation of the world requires both a recognition that 'sin is not only individual, but collective'¹⁵¹ (Garaudy, 1977:236), but also personal

¹⁵⁰ L'erreur de Pélagie n'était pas d'affirmer que l'homme peut gagner le salut par ses propres efforts, c'était d'oublier qu'il n'existe aucun critère immanent pour juger ces efforts

¹⁵¹ le péché n'est pas seulement individuel, il est collectif

transformation, the political struggle demanded by the Gospel also entails 'liberation from sin, that is from egotistic turning in on oneself' (Garaudy, 1976a [1980:1]).

If they were to adopt Garaudy's project as their own, Marxists need not therefore adopt all of Pelagius' arguments, just those that are useful in the collective endeavour to change the world. Moreover, the exchange of ideas need not be unidirectional: Marxists themselves should not be reluctant to offer their alternative explanations of sin to Christianity. Therefore, it is not surprising that early on in his prophetic period, Garaudy describes Teilhard de Chardin's view of original sin as a tentative explanation of evil in a fixed conception of the world (Garaudy, 1971:130). Unfortunately, Garaudy makes no attempt to dig deeper, for example to determine whether any of the different conceptions of original sin that Teilhard advances, Garaudy does not dwell upon exactly what Teilhard proposed regarding sin, let alone indicate whether he agreed with everything Teilhard suggested. Rather, in the sweeping and generalised fashion with which readers of the Garaudy of the prophetic period would become very familiar, he argues that: 'Marxist analysis allows us to prevent the moral confusion which otherwise may be ascribed to original sin, which has run through man's history and relieves him of his responsibility¹⁵² (Garaudy, 1971:130), whilst he later quotes Gutiérrez on the social context of sin (Garaudy, 1977b:17). We are left in no doubt that the project requires the rejection of the concept of original sin at the level of the individual, in favour of a collective, social concept, but equally that no further elucidation of the concept is either required or necessary to bring Marxism and Christianity into alignment.

Not all Marxists either then or now would agree even about Pelagius, let alone Teilhard de Chardin. Collier too recognises the importance of original sin for any alignment of Marxism with Christianity. He, however, is dismissive of precisely Garaudy's project: 'A Pelagian Christianity can meet a Feuerbachian Marxism on the ground of an anthropocentric philosophy, and confirm each

¹⁵² l'analyse marxiste permet d'empêcher la confusion morale par laquelle on risque de mettre sur le compte du péché original, ce qui découle l'histoire de l'homme et relève de sa responsabilité

other in their humanist errors' (Collier, 2001:1). I have argued in this chapter that these are the very 'errors' that Garaudy's project takes as central.

Conclusion

What answer, then to the question posed in this chapter: what was this 'subjectivity' that Garaudy argued Christianity could and should contribute to Marxism? Was there any real difference between the individuals and the human essence of socialist humanism and those of Garaudy's project? Not ontologically, perhaps — but teleologically, yes. There was much talk by Marxist humanists, of individuality, of freedom, of the need and possibility for individuals to develop their personal capabilities in the process of changing society, even socialist society. But below the surface, the absence of need to discuss human motivation and the drivers of change remained; thanks to the legacy of Marxism–Leninism, neither class nor socialism itself were disputed concepts. Although the socialist humanists had dispensed with dialectical materialism, they therefore still wrote as if historical materialism were a practical reality, apparently oblivious of what Lenin would have told them, that it is impossible to have one without the other (Lenin, 1913 [1977: 21–28]).

At the time, both sides of the debate over Man within the PCF appear to have assumed that Garaudy in particular could have the field to himself in terms of the relationship between subjectivity, at least as he defined it, universal essence and Christianity. It is a need that has been recognised by more recent Marxist scholarship, where the anti-structuralist argument that: 'it is clear that there are universal and trans-historical, relatively unchanging human characteristics and, in that sense, a universal human nature' (Sayers, 1998:151; Geras, 1983) is now more widely accepted than when

Althusser (1965 [2005]) espoused the denial of human nature. Even further away seem the early days of the Soviet Union, where eugenicists debated with social engineers as to how to create the New Soviet Man (Bauer, 1952). If Garaudy were to draw his concept of subjectivity from Christianity, however, then it might be expected that he would engage with the theological debate over the relative role of grace and nature in Man, as does Lash (1982:410), and to answer the implicit question as to what extent any subjectivity derived from Christianity that a Marxist can accept is able to explain how Man can reach a right and just conclusion as to belief and action. But he does not.

So far as Garaudy's contemporary critics were concerned, however, it was a plague on all three of your houses: universal human essence, subjectivity and Christianity. Structural Marxists disagreed so fundamentally that they further rejected the concept of personality and the need for an understanding of the individual. Sève did not go that far, but it is easy to see why he would not have wanted his theory of personality assimilated in any way to Garaudy's subjectivity, even without the intermediary of a universal human essence and without Christianity.

Lenin had already promoted the subjective element in class politics, however, albeit that he regarded it as inextricable from objective economic factors (Lenin, 1905 [1965:17]). It would have been but a relatively short step from acknowledging both the biographical construction of an individual and the subjective element in politics to suggesting that subjectivity was a property of an individual personality, *in the sense Sève meant it*. This would have had the advantage of beginning the explanation, which Garaudy avoided, of why subjectivity in his terms varies very widely between individuals in practice, despite their sharing in a common human essence. Subjectivity could have then been assimilated within Marxism without any requirement for a universal human essence, still less for Christianity, which might have been much closer to what Marx originally had in mind, albeit that it was Marx's own use of the term in the *VI Thesis on Feuerbach* that started the debate (Kühne, 1979:803). The way to this had already been opened by Schaff's suggestion cited above that Marx meant the term only rhetorically. This would have been a much closer enemy for the project than

anything Garaudy encountered in practice, either within the PCF or beyond. As it was, Sève's references to this 'subjective element' within Marxism were simply dismissive (Sève, 1969 [1978:158]).

With starker opponents, earlier chapters have shown how Garaudy had already, even before his expulsion from the PCF, begun to argue for the need to demonstrate common ground between Christianity and Marxism as a better way to fill Sartre's gap and place the individual at centre stage within Marxism, but as much for reasons of political practice as for philosophical theory. Where the project went further than Marxist humanism, however, was in Garaudy's new insistence that the congruence between Marxism and Christianity involved mutual dependence. A subjectivity derived from Christianity characterised by *love* replaces historical materialism and violent revolution. Garaudy evidently believed that this would protect the project from the fate to which Sartre had warned Marxism was exposed (Sartre, 1957 [1963:82]) and at the same time match contemporary political reality. Yet, as noted in Chapter Three, he can be accused of engaging in some kind of proposed faux fair barter, in which Marxism will donate a social justice that it does not own to Christianity, in return for a love that Christianity does not own either.

So too, Garaudy's stress on subjectivity, and its pursuit of a Christian theory of the individual with which Garaudy seeks to empower the project, when stripped of a very limited economic gloss, turns out to be close, at least, to the pervasive individual of much contemporary theology (Turner, 2013:810). Returned to its roots, Christianity can serve the purpose of providing not just subjectivity, but the underlying agent, the individual, to the project, but only at the expense of a deep and prolonged division within Marxism itself. Garaudy would still surely insist on differentiating his subjectivity from the possessive individuals of liberal political thought (MacPherson, 1962), those 'autonomous, self-sufficient centres of consciousness, each of which manifests certain more-or-less universal properties, attributes, qualities, and capacities regardless of when and where they live' (Turner, 2013:810). Disapproved of by many contemporary theologians, their force and longevity has

been widely recognised (e.g. Taylor, 1985:10), as well as their indissoluble association with capitalism (Balibar, 1993 [2017:30], 2018:23). But although Garaudy leaves both the idea of an individual and that of sin largely implicit, we are left once again with the impression that philosophically at least, we are dealing with very ordinary individuals committing very familiar sins.

Perhaps even more importantly for the project itself, bereft of both the God of Kierkegaard, 'who commands in saying "The Other" to an "I", that is to say a God who commands a relation' (Chevallier, 2001:111), and of the guiding direction of the Communist Party, Garaudy's subjectivity requires a strong ally for its success though, or else we should surely be left with a discontinuity between the theory of love and political practice. This in turn would inevitably lead to the suspicion that Garaudy wishes to mould love to the shape of his political project, an easy target for criticism if ever there were one.

The mechanism through which these very ordinary individuals and their subjectivity would bring about the extraordinary changes demanded by the project despite the alienation of capitalist society therefore becomes the almost inevitable focus of consideration. This mechanism Garaudy consistently termed *transcendence*, and he believed himself well aware of the distinction between the two: 'The study of subjectivity does not provide an escape from the problem of transcendence' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:90]). Distinction, but not, as he had asserted existed for existentialism and transcendence, contradiction (Garaudy, 1959 [1969:48]). The next chapter will therefore concern the role of transcendence in Garaudy's project.

Chapter Five: The role of transcendence in the project

Introduction: a necessary concept?

Garaudy, the protagonist for transcendence, directed his criticism as a Marxist philosopher at the mainstream of modern philosophy. He was not alone: a similar claim was that it had 'moved generally in the direction of linguistic analysis and has deserted its traditional post as leader in the search for meaningful models of transcendence' (Ratliff, 1975:7). For Garaudy, by comparison:

'As a Marxist, my constant preoccupation was to find the place where transcendence could fit in Karl Marx's thought. It was not a question of the transcendence of God in relation to man, which could not find a place in Marx's problematic, but of the transcendence of Man in relation to nature'¹⁵³ (Garaudy, 1985:266)

So Garaudy valued transcendence very highly, but as others have asked before (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:452; Gauvin, 2018:398), what did he mean by it? At the most general level, a definition has been provided as: 'That which encompasses, or "goes beyond," all closed systems' (Ratliff, 1975:2). It has been further suggested that in the philosophical traditions of the West — in which as we saw in Chapter Three Garaudy's project was anchored — there are three different interpretations of transcendence: a metaphysical or religious sense that is distinguished from the immanent, an epistemological sense of the 'transcendental' existence of the physical world by comparison to perception found in Kant, Berkeley or Husserl, and a linguistic sense, in which the significance of a sign 'transcends' the technical capacity of the sign itself (During, 1988:288).

Finally, there was what has been described as the 'Marxist existentialist' use of the term by Sartre (Miller, 1982:156). Sartre advocated that revolutionaries should adopt a 'philosophy of

¹⁵³ Marxiste, ma préoccupation constant fut de rechercher le lieu ou pourrait s'insérer la transcendance dans la pensée de Karl Marx. Il ne s'agissait point de la transcendance de Dieu par rapport à l'homme, qui ne saurait trouver place dans la problématique de Marx, mais de la transcendance de l'homme par rapport à la nature

transcendence', which would replace the society of laws with a community of ends. In the most general terms Sartre suggested that a revolutionary philosophy of freedom would show that men laid the contingent foundation of all transcendent values, assume that any set of values could be overthrown and replaced, illuminate how any set of values formed part of a social order and tended to preserve it, and suggest that any social order was mutable, even if the expression of new values had to be invented in practice, through the very effort of transcending given values (Sartre, 1946 [1955:234–235]). Did Garaudy suggest anything much different to this?

A Hegelian beginning

Garaudy emphasised transcendence long before he publicly embraced Christianity. He had sought to incorporate a Hegelian sense of transcendence into his Marxist thinking. And what was this? In the words of another author, Hegel 'seeks to transfigure the cave of human experience with all the transcendental lights and perspectives which other types of thought put entirely beyond it' (Findlay, 1981:359). Garaudy's approach to Hegel had been to stress the immanence of his dialectic (Garaudy, 1959 [1969:34]); from another Marxist humanist came a similar argument that 'Hegelian experience is a different story: it reveals concrete reality, and reveals it without modifying or "perturbing" it' (Kojève, 1947 [1980:178]). But if 'Absolute knowledge in Hegel's speculative system takes the place of revelation and faith and totally excludes the experience of transcendence' (Friedrich, 1967:205), can Hegel's philosophy be Christian?

This particular question did not trouble Garaudy before the project. In his Marxist humanist period, Garaudy had been sufficiently interested to write two books on Hegel (Garaudy, 1962, 1966b). For him it was sufficient that both Hegel and Marx favoured *total man*, such that Hegel's philosophy represented 'the twilight of all the Gods, for the Hegelian dialectic of history and spirit reduces each

God to an element in the realisation of total man'¹⁵⁴ (Garaudy, 1962 [1970:428]). Hegel therefore represents a latent Marx (Friedrich, 1967:204). It still required Marx to liberate Hegel's transcendence, which can then be placed at the disposal of Marxism — and contribute to it. An uncritical view of Hegel had already been criticised as blinking when Absolute Spirit is mentioned (During, 1988:295), a difficulty corrected by Marx, who 'points out that Hegel's conception of history¹⁵⁵ presupposes an abstract and absolute spirit, the embodiment of which is the mass' (Lenin, 1895 [1976:34]; Anderson, 1995:44), an approach that formed the basis of the twists and turns of attitudes towards Hegel in Soviet philosophy (Pavlov, 2016).

A Marxist humanist approach was no doubt less focused on the Party than that of a Marxist–Leninist, but Garaudy no less than Marx aimed to 'liberate Hegel's system from its final, and perhaps dispensable, gesture towards the absolute' (During, 1988:288). Garaudy's transcendence in the project was however to become more than simply the secularisation of the Hegelian dialectic. It also depended on the importance of the individual to his Marxist humanism. So, in his view, 'What gives meaning and beauty and value to life, for Marxists as for Christians, is the unstinting gift of self to what the world, through our sacrifice, can become in the future' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:153]). Armed with that faith himself, Garaudy could proceed to discuss change in society with a confidence that he believed that Marxist humanists could not in all honesty share, however much they leaned on the Hegelian dialectic. Sève observed critically, but surely quite correctly, that Garaudy confers on Man a transcendental freedom: Man is not reducible to the social relations which condition him (Sève, 2008:46,105,397), he is transcendent with regard to society and his own history (Sève, 2008:379). In Sève's view Garaudy had in the end simply misunderstood Marx: Christian values of transcendence and love were foreign to a materialist understanding of religion (Sève, 2008:402).

¹⁵⁴ Le crépuscule de tous les dieux, car la dialectique hégélienne de l'histoire et de l'esprit, ne fait de chaque dieu qu'un moment de la réalisation de l'homme total

¹⁵⁵ Geschichtsauffassung

Undeterred, Garaudy's next step was therefore to apply this secularised Hegelianism to that individual. He advanced this view by way of insisting that the way Marx's thought developed rested to a significant degree on his view of the importance of Fichte to Marx (Garaudy, 1964 [1967:33–43]. In particular, that Fichte was already committed to a notion of immanence which 'informs his account of history in such a way as to prevent the need to introduce the transcendence associated with a supernatural event that interrupts the course of history as a whole' (James, 2016:1163). Only therefore if this concept of transcendence can itself be described as Hegelian can the argument that 'When he eventually embraced Christianity in 1975, he arguably did so as a Hegelian' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.) be supported. Garaudy did quote with approval Hegel's description of Christ as the man in whom the unity of God and Man has appeared, who has shown by his death and his history in general the eternal history of the Spirit (Garaudy, 1975:243). And for Garaudy the common thread of German philosophy from Kant through Hegel to Fichte is the human capacity for self-development (Garaudy, 1938:15, 1977a:100). For Garaudy however it is Fichte in particular who has captured the correctness of transcendence within the individual personality:

'What is characteristic in Fichte's conception of the ego is its continual transcendence. At every moment the ego sets a limit and simultaneously leaps over it, as if the infinite were calling it; its present is never defined except in terms of its future growth. The ego is always [a] project: What I have been and what I am only assumes its full meaning in the light of what I am about to be' (Garaudy, 1964 [1967:39]).

Others thought in slightly different terms, but also addressed the question of individuality in relation to transcendence. Schleiermacher, for example, for all his insistence on its dependence on the Divine, wanted to use transcendence to end the dualism of subject and object, 'Schleiermacher thought of the centre and sum of life as consciousness of the divine absoluteness which transcends both subject and object' (Hegedüs, 1991:8). Garaudy too opposed what he regarded as Greek dualism, of many kinds: 'opposition between earth and sky, body and soul, profane and sacred, time and eternity, and immanence and transcendence'¹⁵⁶ (Garaudy, 1971:113):

¹⁵⁶ l'opposition de la terre de du ciel, du corps et de l'âme, du profane et du sacré, du tempset de l'éternité, de l'immanence et de la transcendance

‘What must be sought, therefore, in this creative interface, are approaches to a conception of transcendence that contains neither alienation nor the dualism of body and mind, the earthly and heavenly world, and where Man and God are not so radically opposed to each other that God is as alien to Man as an object’¹⁵⁷(Garaudy, 1978a:157).

This would not be an easy task, as Garaudy also recognised that:

‘Transcendence is a dangerous word, for it is burdened with a weighty past history of confusions and mystifications. Traditionally, the notion implies belief in the beyond, in the “supernatural”, with all that those notions contain of irrationality, of the miraculous, of mystery, and ultimately, of deception’ (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:133]).

So dangerous, perhaps, that before he openly broke with Marxism–Leninism, Garaudy preferred to use the expression ‘dialectical surpassing’ which in his opinion meant the emergence of the ‘new’, of the different beyond all the conditions already present in reality already (Gauvin, 2018:398). In his subsequent view as a Marxist humanist, to be a realist is not to imitate the image of the real, but to imitate its activity; it is not to give an exact copy or duplicate of things, events or men, but to participate in the creative act of a world which is in the process of maturing, to discover its inner rhythm (Garaudy, 1963). Certainly, it should be recognised that Garaudy’s view was not unique — a contemporary Polish Marxist, for example, suggested that transcendence should be seen as ‘consisting essentially in endeavours and activities aimed at going beyond the given reality, the world as it is, overcoming it practically, conceptually and ideologically’ (Krejčí, 1969:87).

Garaudy however, as a Marxist, found neither individual human action nor science wholly satisfactory locations for transcendence. Garaudy therefore went further, declaring a specifically, and for his project even more important, *Marxist* transcendence. For Garaudy the Marxist, humanist or otherwise, this possibility to surpass — inaccessible to the animal or to inanimate nature — exists because of man’s ability to transform the world through labour. Man is part of nature, but with man, through culture, a higher level of nature begins to emerge. This is the real human core of this pre-project Marxist idea of transcendence: it is the alienated expression of the leap beyond nature

¹⁵⁷ In dieser schöpferischen Nahtstelle gibt es also Ansätze zu einer Konzeption des Transzendenz, die weder die Entfremdung noch den Dualismus enthält, die Körper und Geist, irdische und himmlische Welt, Mensch und Gott nicht so radikal einander entgegengesetzt, daß Gott dem Menschen so äußerlich ist wie ein Objekt

effected in culture. The species which crossed this threshold, Man, has been so successfully influenced by this transcendence that another order of reality beyond nature was imagined: a future. As yet, this is full of risk, and oppression. Such is the constraint on transcendence in an alienated — capitalist — world. Marxism, on the other hand, holds out the possibility that once alienation can be overcome, immense reserves of initiative and creation can be released in the transcendence of existing society and the creation of the new. Transcendence, in the secondary or attenuated sense of surpassing or rising above the human situation, was therefore already of crucial importance for Garaudy, even though he seems not to have employed the word itself before his Marxist humanist phase, except to note how Marx had succeeded in escaping its seductions (Garaudy, 1938:20). But certainly as a Marxist humanist, Garaudy believed that under socialism alienation would be progressively abolished because, instructed in dialectical materialism and its theory of knowledge, human beings would become conscious of the laws of nature and the laws of social life which have dominated them for millennia. They would thus be able for the first time in human history to make use of these laws in the interests of society. In short, knowledge of necessity brings with it the only freedom available to humanity, that of transforming the world.

Such an attempt could stretch to the suggestion that the creative capacity of man, demonstrated through labour, actually means that he becomes human *only* through this transcendence. To make transcendence the identifying characteristic separating Man from animals, as Garaudy does, is certainly to place considerable responsibility upon the concept. Yet that is exactly what Garaudy did: his view was that:

‘As Marx explains, when, with the appearance of specifically human labour — of labour, that is, which has as its law the end or project aimed at — Man raises himself about all the other animal species and begins an historical development whose rhythm is incommensurable with that of biological evolution, then we come up against a qualitative leap, a true supersession, a transcendence (in the strictly etymological sense of the word) in relation to nature. (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:133])

For Garaudy the Marxist humanist, the human capacity for transcendence in relation to nature was at the very least one of the key characteristics identifying humanity (Gauvin, 2018:398), a view Garaudy

shared with his Marxist critics (e.g. Sève, 1969 [1978:139]) who also used in support of their own conception of what differentiates human beings from animals the same quote from Marx, who ranked the worst architect above the best bee, because 'he builds it in his head before he builds it in wax'¹⁵⁸ (Marx, 1867 [1976:198]).

'Thus, for Marx, the work, in its specifically human form [. . .] begins with the emergence of the conscious goal, the project, which now dominates without breaking it, the web of causal chains. Conscious finality "transcends" determinism. It is in this "creative break" that Garaudy identifies in Marx a form of "transcendence" that is essentially "transcending" the present order' (Gauvin, 2018:269)¹⁵⁹.

It is worthwhile stressing the essentially *Marxist* definition of transcendence here. Take away the existence of labour, in the Marxist sense, and the concept evaporates. It is therefore only *by extension* that for Garaudy the Marxist humanist, Krejčí and other Marxists, transcendence corresponds to any wider definition, to mean any taking away, any break with regard to the given, whether it is a work of art that is never content to simply reproduce nature, or the historical break that is a revolution.

Because it operates at an individual level, transcendence therefore for Garaudy implies subjectivity, and permeates individual consciousness, residing in dreams, hopes, love, danger and decision. Hence for example in relation to Marxist aesthetics, he combated the narrowness of 'socialist realism', seeking the point where the act of artistic creation, the act of faith in a socialist future, and political action, coincided. He acknowledged that all works of art are realist in the sense that they refer to a reality exterior to themselves and independent of them, for it is not consciousness which determines life but life which determines consciousness.

By comparison with his Marxist humanism, however, the emphasis during the project moves away from labour towards making transcendence *stand alone*: 'Man is always something other and something more than the sum of the conditions which have produced him. This is what distinguishes

¹⁵⁸ er die Zelle in seinem Kopf gebaut hat, bevor er sie in Wachs baut

¹⁵⁹ Ainsi pour Marx, le travail, sous sa forme spécifiquement humaine [...] commence avec l'émergence du but conscient, du projet, qui domine désormais, sans la rompre, la trame des chaînes causales. La finalité consciente "transcende" le déterminisme. » (Biographie du XXe siècle, opuscité, p.268)
C'est dans cette « rupture créatrice » que Garaudy repère chez Marx lui-même une forme de « transcendance » qui est essentiellement « dépassement de l'ordre présent »

him from all other kinds of animal' (Garaudy, 1973b:63). If this concept of transcendence is to be compatible with Marxism, then Marxism itself will surely have to give ground in respect of the dominance of labour in its creation.

I am not sure, however, whether Robinson goes too far when he argues that '*Because* [my emphasis] of the high premium which Garaudy set on transcendence in the sense of surpassing or rising above the human situation, he was already in his Communist days an inveterate opponent of all those brands of materialist philosophy which tend to deny human creativity and subjectivity' (Robinson, 2004: n.p., my italics). That he was so, as I have argued in Chapter Four, is hard to deny. But whether it is fair to say that a failure to recognise the importance of transcendence specifically — as opposed to the importance of subjectivity itself — *caused* that denial of materialist philosophy (and indirectly led to his Marxist humanism) I am not so sure. Many other factors contributed to his break with Marxism–Leninism. Transcendence, moreover, could be defined collectively, or even structurally — as noted in Chapter Four, we should be extremely careful to avoid the assumption that Garaudy's individual is quite such an independent character as his Marxist critics liked to envisage.

To remove just this causal link, however, may open the way to arguing that for Garaudy transcendence actually serves a more fundamental role, that of justifying a Marxist approach *in general*, rather than Marxist humanism in particular. Garaudy's insistence on the importance of transcendence was never, and is not in the project, a cause of dissonance with Marxism; rather, it was always intended to be aligned with it. In Garaudy's view, 'the future will be filled with questions which surpass and transcend anything we can imagine about the future. Yes, Man will always be capable of an always greater future' (Garaudy, 1965 [1967:79]).

So where should we look to find this transcendence, if it is to be somehow distinguished from every individual action or the action of every mechanical object? Garaudy answered, it is to be found where Man breaks the circle of positivist knowledge or action through a creative act, whether artistic creation, scientific research, technical development, love or sacrifice — all these are the human

dimensions of transcendence (García, 1988:146). It is well signposted by the life of Jesus himself, as Garaudy indicated in a response even during the period of Marxist–Christian dialogue (Garaudy, 1968f).

Pinto, faithfully transcribing Garaudy virtually word for word, summarises this view of transcendence: Man's ability not just to extrapolate the past or the present, but to create a new and different future, and to recognise that ability to make history, to make the eighth day of creation. From the edge, forgotten, downtrodden and neglected, transcendent human action, deeper gestures of spontaneity such as the party and dance, poetry, art and music, gift, faith and love can burst forth to create change (Da Costa Pinto, 1982:736). To break with this mockery of civilisation, rupture it, and reorient society radically requires a prophetic decision, a creative act that is essentially an act of faith — Garaudy was ever the optimist, but ever also the *dirigeant*. In Garaudy's view, 'the resurrection is to be grasped by faith: it is neither a historical event nor a scientific fact but something accomplished each day in our creative acts in which we break with routine, complacency and alienation, not as isolated individuals but by our common participation in the only ultimate reality, the reality of human decisions, initiatives and creations'. (Robinson, 2004: n.p.). But what, then, prevents this opening to the Divine, which, according to him, is the *sine qua non* condition of this 'mutation' of humanity he calls for? Garaudy is silent, but the answer is implicit in Marxist analysis: it is *capitalism itself* that counters transcendence. For Garaudy, capitalism and the Devil must live and die together. The alternative to both must always be positive: transcendence cannot err, nor entangle itself with sin.

So ultimately, Garaudy's project locates transcendence in revolution (Garaudy, 1974a). The only way to 'transcend' alienation, Garaudy the Marxist humanist answers, is through class struggle (Garaudy, 1964 [1967:62]). So, when Garaudy asks, if revolutionary consciousness is not simply produced by circumstances, from whence does it derive, he answers, *from transcendence*. For the Marxism of the project, the importance of this concept could therefore hardly be less.

A secular transcendence?

Thus far, it should be agreed that, in sharp distinction to any conception of 'hard wiring' transcendence in an *immutable* immanence, or at least one in which social and political transformation can play but an ancillary role, 'Underneath the appeal to transcendence lies this real experience, that while Man belongs to nature he differs from things and animals and that, with his capacity continually to outstrip himself, he is never a completed being' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:133]). Transcendence is itself therefore evolving, ultimately for a Marxist as a result of changing social conditions.

As we have seen, Garaudy's transcendence was firmly rooted in his Marxist humanism and therefore *immanent*. This is because for Garaudy the Marxist humanist, 'transcendence is no longer an attribute of God but a dimension of man, a dimension of our experience and our acts' (Garaudy, 1965 [1967:39]). In his purely Marxist period Garaudy asserts that any attempt to refer transcendence to an absolute, to God, would be to limit Man by imposing an antiquated worldview on him. To the Marxist Garaudy, transcendence is actually a demand, an exigency, a driving force, but a force that cannot be conceived, named, or expected' (Paulose, 2000:n.p). But for Garaudy, it is suggested, 'this transcendence must always remain within the immanence of human possibilities' (Paulose, 2000:n.p). None of the possibilities of initiative and creation is in this pre-project conception of transcendence an attribute of an independent God, let alone the transcendent God of conventional Christian theology. Nowhere can Garaudy find sympathy with the argument that 'the deepest resources in theism for self-transcendence are found on the religious and ethical level, where the otherness of God appears in language that speaks about a God that commands, judges, and forgives by grace' (Henriksen, 2010:162). He cannot allow transcendence to be 'the movement that draws us away from our natural preoccupation with ourselves' (Westphal, 2004:13) if that be towards a God—outside—the world. Nor can he even permit the existence of that weak God who reveals the possibility of initiative

and change by allowing events of a specific and disturbing kind to occur (Caputo, 2006:12). On the contrary, initiative and creation remain firmly attributes of man, and those that distinguish him from all the other animal species. 'Transcendence — Garaudy will repeatedly insist whilst a 'mere' secular Marxist — "is not an attribute of God, but a dimension of man", it "is the attribute first of Man and his creative act", and it becomes synonymous with real humanity, in the sense of "explore all dimensions of human reality".

Transcendence is, then, "human future", or in Lacroix's phrase, with which Garaudy concurs, "the future is the only transcendence of men, without God"¹⁶⁰ (García, 1988:145). Bloch, though already seeking to establish the consistency of Christianity with Marxism, thought the same: If humanity looks ahead, then atheism becomes a 'transcending without any heavenly transcendence' (Bloch, 1959:1522). Garaudy intends to use the Marxist paradigm to defeat what Moltmann, bereft of Bloch's perception of what dialectical change will achieve, criticised as an endless 'transcendental immanence without transcendence' (Moltmann, 1966:30). As Garaudy put it: we have to find out what need, or suffering, or hope, can have brought Man to his current state of alienation. 'Poetry and love disclose man's transcendence in relation to each of his provisional realisations. This transcendence is the only transcendence known to atheists: the future. In this profound sense, for example, 'woman is man's future' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:143]). This transcendence is the only transcendence known to atheists: the future. Garaudy is always sensitive to the question of determinism here: to investigate the dimension of transcendence, conceived not as an attribute to God but as a dimension of man, 'is not to start from something which exists in our world in a vain attempt to prove the existence of what can exist only in another world; it is simply to investigate all the dimensions of human reality'

¹⁶⁰ la trascendencia – insistirá repetidamente Garaudy– «no es un atributo de Dios, sino una dimensión del hombre», « es el atributo primero del hombre y de su acto creador », y viene a ser sinónimo de humanidad plena, en el sentido de « explorar todas las dimensiones de la realidad humana » Trascendencia es, pues, « el futuro humano », o dicho en frase de Lacroix, a la que asiente Garaudy, « el porvenir es la única trascendencia de los hombres »

(Garaudy, 1966 [1970:104]). There is therefore always, prior to the project, a final reluctance to admit the existence of the Divine.

So, despite Garaudy's empathy for radical Christian thinkers and activists, he was as a Marxist humanist prepared only to give so much ground: 'Like every ideology, religion is a project, it is a way of breaking away from, transcending the given, of anticipating the real, whether by justifying the existing order or by protesting against it and attempting to transform it' (Garaudy, 1965: [1967: 76]). Despite his whole-hearted commitment to Marxist–Christian dialogue, during his Communist days he held that art and poetry offered Man a surer means of rising above the human situation than religion. In relation to religion, prior to the project he also argued:

'As far as faith is concerned, whether it is a question of faith in God or of faith in our task, whatever may be the divergence or what its source is, though it be for one party a bowing to the will of God and to the other a purely human creation, it imposes upon us the duty of making every man ... a poet in the profoundest sense of the word — that which makes every day of his overreaching himself creative of what the Christians call his transcendence and we, his true humanity (Garaudy, 1965 [1967:107]).

Because the crucial difference is this:

'For a Christian, transcendence is the act of God who comes towards him and summons him. For a Marxist, it is a dimension of man's activity which goes out beyond itself towards its far-off being' (Garaudy, 1965 [1967:80]).

This distinction is where Garaudy left matters before commencing the project, although his reluctance to ascribe transcendence to the Divine was never intended to prevent inclusiveness. Quite the contrary: Garaudy the Marxist humanist believed that transcendence 'concerns the action of each of us, whether Christian or not' (Garaudy, 1974a: n.p). We should surely glean from this that such a transcendence ought, among many other things, to transcend individual religions at the same time as forming a uniting human experience.

Alignment with the views of radical theologians

Although he looked back beyond the 'Constantinian' church to an alleged golden age of Christianity, so that, in common with a more recent evaluation of transcendence, it should 'take the form first found in primitive Christianity as one way of renewing lived social relations' (Hinkson, 2018:31), the possibility, at least, of 'allowing Christianity in', even in its contemporary forms, or even to use transcendence as at least part of the way to create consistency with Marxism, was evident to Garaudy well before he left the PCF. Even as a Marxist humanist, Garaudy claimed that 'Christianity unlocked Man from his fixed place in the cosmos and made him the agent of historical change'. (Cox, 1968:24). Transcendence that does not defy immanence, Garaudy says, he learned early from Maurice Blondel (Garaudy, 1989:41). Blondel was a French Catholic theologian, an emeritus professor at Aix when Garaudy studied there. His key idea, first expressed in *L'Action* (Blondel, 1893), was that Man can only achieve fulfilment by action that transforms both himself and the lives of others. Garaudy expressed the same idea by arguing that Man could not become fully human except through not just one other, but also 'with all others, that is to say, transcendence'¹⁶¹ (Garaudy, 1979:170). For both Blondel and Garaudy, only God can fill the void between me and you that prevents that fulfilment. Blondel argued that each of man's acts implies a greater project and that we thus arrive eventually at an ultimate project which defines our attitude to the world. This was appealing to Garaudy because, 'like Marxism, it was a philosophy of praxis rather than a philosophy of being' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.)

Garaudy's principal apologist agrees:

'In *L'Action*, his thesis of 1893 condemned for "immanentism" by the Catholic Church, Blondel gives a philosophically acceptable form to the need for transcendence of the young Garaudy; and he emphasizes the "perfect complementarity between reason and faith. Between a reason that does not proceed only from the cause in question, but goes back from end to end. And a faith that does not think transcendence in terms of externality, and does not oppose

¹⁶¹ 'et avec le tout autre, c'est-à-dire la transcendence

immanence and transcendence. The student thus embraces Blondel's reflection as rationalizing openness to transcendence'¹⁶² (Gauvin, 2018:122).

Whereas Blondel tried to reintroduce transcendence via individual human action, and 'Chenu insisted on the liberating force of incarnation in the building of the world'¹⁶³ (Ries, 1974:515), another of Garaudy's spiritual sources, Teilhard de Chardin, sought to create a scientific theory of transcendence. He maintained that all phenomena including inorganic matter, plants, animals and human beings, are interrelated, and that the universe is evolving towards an 'Omega point' of supreme consciousness at which the Universal and the Personal will culminate simultaneously in each other (Teilhard de Chardin, 1948 [1969:141]). Garaudy enthused that the great synthesis which constitutes de Chardin's phenomenology, this search for the most fundamental aspect of life and history, is a human one. As yet unachieved, the complete synthesis derives meaning and purpose from the future. But is there a component in Garaudy's project that corresponds to Point Omega, in Teilhard de Chardin's teleology? Arguably so: for Teilhard, love drives the arrow of evolution towards Point Omega (Schmitt, 1961:276), and for Garaudy, transcendence as a dimension of Man is a horizon that recedes, even though the goal remains that of Marx and Engels: communism, 'the overcoming of alienation and the creation of a social order where Man would be defined by what he was rather than by what he possessed' (Robinson, 2004:n.p). Of course, Blondel and Teilhard de Chardin ostensibly believed in God, whereas the pre-project Garaudy still spoke of himself as an atheist. In that regard, we should note that one of the reasons why they both fell out of ecclesiastical favour was that they were indeed both suspected of immanentism.

Garaudy was certainly also prepared to cherry-pick the central ideas of more mainstream theologians for his concept of transcendence, for example Karl Rahner — notwithstanding the

¹⁶² Dans *L'Action*, sa thèse de 1893 condamnée pour « immanentisme » par l'Eglise catholique, Blondel donne une forme philosophiquement acceptable au besoin de transcendance du jeune Garaudy ; et il souligne la « parfaite complémentarité entre la raison et la foi. Entre une raison qui ne procède pas seulement de cause en cause, mais remonte de fin en fin. Et une foi qui ne pense pas la transcendance en termes d'extériorité, et n'oppose pas immanence et transcendance. » L'étudiant épouse ainsi la réflexion de Blondel comme rationalisant l'ouverture sur la transcendance

¹⁶³ Chenu a insisté sur l'incarnation libératrice dans la construction du monde

development of Rahner's theology advanced by Metz in Chapter Three. As a Marxist humanist, Garaudy had no embarrassment with Rahner's starting point, 'the individual subject and his experience of transcendence' (O'Donovan, 1980:49). Thus open to Rahner's theology, what especially interested Garaudy was the 'transcendental' Christology through which Rahner sought to demonstrate how individual human beings, even — in fact, especially — through ordinary choices and actions — Garaudy could perhaps have tarried longer over Rahner's insistence on the mundane — and engagements with other individuals, transcend their existing constraints to glimpse God, who has enabled those choices. Human beings are therefore both transcendent and immanent, the two entwined within actual history.

But at least, in drawing on Rahner's view of transcendence, Garaudy attained at least a parallel to the Christian mystic position at the individual level. Everything is a manifestation of God, and '... the more intensive and mystical the experience becomes, and the more a supernatural elevation of transcendence exerts its influence... the clearer it must become that this emergence into awareness of transcendence and of the term to which it tends, discloses a transcendence qualitatively different from the merely concomitant and implicit form' (Rahner, 1964:145–146 n34; Egan, 2013:55). To balance this and to go beyond Rahner's tentative nod in the direction of political theology, Garaudy also drew on the perception of Metz's more overt acknowledgment that transcendence itself has become an historical process, as 'God is no longer merely 'above' history; he is himself "in" it, in that he is also constantly 'in front of it' as its free, uncontrolled future' (Metz, 1968 [1969:22f]). Garaudy's formulation during his Marxist humanist phase was still couched in terms of denial: 'God's transcendence implies his constant negation, since God is beyond all essence and all existence; he is constant creation' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:160]).

Whilst both Metz and Rahner were important contributors to the theory of transcendence in the project, Garaudy was not prepared to adjudicate in any theological debate. Rather, he drew selectively on the theology of others, as for example pointing to Bultmann as acknowledging

transcendence 'in its most exalted form, as a dramatic invasion of the divine into the history of man' (Garaudy, 1965 [1967:34]). And by contrast to Rahner's insistence on the mundane, 'So far as myth is concerned, Bultmann argues that is the form in which the transcendent makes its presence felt in the life of man; and this form depends on the way in which the world was envisaged at the time when the myth was born. Myth has no value in itself. It's a direct way of making all things accessible, putting the world into a rational order and allowing the believer a window into transcendence'¹⁶⁴ (Bustros, 1976:245).

Very well: there is nothing new here in theological terms, except perhaps the relentless implicit insistence that a theory of transcendence necessary for consistency between Christianity and Marxism need not take sides in any theological debate, although that need not dismay us.

A spiritual transcendence in the project?

Already at the time Garaudy wrote, the death of God movement and radical theology had begun to shift theological debate. The Garaudy of the prophetic phase was not alone in his perception of transcendence. Kee argued that transcendence was a secular term, representing the mind of self-determination: the way of transcendence is the lifestyle of a person whose behaviour is determined by his own value judgments (Kee, 1971:228). So too Altizer insists on:

'The ongoing self-annihilation of God brought about by divine kenosis or sacrifice . . . The incarnation and crucifixion accordingly re-enact and illustrate 'a transition within God by which the transcendent God became immanent' (Peterson, 2014:6)

¹⁶⁴ Quant au mythe, Bultmann le considère comme la forme sous laquelle s'exprime l'irruption du transcendant dans la vie de l'homme; et cette forme dépend de la manière dont on concevait le monde à l'époque de la naissance du mythe. Le mythe n'a donc aucune valeur par lui-même. C'est un simple moyen de rendre accessible tout ce qui dépasse encore la mise en ordre rationnelle du monde et de permettre au croyant une ouverture vers la transcendance

and 'a sense in which the God—above—us had to die in order to become the God—with—us' (Sproul, 1985:19). Likewise too, for both Bonhoeffer and Moltmann, the boundary between transcendence and immanence runs through the existence of Man (Hegedüs, 1991:103). This is explained by the argument that 'Modern Man' no longer finds transcendence in the outermost, all-encompassing periphery of the cosmos, but in himself, for he has made himself the centre of the world. Moltmann then deepens the problem of God to include the problem of transcendence in modern society. The feeling that God is dead is understandable if a trusted concept of God is lost. (Moltmann, 1969). Likewise, Berger suggested that certain reflections could become a legitimate basis, 'signals of transcendence', for theological projections about transcendence (Berger, 1969:94–95).

So, within the project, Garaudy now seeks to draw the two ends of the chain much closer together, repeating the thought of his youth that:

' . . . If it was true that the working class is only the suffering class, perhaps Christianity corresponded to its expectations, because it knew how to express and transfigure suffering by giving it a meaning that magnifies it beyond nature, in a "supernatural" way'¹⁶⁵ (Garaudy, 1975:94).

Within the project he now writes of the content of transcendence in very similar terms to that of his Marxist humanist phase, but no longer in terms reluctant to admit of the existence of God. Rather, God becomes central to the Marxist project precisely *because* of transcendence:

'There is thus, in this creative rupture, the outline of a conception of transcendence which is no longer alienation or dualism, radically opposing the body and the mind, a terrestrial world and a celestial world, Man and a God external to him as an object would be, but a transcendence which is a break with a mechanical determinism, which is choice between the possible, the anticipation of the future by a project which is not only a reflection of the already existing world or simply negation of this world, but going beyond the present order. An act to be created, not given. This transcendence, even if it is only the transcendence of Man in relation to nature and nature and his own history, creation in act of a human nature, is the necessary postulate of any revolutionary action, because without it Man would indeed be "a puppet produced by structures". It marks the point of possible insertion, in Marxism, of an authentic transcendence'¹⁶⁶ (Garaudy, 1977a:27).

¹⁶⁵ S'il était vrai que la classe ouvrière est seulement la classe qui souffre, peut-être le christianisme correspondait-il à son attente, car il a su exprimer et transfigurer la souffrance en lui donnant une signification qui la magnifie au-delà de toute nature, de façon « surnaturelle »

¹⁶⁶ 'Il y a donc là, dans cette rupture créatrice, l'ébauche d'une conception de la transcendance qui n'est plus aliénation ni dualisme opposant radicalement le corps et l'esprit, un monde terrestre et un monde celeste,

Which words could easily draw comparison with those of Sartre's words: 'human reality is a perpetual surpassing towards a self-coincidence that is never given' (Sartre, 1943:46; Gillespie, 2013:78), except that for Garaudy, 'going beyond' could never mean, or be explained, other than in social action, and ultimately in political change.

The persistence and relative stability of the idea for Garaudy, and its inextricable connection with individual human freedom is, in fact, quite notable. In one of the key texts of the project he writes:

'Transcendence is, by the same token, that dimension of history when we realise that it is not linear, one-dimensional, but on the contrary that it is born of a multiplicity of possibilities, so that, when returning to the past, the single possibility that we record as having triumphed need necessarily have done so. On the other hand, history in the process of being made, and the future that will come from it, are not scenarios already written outside us and beyond us, and which will leave us to play only pre-determined roles, but a continued creation, a choice, for which we are fully responsible, among many possibilities'¹⁶⁷ (Garaudy, 1976:182)

So as one commentator summarised Garaudy's argument:

'The postulate of transcendence is biblical and has become powerfully mobilizing through calls to realize the Kingdom of God on earth. The various Kingdom projects bear the imprint of the time in which they were conceived, but they are not a simple reflection of the existing world, each time they propose a new social order. From Joachim de Flore to current political theologies there is one constant: it is to conceive of the Kingdom of God not as another world, but as a different world. Thus the postulate of transcendence, which is, like hope, an aspect of faith, is at the origin of all defatalisation of history'¹⁶⁸ (Winling, 1981:270).

l'homme et un Dieu extérieur à lui comme le serait un objet, mais une transcendance qui est rupture avec un déterminisme mécanique, qui est choix entre les possible, anticipation du futur par un projet qui n'est pas seulement reflet du monde déjà existant ou simple négation de ce monde, mais dépassement de l'ordre présent. Acte créateur et non être donné. Cette transcendance, même si elle n'est encore que transcendance de l'homme par rapport à la nature et à la nature et à sa propre histoire, création en acte d'une nature humaine, est le postulat nécessaire de toute action révolutionnaire, car sans elle l'homme serait en effet « une marionnette mise en scène par les structures ». Elle marque le point d'insertion possible, dans le marxisme, d'une authentique transcendance

¹⁶⁷ La transcendance est, par là même, cette dimension qu'à l'histoire lorsque nous prenons conscience qu'elle n'est pas linéaire, unidimensionnelle, mais au contraire qu'elle est née d'une multiplicité de possible et qu'elle ne nous apparait nécessaire que lorsque, nous retournant vers le passé, nous enregistrons seulement qu'un seul possible a triomphé. Par contre l'histoire en train de se faire, et l'avenir qui va naître d'elle, ne sont pas des scénarios déjà écrits en dehors de nous et sans nous, et qui ne nous laissèrent qu'à jouer des rôles préfabriqués, mais une création continue, un choix, dont nous sommes pleinement responsables, entre plusieurs possibles

¹⁶⁸ Le postulat de la transcendance est biblique et est devenu puissamment mobilisateur à travers les appels à réaliser le Royaume de Dieu sur terre. Les différents projets de Royaume portent l'empreinte de l'époque à laquelle ils ont été conçus, mais ils ne sont pas simple reflet du monde existant, ils proposent chaque fois un ordre social inédit. De Joachim de Flore aux actuelles théologies politiques court une constante : c'est de concevoir le Royaume de Dieu non pas comme un autre monde, mais comme un monde autre. Ainsi le postulat

But there is even more: at least before the prophetic period, Garaudy had already recognised that 'God's transcendence implies his constant negation, since God is beyond all essence and all existence; he is constant creation'¹⁶⁹ (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:160]). Now, however, this irruption of the supernatural becomes in Garaudy's project not a simple negation, but a breaking power. Transcendence is that dimension of Man which releases what has been hitherto concealed:

'It is the opposite of the irrational; it is the critical moment of reason, the permanent questioning of the reason already made in the name of a reason being made and of which it is the ferment'¹⁷⁰ (Garaudy, 1974b: n.p.).

And in ontological terms, 'Transcendence is the interior conflict of immanence. It belongs, not to the order of *being*, but of *doing*' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:90]).

There is still no room in the project for an Otherworldly God, no acceptance that 'The wholly otherness of transcendence can transform and make transparent the whole immanent world from darkness to light' (Hegedüs, 1991:43), nor agreement with a literal interpretation of Jesus' injunction to 'Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself' (Matthew 6:24). Rather, it must still be the case that 'Transcendence, this presence of the future in man, this prophetic dimension of life, is a human dimension, that which inspires it the strength to relativise, to desacralise existing orders and established powers'¹⁷¹ (Garaudy, 1976:185). Otherwise we would be stuck with what Moltmann called an alienated transcendence (Moltmann, 1969:183). This is a hopeful theology as much as a theology of hope, in the end. We are asked to believe that we have lost our way, in a world threatened for its very existence, and lost faith in an eternal God. We

de la transcendance, qui est, comme l'espérance, un aspect de la foi, est à l'origine de toute défatalisation de l'histoire

¹⁶⁹ La transcendance, cette présence de l'avenir dans l'homme, cette dimension prophétique de la vie, est une dimension humaine, celle qui lui inspire la force de relativiser, de désacraliser les ordres existants et les pouvoirs établis

¹⁷⁰ elle est beaucoup plus le moment critique de la raison, la mise en cause permanente de la raison déjà faite, au nom d'une raison en train de se faire et dont elle est le ferment

¹⁷¹ La transcendance, cette présence de l'avenir dans l'homme, cette dimension prophétique de la vie, est une dimension humaine, celle qui lui inspire la force de relativiser, de désacraliser les ordres existants et les pouvoirs établis

want to experience eternity in the transitory by means of the false absolutes of power, wealth, delight, ecstasy and so on, but we are denied (Hegedüs, 1991:111). Garaudy, at least, can tell us *why*.

Not all will agree with the Marxist explanation. Tillich for example says that what is both most similar and most different between Marxism and Christianity is the view of history: prophecy, and differing views of transcendence, of which the last is 'the most fundamental' (Janz, 1998:25).

'There is a kind of transcendence in Marxism, i.e., the limits of the present possibilities of human nature are transcended by the expectation of a coming stage of justice. A kind of miracle in the transition from the present to the future stage of mankind is presupposed, at least implicitly. And it is obvious that Marxism draws a great deal of its psychological power from this element of transcendence and faith. But this transcendence is not the absolute transcendence of Christianity. It remains in time and space, in history and politics. It is dependent on immanent processes. It transcends the present time, but not time as such. It does not know eternity breaking into time, shaking, turning, and transforming the temporal. Marxism never reaches this transcendence' (Tillich, 1941: 256).

Garaudy does not concur:

'For what characterizes this Christian revolutionary tradition from Joachim of Fiore to John Huss, from Thomas Münzer to the theologies of hope and political theologies of our own day, is that the Kingdom of God is not conceived as another world in space and time, but as a different world, a changed world, a world changed by our own efforts. The Kingdom of God is not a promise we have passively to wait to be fulfilled but basically a task to be accomplished' (Garaudy, 1973b:66-67).

Norris equally, in developing his critique of Garaudy the Marxist, focuses on transcendence as the key to dialogue between Marxists and Christians. Marxists, he says, have developed a radically temporal, dynamic, and humanistic concept of transcendence as inherent futurity. Specifically referring to Garaudy (1976), Masset argues that: 'This project ... rests on a conception of man, according to which what is possible is already part of reality; the possible is already reality; Man is what goes beyond, transcendence, a break with what is given and a projection into the future. Transcendence is here'¹⁷² (Masset, 1977:322), that 'dimension of Man which is fully aware that he has no other essence than his future, and that his life will always be incomplete'¹⁷³ (Garaudy, 1976:182). Both appreciate that

¹⁷² Ce projet . . . repose sur une conception de l'homme, selon laquelle le possible chez l'homme fait partie du réel, le possible est déjà du réel ; l'homme est dépassement et transcendance, rupture avec le donné et projection dans l'avenir. La transcendance est ici

¹⁷³ « cette dimension de l'homme prenant conscience qu'il n'a pas d'autre essence que son avenir et qu'il vit d'être inachevé »

Garaudy's concept of transcendence is a human attribute, grounded in individual experience of discontinuity, exigency, and a new future. Theologians too frequently conceive of God's being as the power and the mystery of the future, but conceptualise transcendence as a divine attribute, the limiting concept of an absolute future. For the theologian the future is a reality which comes toward us and can never be reduced to the limited, projected futures of men. It can therefore be called 'God' (Dean, 1976:186). From this distinction, Norris concludes that Garaudy's account of transcendence rests on an immanent and reductionist concept of the future which is ontologically and normatively empty (Norris, 1974:55).

For Norris it further follows that Garaudy must view creativity and history as an endless dialectical process, in which the makeability of history becomes itself the goal of the making of history. But for Norris, criticising Garaudy, God's being, as the power of the Absolute Future, is not incompatible with human autonomy; in fact, it is that from which Man derives his real freedom and responsibility. Despite its value as a source of historical change and social reform, his conclusion is that Garaudy's transcendence does not provide that view of the absolute by which to judge our plans and projects. Finally, unlike the theologian, Garaudy is unable to affirm 'the absolute value of each individual over against all social collectivities' (Dean, 1976:186). This view finds an echo in much more recent criticism of Garaudy's esoteric Christian position: 'As a Communist, and later as a radical Christian, Garaudy believed in transcendence in the sense of surpassing or rising above the present human situation, but his Marxist background made it very difficult for him to countenance a transcendent Deity above and independent of the universe' (Robinson, 2004, n.p.).

With his project to establish mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity, Garaudy aimed at papering over this chasm, and so predictably, he does not agree with Norris. 'It is not utopian, it is sufficient to consider that transcendence, that is, a permanent rupture in Man regarding his

biological or social, psychological or cultural past, is the fundamental teaching of Christianity'¹⁷⁴ (Garaudy, 1977b:17). For the Garaudy of the project, it was in Christianity where the problem of transcendence was raised, and where it is still raised: 'the transcendence at the middle, the this-worldly transcendence appears as the weakness of God in Jesus among the strengths of men' (Hegedüs, 1991:26). In recognising the role that Christianity — and most importantly the example of Christ himself — now plays within the project in generating the basis for transcendence, Pinto refers to three 'postulates' of the rupture: transcendence, prophecy and hope. This final postulate Garaudy now identifies¹⁷⁵ with the essence of Christ (Da Costa Pinto, 1982:738), above all the experience of overcoming limits, and the possibility of creating, at every moment, something new and unforeseeable. God is the creative force at the heart of everything. 'God exists wherever something new is coming to life, in artistic creation, scientific discovery, love or revolution. God is the contradiction of entropy' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:28]).

The resurrection of Christ inaugurates a new existence which is a rupture and surpassing of individualism with the conviction of the good news that 'everything is possible with man, the possible is part of the real'. The resurrection promises a new quality and intensity of life founded on the frontiers of our 'I' and opens us to the other in the common project of new relationships with nature, with our fellow human beings and with the divine. 'But what is it for Garaudy that in Man overflows to man? What is too great in Man to stop himself? Garaudy designates it with a word that he frequently uses in his essay: "the transcendence", "the transcendent". And in Garaudy's opinion, it is through others that one becomes aware of this "transcendence"¹⁷⁶ (Fernández, 1975:n.p). This is a familiar existential theme from Sartre (1943:308) and the death of God movement (Altizer, 1980:50,

¹⁷⁴ No es dominio de la utopia, basta considerar que la trascendencia, la posibilidad permanente de ruptura en el hombre respecto a su pasado biológico o social, psicológico o cultural, es la enseñanza fundamental del cristianismo

¹⁷⁵ identifica

¹⁷⁶ Pero, ¿qué es para Garaudy lo que en el hombre desborda al hombre? ¿aquello que en el hombre es demasiado grande para bastarse a sí mismo? G. lo designa con una palabra que recurre con frecuencia en su ensayo: "la trascendencia", "el trascendente". Y a juicio de G., son los otros en quienes uno toma conciencia de esta 'trascendencia'

2006). But Garaudy's transcendence sides with the liberation theologians (Verhoef, 2017:e4), and post-colonial theorists (Rivera, 2007:170) in being dynamic and socially transformative, at least in intent, as opposed to Sartre's use of self-knowledge through others as an epistemological device or Bloch's reliance on the dialectic (Bloch, 1959:271; Zimmerman, 1970:102). Whilst the effects of this transcendence may be the same as for the Marxist humanist, its source is now different.

The concept of transcendence in the project was still, as was recognised in contemporary comment (e.g. Ries, 1974) and reiterated in contemporary analysis (Pinto, 2017:456) very far from traditional Catholic or Reformation thought. Neither the ineffability of God, His unnamability, holiness, or a Trinitarian ontology, play any part in Garaudy, who would surely have been suspicious of such suggestions as 'the theoretical philosophy of finite Man cannot know the infinite God' (Hegedüs, 1991:7), seeing in them the legacy of a religion and a church from which he was seeking to distance any Marxist humanist concept. Rather, Garaudy's transcendence still 'is of a finite nature as with Bishop J. A. T. Robinson. It is a transcendence limited to this historical world: nature outgrowing itself into culture. Transcendence bears within it the concept of alienation' (Hughes, 1970:61). Finite, yes, but metaphysical in its expression: Garaudy's view was that the 'prophetic spirit' was liberating as it 'relativises all values, forbidding us to take as finished, in the sense of completed, what is finite, that is, created to meet particular needs, and is thus insufficient in relation to the infinite' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:122]).

Further questions and objections

Garaudy's project rested on the existence of a powerful transcendence at the individual level that could, and did, manifest itself socially, concurrently across not only politics but in works of art, literature, science and in love. In so doing, however, Garaudy's transcendence can therefore be placed

along with others from Hegel to Žižek who have argued that transcendence is necessary for the development of human freedom.

A critical review of Norris, for example, faults him for assuming that it is a fault that the Marxist notion of transcendence is immanent in the historical process and, being historically open, also empty. To this can be opposed either a Marxist determinism, with which Garaudy must break (Vree, 1974:50), or a Christian theory in which transcendence is an attribute not of Man but of God. In either case, God or history takes on the capacity of the Absolute Future, the engine of history who has, or at least eventually will, lead Man to Himself. From Garaudy's standpoint within the project, neither is true — both deny freedom to Man, the former confirming Christian suspicion of Marxism as a thief of human freedom and the latter, confirming Marx's contention about Christians and theism. If Vree's view of Marxism devalues human freedom in the name of the dialectic, Norris in effect negates human freedom to elevate the glory of God (Schuller, 1976). Transcendence, in this view, is the enemy of freedom, whether Marxist, Christian or otherwise. If such a criticism were to be extended to the project, a critic could argue Garaudy adopted the worst of both worlds. As one reviewer comes a whisker away from discerning (Carro, 1977:199), transcendence becomes the dialectical materialism of the project, albeit that for the project, historical materialism precedes the dialectic.

This criticism might be thought ill-judged, or at least too harsh. But it is not alone. A second criticism has been that theologians, with whom we can perhaps associate Garaudy in this respect, tend to locate the transcendent in brief moments of experiences (with the rest of our lives doomed as being less important) (Verhoef, 2017:e14). Rahner may have been an exception to this rule — although his stress is epistemological, on transcendental *revelation* (1976 [1978:149]). So too Jürgen Habermas, who insisted on the transcendental significance of virtually universal linguistic structures of human communication (Habermas, 1987:7). A potentially elitist extension of blindness to these alternatives is therefore surely the possibility that transcendence, like intelligence or wealth, is

unevenly distributed, especially under capitalism. Perhaps not all people develop equal capacity to experience transcendence? One is reminded of the suggestion that 'For the Protestant, access to immanent transcendence was freed from the necessary mediation of a hierarchy of clerics but was still restricted to the chosen few within the laity. The damned ones could only be spectators of transcendence' (Ferrara, 2015:112). If so, Garaudy's project introduces a spiritual dimension of human inequality to Marxism, whilst arguing for exactly the reverse.

Even if Garaudy can extricate himself from this dire predicament by convincing us of a specifically Marxist view of alienation, how is this reservoir of transcendence he has identified to be perceived, let alone organised or used? Along with others, Garaudy runs the risk of creating a 'too distant' transcendence, one that has been criticised as becoming unknowable, unreachable and eventually irrelevant to us (Verhoef, 2017:e4). An important example of this problem is that whilst transcendence, and belief in the Resurrection, play a decisive role in the project in explaining how the future may come about, they are notably absent from any analysis by Garaudy of how that future might itself look. It might seem that the three postulates — hope, transcendence and prophecy — are only poorly aligned themselves within the project of mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity. For as soon as Garaudy turns to conceptions of the future, it is to concepts of freedom, liberty and self-management found in Rousseau, and to Marx that he refers, not Jesus (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]). And in fact, as noted above in Chapter Three, it is not even to them that Garaudy looked, rather to alternative futurists such as Chauvey (1970) who as an economist and political theorist makes no mention of, nor seem to require, any concept of transcendence. So how is this transcendence, so important to Garaudy in the political struggle of the moment, to be perceived, let alone organised or used?

At a practical level, if Garaudy believed that his conception of transcendence would encourage further agreement between Marxists and Christians, he was certainly to be disappointed. None of his arguments before the project and certainly any after it either convinced contemporary Marxist critics,

who had parted ways with him over Marxist humanism and were therefore quite unlikely to consider transcendence as anything other than metaphysics. For his principal critic Sève, therefore, transcendence is a redundant concept, swept up in the wider definition of what men actually are. Worse, 'When Garaudy talks of transcendence, Sève replies that the concept is 'at the very least tainted with speculative equivocation' (Geerlandt, 1978:55), which in Marxist terms, is criticism indeed. 'Its use is rightly a heresy in the sense of the orthodox Marxists, and Lucien Sève did not fail to point out mysticism in the use of this concept' (Didier Gauvin, personal communication, 29 November 2018). As if, of course, an accusation of mysticism would in some sense be fatal — in their eyes, at least — if proved correct. Or if not fatal, they should have perhaps to accept that Garaudy was using transcendence as an essentially ideological concept in the Marxist sense, part of a Marxist humanist debate in which his work, like that of Sève and Althusser, need not be taken seriously at the level of theory. Some of Garaudy's critics have asked whether he even meant the same thing over time. Although recognising its importance during Garaudy's Marxist-Christian period, Gauvin argued that transcendence in Roger Garaudy is *an erratic notion*. According to Gauvin: 'The concept of "transcendence" has evolved a lot in Roger Garaudy. Everything happens as if it made this term work as one of those portmanteau words that made Georges Cogniot (1965) say that it is a 'word game'' (Gauvin, 2018:398). These are however two different points: I argue that transcendence *did* mean something more specific, so long as he remained a Marxist, whether avowedly Christian or not. As I will argue in Chapter Six, Gauvin here must borrow from Garaudy's own future to make his case against consistency. As to word games, Marxist critics of Garaudy would also have to accept awkward allies: for a logical positivist of the stripe of A.J. Ayer (1936), it would also perhaps not even be clear that Garaudy was saying anything meaningful at all, any more than was Teilhard de Chardin (Medawar, 1961:99), over whose work Garaudy enthused, being responsible for bringing them to the attention of PCF comrades (O'Collins, 1968:269).

Finally, even if we support Garaudy against dogmatists of a Marxist, positivist or religious inclination, and reject Gauvin's accusation of shifting sands, the suspicion remains, as Norris (1974)

argued, that Garaudy's transcendence is there to be exploited whenever the need arises, an omnibus concept designed, it would seem, to keep atheism at bay. Four decades on, even his key apologist concedes that transcendence, like the principle of levels of analysis, is forced by Garaudy to do too much work: 'each time, we find, as a solution to the deviations or insufficiencies of the present civilisation (or of its socialist contestation) the theme of transcendence as salvation — of a new (spiritual) alliance with the divine' (Gauvin, 2018:397). With *what* divine, we may also therefore legitimately ask? Did Garaudy in effect simply abolish the notion of transcendence as a divine attribute, retaining the word 'God' as a convenient label for what he perceived, in the last analysis, to be a purely human phenomenon? By comparison, more recent Afro-American Christian advocacy, for example, points to the Holy Spirit as the force behind human transcendence (Hinson, 1999), but Garaudy never assigns the Holy Spirit this role. Conversely, in his Christological focus Garaudy could be accused of not entirely escaping the shadow of Rahner, even of the kind of dismissive Christian exceptionalism that has surfaced in subsequent decades, for example amongst African Christians (e.g. Maghezi & Maghezi, 2016), were it not for the evidence of the 'Dialogue of Civilisations' within the project, which was specifically aimed at rejecting any kind of Christian exceptionalism. It is evidently a narrow path to tread successfully, and there must be at least a suggestion that Garaudy does not wholly succeed in keeping to it, however much he attempted it within the project.

Further, not only does Garaudy arguably want the concept to do too much, but he wants to *appropriate* it. Sweeping up freedom, choice and responsibility, it must involve a rupture with existing political structures, an openness to a dialogue of civilisations, it must involve a sacrifice of individuality as traditionally conceived in the West (Garaudy, 1976:181). And above all, it is Marxism and Christianity themselves that must eventually be transcended. Evidence for this can be found in the fact that changing political direction after his departure from the PCF did not require Garaudy to dispense with transcendence: rather, it became his invisible political ally. What was missing — and what makes Garaudy's transcendence an elusive concept — was analysis of what happens when spiritual transcendence meets political reality. So nowhere does Garaudy recognise, let alone

confront, the possibility that others may have quite different conceptions of transcendence. These might range from a liberal contention that two pre-eminent examples of ‘non-individual immanent transcendence are the figure of the Rousseauian legislator and the Rawlsian understanding of the normativity of justice as fairness’ (Ferrara, 2015:114), where creative intervention in law and code could mean ‘a Rawlsian micro-reform’ (Hall, 2012:370) to more malign concepts, especially those tied up with national or even racial identity. Nor does he ever admit any connection between transcendence and the failure of the Marxist–Leninist project, which has been summarised as ‘transcendence is a relic of former mistakes’ (Verhoef, 2017:e5). This omission was eventually to end in tragic consequences, as Chapter Six will show.

More immediately, as the failure of his political project became evident, his optimistic idea of transcendence inevitably threatened to follow it into eclipse. The role of transcendence in the project is liberation. So, if the project fails to deliver liberation, what else can be at fault but transcendence? A parallel can be seen in the role of hope for Moltmann, who has been criticised for presenting ‘God’s Kingdom mainly as a transcendent reality so that it becomes almost a Platonic ideal standing in contrast to earthly existence’ (Fiorenza, 2000). Moltmann’s ‘disappointment at the end of ‘socialism with a human face’ (Moltman, 1974 [2015:xviii]) led to a retreat to the Cross: Garaudy’s response to this continued disappointment is examined in the subsequent Chapter.

Transcendence in the project

It is now possible to draw the threads of this analysis together. Whilst much philosophically of the concept remains from the Marxist humanist conception — goals, in particular, psychology and the underlying philosophy of action — what really changed for Garaudy with the advent of the project is

therefore not what transcendence *is*, but its cause and effect. Four aspects of transcendence in particular change.

First, the *cause* of transcendence. No longer satisfied in an entirely humanist explanation, Garaudy now argues that transcendence cannot be extracted, or even deduced, from man's biological heritage, sociological conditioning, history or even economics. It must come from God; only from God can Man acquire a transcendence which can be 'a break with regard to determinism and rationality as they are defined at this or that moment in history'¹⁷⁷ (Garaudy, 1974b: n.p.). He now *does* believe that his thirst proves the existence of the spring. The concept has retained its underlying ontological continuity — the formulation that 'transcendence is the alienated expression of the leap beyond nature effected in culture' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:134]), but the Garaudy of the project is no longer confident that a purely materialist explanation can suffice for its existence. On the contrary, he now identifies the *cause* of transcendence as the sacred, whereas for a Marxist humanist it must lie somewhere in culture and the personality, to which varying degrees of independence from the economics of class and oppression may be ascribed. This was a point that had been made against him before the project: Paul Lehmann confronted Garaudy's point and countered, not by quibbling over politics but by insisting that "'Transcendence" refers to the possibility and the power of initiative and creation, not as the specific attribute of man, but as the specific gift to man' (Lehmann, 1967:221). As a Marxist humanist, Garaudy was quite prepared to agree that for Christians transcendence was 'the effort to surpass all human limits with the help of God', according to an expression of Carson Blake...Transcendence becomes therefore a dimension of each of our creative acts'¹⁷⁸ (Garaudy, 1968g [2013: n.p]).

The difference between this and transcendence within the project, however, is that Garaudy now agrees that transcendence is divine. Yet as Bustros notes, Garaudy seeks to bridge any Christian

¹⁷⁷ La transcendance est ainsi rupture à l'égard des déterminismes et des rationalités telles qu'elles sont définies en tel ou tel moment de l'histoire

¹⁷⁸ « l'effort pour transcender toutes les limites humaines avec l'aide de Dieu », selon une expression de Carson Blake...La transcendance dévient alors une dimension de chacun de nos actes créateurs

assertion of opposition between the transcendence of God and that of Man, and therefore any concept of transcendence as a gift of God, whether as an aspect of grace or imparted to human nature by God, by combining the two:

‘The more that I work, the more God is the Creator. There is no God outside me. God has passed entirely into Man: he reveals himself and continues his creation in him, through him¹⁷⁹ (Garaudy, 1975:236).

The conclusion is comprehensive: ‘Garaudy’s stress on the problem of subjectivity in the thought of the founders of Marxism leads him to a conception of Man based essentially on transcendence and artistic creation’¹⁸⁰ (Bustros, 1976:45), albeit that this conception of creation is broad; it can and should incorporate the activities of our daily life (Garaudy, 1975:54). In his prophetic period, it is expressed thus:

‘We have never ceased to show how urgent it was to bring out, at every level, projects transcending the immediate desire, the established order or the established norm. We must clearly define what we mean by transcendence, not just as an attribute of God, but as the essential dimension of man¹⁸¹ (Garaudy, 1976:179).

Which he then proceeds to do:

‘We mean by transcendence the way in which man, in each of his creative acts (be it scientific invention, or technique, artistic creation, love, revolution or sacrifice) transforms his lived experience into something above and beyond the historical conditions that have engendered it; that his future cannot be deduced from just his biological heritage, his sociological conditioning, his culture, or his training. Transcendence is thus a rupture with determinism and rationality, defined at this or that moment of history, for reason is never anything but a provisional account of the conquests of rationality¹⁸² (Garaudy, 1976:179).

And again that:

¹⁷⁹ Plus je travaille, plus Dieu est créateur. Il n’y a pas d’extériorité de Dieu. Dieu est passé tout entier dans l’homme; Il se révèle et continue sa création en lui, par lui

¹⁸⁰ La mise en valeur par Garaudy du problème de la subjectivité dans la pensée des fondateurs du marxisme l’amène à une conception de l’homme basée essentiellement sur la transcendance et la création artistique

¹⁸¹ Nous n’avons cessé...de montrer combien était pressante l’exigence de faire émerger, à tous les niveaux, des projets transcendant le désir immédiat, l’ordre institué ou la norme établie. Nous devons définir clairement ce que nous entendons par transcendance, non pas seulement comme attribut de Dieu, mais comme dimension essentielle de l’homme

¹⁸² Nous appelons transcendance le dépassement par lequel l’homme, en chacun des actes créateurs (qu’il s’agisse d’invention scientifique, ou technique, de création artistique, d’amour, de révolution ou de sacrifice) fait l’expérience des conditions historiques qui l’ont engendré; que son avenir ne se déduit pas seulement de son héritage biologique, de ses conditionnements sociologiques, de sa culture, de sa formation. La transcendance est ainsi rupture à l’égard du déterminisme et des rationalités tels qu’ils sont définis en tel ou tel moment de l’histoire, car la raison n’est jamais qu’un bilan provisoire des conquêtes de la rationalité

'We call transcendence the permanent possibility of breaking with the established order and the already existing models of society. That is to say, the way in which, instead of seeking the ends of a society within the system, as in our societies of growth for growth, to resign oneself to the blind proliferation, without finality human, science, technology, economics and consumption, we can seek the ends of society outside the system; in a new way of living our relationships with nature, with other men, with the future, and choosing a new model of civilisation'¹⁸³ (Garaudy, 1976:180).

And hence:

'We will call transcendence this dimension of Man where he becomes aware that he has no other essence than his future and that he lives to be unfinished. This future, at the same time it welcomes it as an unforeseeable gift — some will say "a grace" — and at the same time it seeks and prepares it as a work to be done, as in the poetic act, in the creative act'¹⁸⁴ (Garaudy, 1976:183).

So further:

'This same faith in "transcendence", that is to say in the certainty, turning into a principle of action, that no authority can impose itself as the centre and measure of everything, is protection at the same time against any external tyranny and against any abandonment of my individual drives.

Transcendence is the opposite of "sufficiency", for individuals as well as for institutions. This certainty is the foundation of complete freedom; there is a power, which is in us without being ours, to let ourselves be enslaved by no partial desire, to make ourselves available for any enterprise beyond our own interests. It makes us fully responsible for our personal freedom as well as our common history.

Freedom is not an "attribute of the individual", isolated from all others, competitors and rivals, in the jungle of interests and the race for growth; it is based on the presence in each of this transcendent power'¹⁸⁵ (Garaudy, 1979: 31).

¹⁸³ Nous appelons transcendance la possibilité permanente de rupture avec l'ordre établi et les modèles déjà existants de société. C'est-à-dire l'acte par lequel, au lieu de chercher les fins d'une société à l'intérieur du système, comme dans nos sociétés de croissance pour la croissance, de se résigner à la prolifération aveugle, sans finalité humaine, des sciences, des techniques, de l'économie et de la consommation, nous pouvons chercher les fins de la société au dehors du système; dans une manière nouvelle de vivre nos rapports avec la nature, avec les autres hommes, avec l'avenir, et de choisir un nouveau modèle de civilisation. Il ne s'agit pas d'une simple négation, mais d'un pouvoir de rupture. La transcendance est cette dimension de l'homme qui fait émerger en lui l'homme cache. Elle est le contraire de l'irrationnel; elle est le moment critique de la raison, la mise en cause permanente de la raison déjà faite au nom d'une raison en train de se faire et dont elle est le ferment

¹⁸⁴ Nous appellerons transcendance cette dimension de l'homme prenant conscience qu'il n'a pas d'autre essence que son avenir et qu'il vit d'être inachevé. Cet avenir, à la fois il l'accueille comme un imprévisible don — certains diront « une grâce » — et en même temps il le recherche et le prépare comme une œuvre à accomplir, comme dans l'acte poétique, dans l'acte créateur

¹⁸⁵ Cette même foi dans la « transcendance », c'est-à-dire dans la certitude, devenant principe d'action, qu'aucune autorité ne peut s'imposer comme centre et mesure de toute chose, est protection à la fois contre toute tyrannie extérieure et contre tout abandon à mes entraînements individuels.

The best example of such transcendence is to be found in great art¹⁸⁶, says Garaudy (1979:234): the opposite of an individualistic, Renaissance version of artistic endeavour, a mere reflection of existing reality aimed at the market, but rather, a project, exploration of and experimentation with possible futures, which draws in not spectators, still less consumers, but co-creators of a prophetic future.

For the Garaudy of the prophetic period, transcendence is therefore impossible without the opening of Man to God: 'This book is written only to trace the birth of God in Man and Man in God' (Garaudy, 1979:65). 'Eschatology does not consist in saying: this is where we will be led to, but in saying: tomorrow can be different, that is to say, everything cannot be reduced to that which exists today. This biblical postulate of transcendence is the first postulate of all revolutionary action' (Garaudy, 1975:235–6). Not that Garaudy ever tries to use transcendence as proof of the existence of God. Transcendence plays a role in battles within Marxism, not over faith.

Second, therefore, *faith* in transcendence. Garaudy argues that: 'To express faith in the language of our time means to help people to realise that creation is not finished. That the act of God is to create. That God is act, the act of love, the act of liberation' (Garaudy, 1976a [1980:9]). What Garaudy offers here, it is alleged, is a confession of faith disguised as philosophical analysis (Mayrl, 1978:86). Genuine Christianity, we are told, is similar to authentic Marxism in that it adheres to a dialectic of possibility. It rejects dogmatic and positivistic approaches to reality — the tendency to sanctify and reify what is and thereby to overlook what could be. 'For a Marxist, transcendence is never absolute. It means passing from one order to another' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:90]).

La transcendance, c'est le contraire de la « suffisance », pour les individus comme pour les institutions. Cette certitude est le fondement de toute liberté plénière: il existe un pouvoir, qui est en nous sans être à nous, de ne nous laisser asservir par aucun désir partiel, de nous rendre disponible pour n'importe quelle entreprise dépassant nos intérêts propres. Il nous rend pleinement responsable de notre liberté personnelle comme de notre commune histoire. La liberté n'est pas un « attribut de l'individu », isolé de tous les autres, concurrents et rivaux, dans la jungle des intérêts et de la course à la croissance; elle est fondée sur la présence en chacun de ce pouvoir transcendant

¹⁸⁶ Le grand art nous offre le modèle le plus évident de cette transcendance

In Christ, Garaudy argued, 'the God of distant transcendence entered into the daily history of men' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:91]). Garaudy's Christ is 'a breaker of idols and chains, a by-passer of boundaries, one who destroyed taboos and placed himself beyond justice, good and evil in the name of a love that transcended all historical limits' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:91]). And Marxism must incorporate this Christian insight, the divine element in man, for it to succeed: 'The revolutionary attitude, in politics as well as in art, needs transcendence even more than realism' (Garaudy, 1972 [1976:91]).

Thus, the exhortations of Hebrew Prophets to do away with false idols were really struggles against reification; the resurrection of Christ was an expression of dialectical transcendence. Moltmann is therefore quoted with approval, 'This faith can be defined as the moment of rupture, the experience of rupture, of transcendence' (Garaudy, 1977:15). Ries reported that at a colloquium held at Mons in May 1974, Garaudy argued that to replace even a law of correspondence, let alone of determinism, a genuinely revolutionary consciousness supported by a postulate of transcendence emerges from the future — a prophetic tradition which insists that the current order is not immutable. 'Many times, this challenge is based on religious models' (Ries, 1974:515). In seeking consistency between Christianity and Marxism, Christian faith has for Garaudy tentatively replaced a Leninist faith in the Party.

Third, the *means* of transcendence have altered. For Garaudy, transcendence was always 'a gift of love from the individual to the whole of humanity' [Garaudy, 1966 [1970:114]]. Its significance is unparalleled: 'the new dimensions and significance given to love by Christianity are the richest contribution it has made to the continued creation of man by man [of Man by men]' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:137]). Why? Because in the absence of the militant discipline of a Marxist–Leninist Party, the rediscovery of love, one of the decisive contributions of Christianity, takes on an *independent* role in bringing about transcendence. In every being, love is a witness to the impossibility of living in isolation' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:139]). Christian love is the essential relationship of the human being toward

God and other fellow humans. It is the transcendence of the individual in birth, the act of creating the human being. It is the immanent need of the human being as a spiritual being. Love of the other therefore calls on us to emerge from ourselves, to break through our own limits and transcend ourselves, to identify our interests with those of others and to recognise the possibility of transcendence through sacrifice, following Christ's example. 'Love belongs to the order not of *nature* but of *culture*: for a value cannot be given "from outside", even though the giver be a God' (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:140]). In this he has support from another thinker whom he admires: 'Someday, after harnessing the winds, and the tides, and gravity, we shall harness, for God, the energies of love. And then, for the second time in the history of the world, Man will have discovered fire' (de Chardin, 1975: 86–87). Again, transcendence powered by Christianity substitutes for revolution dictated by a Marxist–Leninist Party as the mechanism of social transformation.

Yet transcendence, although its absence is its essential dimension, cannot be reduced only to a question of means, as Bloch recognised. It is also that which is actualised in the human being, that which is creative and thereby expressed also in immanence' (Skledar, 1989:18). 'For Garaudy, transcendence is a dimension of man, of his history, of his future. In the lived experience which shows to Man that he is more than the result of conditioning, is an overcoming. The new models of culture make it possible to grasp, through the permanent possibilities of breaking with earlier models, the hidden emergence of man. Finally, the consciousness of incompleteness shows us that history is born of a multiplicity of possibilities among which only one triumphed¹⁸⁷ (Ries, 1974:515). Noteworthy within the project is the stress Garaudy placed on new models of culture — some of which he himself was closely involved in promoting through the 'Dialogue of Civilisations'.

¹⁸⁷ Pour Garaudy, la transcendance est une dimension de l'homme, de son histoire, de son avenir. Dans l'expérience vécue qui montre à l'homme qu'il est plus que le résultat des conditionnements, se trouve un dépassement. Les nouveaux modèles de culture permettent de saisir, à travers les possibilités permanentes de rupture avec les modèles antérieurs, l'émergence cachée de l'homme. Enfin, la conscience de l'inachèvement nous montre que l'histoire est née d'une multiplicité de possibles parmi lesquels un seul a triomphé

Fourth, although the most significant *effect* of transcendence remains revolution, we know from discussion above (in Chapter Three) that in the period of the project Garaudy's conception of revolution, especially in developed countries such as France, had evolved to be far different from that with which he may have identified in previous decades. What now also distinguishes the project from its Marxist humanist predecessor is the enhanced *role* of transcendence. No longer is it what Pinto describes as 'horizontal' (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:453). The Garaudy of the project is explicit that 'without the recognition of the transcendence of God in relation to man...the permanent possibility of a wisdom that goes beyond science and commands it to its purposes, and of unpredictable divine emergency and creation beyond the limited ends of our technical reason', there can be no socialist revolution — and no real future for man¹⁸⁸ (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:458). For the Garaudy of the project, there can be no transcendence without Marxism, any more than there can be transcendence without Christianity, or at least without borrowing its contribution to transcendence.

Still further, Garaudy now claims that all political humanism will fail unless it recognises this transcendence as its first and most fundamental dimension. In his view, this conception of history would be as much a break with the conservatism of traditional structures as with the so-called "revolutionary" and, in fact, positivist version of pseudo-scientific determinism (Garaudy is pointing the finger at dogmatic Marxism–Leninism). To embrace transcendence is to reject any mechanistic conception of a "sense of history, whether placing Man under the fiefdom of a Divine Providence external to him or equally to a historical dialectic, if conceived as a particular case of a "dialectic of nature " (Garaudy, 1976:180). Garaudy cites Gide's aphorism that 'there is no worse conservative than a revolutionary in power'¹⁸⁹ and quotes liberation theology in support: 'Messianism is the presupposition of humanism, which depends entirely on its confiding in the power of transcendence

¹⁸⁸ Sans la reconnaissance de la transcendance de Dieu par rapport à l'homme...la possibilité permanente d'une sagesse qui dépasse la science et l'ordonne à ses fins, d'imprévisibles émergence et création divines qui dépassent les fins limitées de notre raison technicienne

¹⁸⁹ il n'est pire conservateur qu'un révolutionnaire au pouvoir

of Man as the only factor of liberation possible'¹⁹⁰ (Garaudy, 1976:185; Alves, 1969:116; Gutiérrez, 1973). Indeed, 'the theology of liberation starts from the biblical postulate that the resurrection is the affirmation of "everything is possible". It incorporates the prophetic postulate under which a human work is never the last end. Therefore, we must change the world and change the world changed. For this theology, transcendence is a dimension of Man and the sacred is immanent to human work'¹⁹¹ (Ries, 1974: 516). This conception of a politics that embraces transcendence, Garaudy reminds us, must include feminism, as 'a humanist socialism that welcomes the feminine side of itself, cannot disregard faith, nor can it disregard women' (Garaudy, 1981:138–139). This view pre-dated the project — Garaudy having argued before that 'woman is man's future'. (Garaudy, 1966 [1970:143]), but Gauvin still dismissed this as evidence merely of Garaudy's lack of immunity to political correctness (Gauvin, 2018:397). This point will be revisited in Chapter Seven.

Conclusion

Transcendence was carried over by Garaudy from his earlier Marxist humanism into his project of mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity. As a result, the content of his concept of transcendence changed but little, illustrating how thin Garaudy's atheistic veneer really was in his Marxist humanist phase. At that time, it garnered support from others easily enough when the God—from—above was declared dead. Moltmann's God draws us to the future, encouraging the development of a concept of transcendence. Equally significantly, Altizer's God became the spiritual dimension of man's own being — more Marxist than Christian, if the only choice is between the two

¹⁹⁰ Le messianisme est le presupposé de l'humanisme qui dépend entièrement de sa confiance dans le pouvoir de transcendance de l'homme comme seul facteur de libération possible

¹⁹¹ En effet la théologie de la libération part du postulat biblique que la résurrection est l'affirmation du « tout est possible ». Elle y intègre le postulat prophétique en vertu duquel une œuvre humaine n'est jamais fin dernière. Dès lors, il faut changer le monde puis changer le monde changé. Pour cette théologie, la transcendance est une dimension de l'homme et le sacré est immanent à l'œuvre humaine

definitions of transcendence Garaudy presented. At least as far as transcendence is concerned, Garaudy's project of mutual dependence was therefore already effected when Christianity, at least radical theology, caught up with Marxist humanism. The ordinary individuals Garaudy had created were now enabled to do extraordinary things.

Unfortunately, the transcendence of Garaudy's project was as elusive a concept as the project in which it played such an important role. It was as easy as radical and liberation theology in general to be subjected to intellectual criticism and subjected to the test of history. It was also vulnerable not only to the criticisms levelled against Garaudy's predecessors, but also some particular to Marxists and others specific to his own formulation of the concept. By the end of the time he committed to the project, Garaudy perceived his transcendence as in desperate need of an invincible ally. Yet none of the criticisms eventually proved fatal. Partly this is because as with the tenacity of the project overall, so with transcendence as a component. Conscious of the need for political and ideological flexibility, and more aware of the likely shape of the future than contemporary critics, Garaudy had always intended to remain at a high level of generality and distinguished his analysis as much by what he refused to elaborate as by what he did argue.

Loosely defined, transcendence had its space, or level, in the project — but its elusiveness was not necessarily as much of a weakness as his critics argued, especially when left to others to develop. In thus siting transcendence within immanence, Garaudy anticipates the future biography of transcendence, which has 'shifted from the metaphysical belief that the very essence of the Other or Truth or Transcendence can be known, to an openness to transcendence at the historical, immanent level' (Du Toit, 2011:e9). It may after all matter that *when modern thought rediscovered transcendence, it is in significant measure Garaudy's version that has now been uncovered*. I present transcendence more critically and give voice to this rediscovery in my restatement of Garaudy's project in Chapter Seven. For Garaudy himself, however, it was too late, the project had ended.

Chapter Six: Garaudy's conversion to Islam

Introduction

Previous Chapters focused entirely on Garaudy's project during the 1970s, identifying the mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity at its core. The eventual trajectory of the project was that, far from bringing the two ends of the chain together, in 1982 he dropped them both and converted to Islam. Several attempts have already been made to explain Garaudy's conversion (Fleury, 2004; Gauvin, 2018; Minard, 2019). The reason why I am attempting it again in this chapter lies in my focus on the project which immediately preceded it: an explanation for conversion is also a self-critique of the project.

It may be wise to commence by agreeing with scholars who have argued that 'conversion is a shift in religious allegiance across traditions' (Stark and Finke 2000:114). But whilst this may appear uncontroversial, there are multiple conceptualisations and definitions of religious conversion (Snook et al., 2018:224). It has even been argued that 'conversion is what a group or person says it is' (Rambo, 1993:7). My resolution of this conundrum is that whilst Garaudy's shift of religious allegiance towards Islam is a matter of empirical record, there remains the wider question as to what extent his conversion encompassed a change of faith or belief, whether religious or otherwise, which I seek to elucidate in this chapter. Two claims must I believe be addressed immediately.

The first is that Garaudy's conversion was entirely driven by his personal life. At one level this was the suggestion that 'It is hard to find a single explanation for his different political and ideological affiliations. Roger Garaudy was a very complex personality. His itinerary proves it'¹⁹² (Tissot, 2012,

¹⁹² Il est difficile de trouver une explication unique à ses différentes adhésions politiques et idéologiques. Roger Garaudy était une personnalité très complexe. Son itinéraire le prouve

n.p.). At another is the suggestion implicit in the remark that ‘Roger Garaudy converted to Islam, several weeks after having met his future wife, the Palestinian Salma Al-Farouki’¹⁹³ (Prazan & Minard, 2007:37f). No doubt Garaudy was a complex personality; no doubt also that his conversion and marriage were two intertwined events. As Sève rightly said, it is necessary to take into account an entire biography when assessing individual decisions (Sève, 1969 [1978:141]). But to attribute Garaudy’s conversion entirely to his personal life would overlook the fact that his interest in Islam dated back many decades, as well as the surely strong possibility that any such intertwining might have a more complex set of causal relationships. It would also make for a short chapter indeed. An equally limited perspective would be to go to the other extreme and take Garaudy’s own arguments for his conversion at face value without subjecting them to critical analysis. My approach will therefore be different from both: I aim to take Garaudy’s conversion as seriously as the project that immediately preceded it.

The second, almost diametrically opposite to the first, even if from the same source, is that ‘it appears that this conversion was not the result of mere caprice, but rather progress over many years which in retrospect seems almost naturally to lead to adherence to Islam’¹⁹⁴ (Minard, 2019:2), a view to which Robinson (2004) pays tribute by quoting from scripture: ‘Allah guides to his light whomsoever he wills’¹⁹⁵ (Quran 24:35). Amidst the ‘remarkable silence’¹⁹⁶ with regard to theories of conversion to Islam by Europeans (Allievi, 1999:283), this way of thinking generally suggests that conversion cannot be reduced to a decision point, as symbolised by the moment of ritual of integration into a new community. This echoes the view taken by many Western scholars over the decades, who have placed emphasis on a progressive series of events rather than a separately identifiable, unique experience (Scroggs & Douglas, 1967:206; Zinnbauer & Pargament 1998; Hood et al., 2003). It may

¹⁹³ Roger Garaudy s’est converti à l’islam en 1982, quelques semaines après avoir rencontré sa future femme, la Palestinienne Salma Al-Farouki

¹⁹⁴ Il apparaît que cette conversion résulte non pas d’une simple fougade, mais d’un cheminement de plusieurs années qui, rétrospectivement, semble Presque naturellement déboucher sur l’adhésion à l’islam

¹⁹⁵ Yahde 'llahu li-nuri-hi man yasha

¹⁹⁶ Etrange silence!

even be difficult to identify points in time along a continuum where it begins and ends (Snow and Machalek, 1974: 170). On the contrary, conversion becomes perceptible as the games and issues for the individual become clearer in their interaction with others and the dialectical relationship with the individual personality (Fleury, 2004:28).

After his conversion, Garaudy himself did take the view, frequently identified amongst converts (Stark & Finke, 2000:122), that Islam was his natural final resting place (Garaudy, 1985, 1989), 'the logical outcome of a path with which it is in perfect continuity' (Forget: 1997:111). Perhaps this was understandable, after the kind of adverse comment on his previous change of political tack discussed in Chapter Two, and then his public declaration of Christianity (Garaudy, 1975:265). I however do not seek to deny the claim of process itself, as any refutation of inevitability or even likelihood would be difficult without straying into speculation over alternative biographical trajectories. Nor is my purpose to use the example of Garaudy to debate theories of conversion. Rather, I seek to prevent any such claim facilitating elision of what I argue is a very significant break between the project and the Islam that followed it: what was inevitably cast aside in Garaudy's conversion and why. There may, however, be an implicit theoretical rebuke in my argument: sociological theories of gradualness could be envisaged as obscuring very real differences of belief required to convert from one religion to another.

The political failure of the project

My principal assertion is that in the case of Garaudy, these differences of belief need not necessarily be *differences of faith*. Garaudy himself referred to 'The central affirmation of my life: that politics, artistic creation and faith are all one'¹⁹⁷ (Garaudy, 1975:259). Yet what he saw in practice

¹⁹⁷ L'affirmation centrale de ma vie: la politique, la création artistique et la foi ne font qu'un

during the 1970s was a fracturing of all three. Politics as Garaudy had known and practised it for almost five decades had evidently reached a dead end. There was not the slightest chance of revolution in France; rather:

‘the 1970s marked the end of an era in French intellectual life, symbolised by the death of Jean-Paul Sartre in April 1980. The slow atrophy of Marxism provided spaces for a wide variety of non-Marxist intellectual currents, most notably liberalism, but none of them seemed to give much direction to the great political struggles of the era’ (Chabal, 2016:244).

The political suggestions Garaudy had advanced in the successive books of the project — notably in *L’Alternative* (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]), *Parole d’Homme* (Garaudy, 1975) and finally in *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979) — had come to nothing in the short term. He had tried to lead his country to a promised land, but without a Party, without even a coherent band of followers. Amorphous concepts of potential agents of change such as ‘youth’ or even ‘the new historical bloc’ had turned to political dust. Politics, at least in France, did not even seem to have any need for the prophets that he had argued it needed (Garaudy, 1979:9). He had become ‘politically marginalised’¹⁹⁸ (Minard, 2019:12).

Second, and connected with the former, intellectuals and culture were in significant measure divorcing the political Left worldwide, including in France (CIA, 1985:13; Poirrier, 2004:305). Artistic affiliation to the political Right had by the end of the 1970s become far more socially acceptable in France than it was even a decade earlier, let alone immediately post-war, when Garaudy could suggest that there was such a close relationship between Marxism and ‘French culture’ that ‘The greatest masters of thought and of the arts are with us or near us’ (Garaudy, 1946b:1). And finally, the anti-Communist direction in which Pope John Paul II was taking the Catholic Church (Giovagnoli, 2005) indicated the extent to which Vatican II and the Marxist–Christian dialogue had been left far behind.

The extent and rapidity of this triple rebuff, which occurred predominantly during the course of Garaudy’s project, should surely not be underestimated. The challenge with which the Garaudy of the project increasingly grappled was therefore this: that however much personal treasure he had

¹⁹⁸ Marginalisé politiquement

saved up in the world, however high his reputation, he did not believe that the project had made the world a better place in practical, political terms. Although as outlined in Chapter Three, he nominally had a programme of action to replace Marxism–Leninism (Garaudy, 1976, 1979), the risk was now clearly apparent to him that this programme would fail, at least in the short term. Gauvin was scathing in his assessment:

‘His return to God in the 1970s locked Roger Garaudy into an offbeat image, generated by a social perception which was essentially secular, atheist and culturally markedly on the Left, as these were the characteristic features of French society; the perception was largely passed through the prism of Garaudy’s ‘enemies’ (Althusser, Foucault and their imitators) and was therefore rather negative. Whoever then passed for a ‘renegade’ for the PCF — but also for the ‘progressive tradition’ — had little chance of preserving their audience except to ‘play the game’ by ‘symbolic acrobatics’ aimed at offsetting the devaluation of his own [intellectual] capital; a vicious circle, because even the search for visibility resulted in spectacular but delegitimising positions’¹⁹⁹ (Gauvin, 2018:430–431).

Such a realisation could have perhaps led to different outcomes: a retreat to quietism, which Garaudy felt unable and unwilling to do, for example, or an attempt to revise the political programme and the project generally, which I attempt in Chapter Seven. In fact, it led Garaudy to the public adoption of another set of political and religious identities altogether.

No longer a Marxist

I argue that Garaudy’s openness to Islam relied crucially on his inability to satisfy himself any longer of the relevance, plausibility or applicability of Marxism, even that of the project, to the politics of the 1980s and beyond. The progressive revision of Marxist ontology, ethics and ‘eschatology’ is evident in his work and has been described above in Chapter Three. The political failure of the project

¹⁹⁹ Son retour à Dieu des années 1970 a confiné Roger Garaudy dans l’image décalée par une perception sociale essentiellement laïque, athée et culturellement marquée à gauche, puisque tels étaient les traits caractéristiques de la société française; cette perception largement passée au prisme des ‘ennemis’ de Garaudy (Althusser, Foucault et leurs épigones) fut donc plutôt négative. Celui qui passe dès lors pour un ‘renégat’ pour le PCF — mais aussi pour ‘la tradition progressiste’ légitime — avait peu de chances de préserver son audience sauf à ‘faire le jeu’ par des ‘acrobaties symboliques’ visant à compenser la dévaluation de son capital propre ; cercle vicieux, car la recherche même de visibilité se paie de prises de positions spectaculaires mais délégitimatrices

in practical terms led Garaudy to a further, and still more dramatic theoretical reappraisal. After what Garaudy had seen with the successive failures of Stalinism, then Eurocommunism and the PCF, and above all finally with what he saw as the failure of his own project, even the vastly revised Marxism of the project no longer seemed to him a solution to the problem of the ills of the world. By the time Garaudy reached the point of his conversion, he was prepared no longer to look at the world as a Marxist. Whilst this of itself was not a sufficient cause for his conversion, once Garaudy no longer considered himself a Marxist, the principal roadblock to conversion to Islam was removed, and a huge political space opened up for him in consequence.

The political attraction of Islam

Garaudy recounted several times the event that first brought Islam to his attention. In Algeria, his life was saved by Muslim guards who refused to shoot innocent prisoners, including him. At the time, the religious aspect of the incident was less important to him than the solidarity of the prisoners, and their fraternal relations with the guards; he actually described the whole affair as his first experience of militant action (Garaudy, 1975, 1989; Robinson, 2004). Back in post-war France, Garaudy could not have avoided the ambiguous attitude of French intellectuals in general towards Islam because of French colonial rule over Islamic countries in North Africa and the Middle East. There can for example be no doubt of the strength of Islam as part of the inspiration towards national self-determination in Algeria. The gradual dawning of increased recognition of the contribution made to France by its colonial history, and the growing political and artistic significance of the Muslim immigrant community in France, all appeared to Garaudy at least to chime with his own campaign within the project for a 'Dialogue of Civilisations' (Garaudy, 1976).

Such resonance was reinforced by the widespread perception, in the immediate post-war decades, that unlike a Christianity allegedly revolving around individualism, the already collective *ummah* of Islam could turn to socialism. The early 1970s were still heady political times that had seen the Palestinian resistance, and Ba'ath parties in Iraq and Syria expressing their allegiance to socialism, at least in principle (Carré, 1973:1054). The Islamic world, just as much as the Western, was permeated with socialist, and Marxist ideas, even in the years immediately prior to Garaudy's conversion (Sing, 2018). At the time Garaudy converted, the identification of the Islamic world with resistance to Western capitalism was still not too far-fetched, provided one was prepared to overlook such instances as the blatant collaboration of the Taliban in Afghanistan with the United States in their fight against Soviet occupation (Hartman, 2002). Other French intellectuals, such as Vincent Monteil, were similarly impressed: for them both, 'Islam therefore appeared as the means of committing oneself in a fight against the oppression of the West'²⁰⁰ (Gardeul, 2004:509). Contemporary Islamic capitalism, as witnessed *par excellence* in the United Arab Emirates, but also in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and even Iran and Pakistan, was much less in evidence, and even then, it was Wahhabi Islam in Saudi Arabia that was to impress Garaudy least.

But, it has been suggested, 'It was the Iranian Revolution above all which accelerated Garaudy's rapprochement with Islam'²⁰¹ (Minard, 2019:5). 'Inevitably, Islam's power to mobilise the masses in the Iranian revolution of 1979 fascinated and attracted him' (Robinson, 2004), not least because of the inequality of wealth in the Shah's Iran (Garaudy, 1979:19). In the West much was heard, during the course of the Iranian revolution, about 'an unnatural alliance between Marxists and Muslims which was bound to end with the Marxists swallowing up the Muslims after the overthrow of the Shah' (Algar, 1980:10). Robinson was surely right to point to both the anti-Americanism and the anti-Zionism of the Iranian revolution as politics with which Garaudy felt at home. Although Europe—

²⁰⁰ L'islam apparaît alors comme le moyen de s'engager personnellement dans un combat contre un Occident oppresseur

²⁰¹ c'est surtout la révolution iranienne qui accélère le rapprochement de Garaudy avec l'islam

wide, the Left's response varied between Parties and factions (Greason, 1986), and by no means all converts to Islam did so with Marx in mind (Minard & Prazan, 2006:30), the importance of the Iranian revolution for the Left in France must not be underestimated. Garaudy was not the only left-wing intellectual to fall under its spell. Michel Foucault was arguably the most prominent, his positive evaluation of the Iranian revolution coinciding with a reading of Bloch (Foucault, 1978), and extensively criticised thereafter (e.g. Scullion, 1995; Leezenberg, 2004; Afary & Anderson, 2005). In Garaudy's project, Islam and especially the revolutionary promise of Iran, Libya and even Algeria were already all potential recruits to the cause of transcendence. Hence the new type of revolutionary that Garaudy thought he discerned in contemporary Islam (Garaudy, 1979:283) was one 'fully aware that transcendence is the first condition of the break' (Garaudy, 1979:296–7). In the project, there was always hope, even if there was not good judgement.

Yet however sympathetic he was to the Iranian Revolution, it was the Middle East where Garaudy developed an increasing political focus. The particular political issue to which Garaudy found himself increasingly drawn during the 1970s was the plight of the Palestinian people. Finally, this came to a head, as described by Robinson:

'in 1982, together with Fr. Lelong and Pastor Matthiot, Garaudy paid to have a full-page article in the French daily newspaper *Le Monde*. In the article, which appeared on 17 June, the authors argued that the recent massacres in the Lebanon, far from being an unfortunate mistake, were consistent with the internal logic of political Zionism. As a result of this, Garaudy received several anonymous death threats and was widely ostracised. A fortnight later, he officially converted to Islam. Although he had been contemplating doing so for some time, we may surmise that the support that he received from Muslims who endorsed his criticism of Israel gave him additional impetus' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.).

In criticising Zionism during the project, he had drawn on Islam equally with his own recently professed Christian faith (Garaudy, 1975:265), arguing that the Quran, Islam also being a religion in the Abrahamic tradition, was 'inspired by the same universalism and the same spiritual interiority in its interpretation of the covenant. It is an alliance open to all who act according to the spirit of God . . . [for] "The Lord said: My covenant will not extend to the wrong-doers"' (Sura II, 124). Therefore, it is not a question of an alliance according to blood but rather of a pact of the heart (Garaudy, 1977c:43).

But criticism of Zionism within the project was never accompanied by an attack on the Jewish religion, let alone by anti-Semitism. By the time of his conversion, however, anti-Zionism, which served as a bridge to help connect his socialism and Islam, had finally become so important a part of his politics that it developed sufficient impetus to drag him across the religious spectrum, and he was prepared to abandon Marxism for what he perceived as the greater good.

Political Islam as a replacement for Marxism

Garaudy was far from alone in envisaging Islam as a religion that was less comfortable with the Western world than could be any eschatological Christianity. There was, it has been claimed, an ‘elemental rift between a Christian vision in which the world is politically fallen and an Islamic one in which the world can surely be redeemed partly via the political’ (Akhtar, 1991:7). If ‘Classical Islamism until recently was a phase of Islam in combative contestation with European colonialism, while engaged in conversation with its two major ideological rivals — nationalism and socialism’ (Dabashi, 2008:258), more recently too there has been no shortage of advocates for a political Islam that set its face against corruption and injustice: ‘The storms that now blow across Arab deserts can dethrone kings’ (Akhtar, 1991:3). In this view, predominantly Latin American liberation theology, which as we saw in Chapter Three was conceptually close to Garaudy’s project, ‘is essentially an Islamization of Christianity’ (Akhtar, 1991:11). So far, we may think that Robinson (2004), Collès (2013) and Gauvin (2018) are right: Garaudy has only changed his religious community, not his faith, nor his politics.

This would be mistaken. Well before Garaudy converted, leading Islamic scholars had gone beyond the ‘tempestuous love affair between Marxism and Islam’ (Sing, 2018:49) — that metaphor again — and both the adoption of ideas from Marxism within Islam and the usurpation of Marxist

rhetoric (Talattof, 2005:646) to make explicit the irreconcilable differences between them. A notable example was the series of articles that the leading left-wing Islamic scholar Ali Shar'iati published in the Iranian newspaper Kayhan in 1976, under the title of 'Man, Marxism and Islam', collected and translated four years later in a book (Shar'iati, 1980). For Shar'iati, the radical idea of an Islam without institutionalised religious leadership (Shar'iati, 1980:9) was prefaced by the recognition of Islam as a total world view²⁰² (Shar'iati, 1980:8). In his view, in Marx, 'man is ultimately returned to the mechanical nature of the naturalists, to be conceived of as a material entity' (Shar'iati, 1980:29). Marx gives with one hand — to society — and takes away with the other — by materialism (Shar'iati, 1980:29). He went on to argue that 'In communist society, we find a similar downward curve in human moral values' (Shar'iati, 1980:33), and concluded that 'the intense attention to fashion and luxury now prevalent in both individual lives and the system of state production arises from the fact that, practically speaking and in the final analysis, Marxist and capitalist societies present a single kind of man to the marketplace of human history' (Shar'iati, 1980:33). Garaudy would no doubt have agreed with the criticism of 'communist societies', had Shar'iati confined his judgement to the Soviet Union and other countries organised along similar lines. But whereas both as a Marxist humanist and within the project Garaudy wishes to rescue Marxism, Shar'iati sought to bury it along with the societies he presented as inescapable conclusions of Marxist principles, and by contrast 'attempt to counterpose Islam as a comprehensive religion, philosophy and an intellectual current to Marxism' (Bayat, 1990:29). More widely, whilst Shar'iati had at least made some attempt at the incorporation of Marxist categories into Islamic activists (Javadzadeh, 2011), 'By the 1980s and 1990s, however, even this small Marxist influence had gone among Islamist intellectuals' (Bayat, 2008:49).

I conclude that Garaudy could not have been unaware that: 'The Iranian revolution has been, among other things, an implicit repudiation of Marxism as a revolutionary ideology and as a doctrine relevant to the problems of Iranian society or valid for humanity at large' (Algar, 1980:7). And even

²⁰² jahanbini

supposing there was some route to at least consistency between Marxism with Islam, by the time Garaudy converted, even former Palestinian Maoists were declaring themselves no longer Marxists, but jihadis instead (Sing, 2011). Garaudy's conversion could not therefore be an attempt to subvert Islam for Marxism, and there is no evidence that he tried.

On the other hand, Islam could still serve as a weapon of attack on the West, as he himself made clear:

'By its two fundamental principles: that of power belonging only to God, which relativises all social sovereignty, and that of "consultation" (*shura*), which excludes all mediation between God and the people, are found at both an absolutist tyranny sacralising power and claiming to make a ruler a god on earth, and a Western-style "democracy," that is, individualistic, quantitative, statistical, delegated, and alienated. Freedom is not negation or loneliness, but fulfilment of the divine will'²⁰³ (Garaudy, 1985:299).

He went on to claim that all forms of representation were an imposture, whether an absolute Monarch or a Parliament. Parties, classes, 'are a substitute for the tribe or the sect'²⁰⁴ (Garaudy, 1985:299). As one analysis depicted the analysis of converts to Islam: without sharia, the West offers only anarchy (Rocher & Charkaoui, 1986:81).

Echoes of the project remained, especially in his characterisation of what he believed he was fighting *against*. For example, he observed that the Western model of 'growth' was characterised by blind production of things, whether useful or useless, including destructive armaments (Garaudy, 1987b). Such growth in the West, Garaudy argued, had been possible only by systematic colonisation, including the genocide of Native Americans, the African slave trade, the opium wars in China and culminating in the atomic attack on Hiroshima (Garaudy, 1987b: ix). There would be few Marxists to disagree with this. Garaudy's view that underdevelopment was caused by the West has also been frequently supported, not only by Muslims (Dabashi, 2008) but by others (e.g. Said, 1978; Hardt &

²⁰³ D'abord en ce qui concerne le *pouvoir politique*. Par ses deux principes fondamentaux: celui de pouvoir n'appartenant qu'à Dieu, qui relativise toute souveraineté sociale, et celui de la « consultation » (*shura*), qui exclut toute médiation entre Dieu et le peuple, se trouvent écartées à la fois une tyrannie absolutiste sacralisant le pouvoir et prétendant faire d'un dirigeant un dieu sur la terre, et une consultation « démocratie » de type occidental, c'est-à-dire individualiste, quantitative, statistique, déléguée et aliénée. La liberté n'est pas négation ni solitude, mais accomplissement de la volonté divine

²⁰⁴ se substituant à la tribu ou à la secte

Negri, 2000), who did not themselves feel obliged to convert to Islam as a result. On the contrary, well before Garaudy converted there was the contention available for his review that 'There has been no special Muslim road for capitalism' (Rodinson, 1966 [1973:184]) — no evidence that economic policy in Islamic countries was any less directed at economic growth. In *Resistance to Empire*, even when 'Muslims and various left-wing and Marxist groups have come together again, because they face the same enemies — imperialism, colonialism, militarism, racism and Zionism', (Fowkes & Gökay, 2009:25), the most that even radical Islamic liberation theology can promise is to curtail capital, not abolish it (Dabashi, 2008:21). Hence the very description of the events of 1979 in Iran as 'Khomeini's revolutionary success' (Dabashi, 2008:93). There is to be no revolution against capitalism itself, which is neither promised within Islam nor achieved by the Iranian revolution or any other Islamic government or state, whether Sunni or Shia, notwithstanding that some Sunni religious authorities have on occasion attempted to portray Shia and Marxism as interrelated twin heresies (Sing, 2018:89). The Garaudy of the project would recognise therefore that that Islam is not, as its apologists have suggested, a third way (Shubber, 2010:15) between communism and capitalism: Islamic economics are both in theory and practice various forms of capitalism (Nomani & Rahnema, 1994) and must eventually expect to be transcended. Moreover, further pause for thought might have been given by the fact that since World War II political differences between Sunni and Shia have also sadly contributed to violence and war, albeit intricately connected with Western geopolitics (Douai & Lauricella, 2014). Garaudy did worry, worshipping in the Süleymaniye Mosque, whether Islam had not suffered the same fate as Christianity in becoming 'an imperial ideology' (Robinson, 2004, n.p.). But this concern never provided sufficient motivation to prevent his conversion, nor for him to try to leave the faith.

Far from it: it has been suggested that one problem with such a radical change as Garaudy's conversion to Islam is an over-enthusiastic adoption of the new belief system (Da Costa Pinto, 2017). So it was that Garaudy enthused over Islamic economics. Property in Islam, he now said, is already neither the property of an individual or a group. Rather, it is a social function, divinely ordered. Unlike

European law which defines property as 'the right to use and abuse', Islam asserts that God alone possesses. Muslims are therefore forbidden either to accumulate wealth for their own ends or to squander it (Robinson, 2004). Moreover, the institution of zakat should in theory operate both as a form of social security and as a way to prevent the accumulation of hereditary fortunes. No doubt a Muslim welfare state may be welcome, for example to those who may have yearned for the return of 'permanent employment, state-subsidized education, and free health care' (Schwartz, 2009:25) as provided by the Soviet system. But to talk positively of accumulating wealth, when combined with the absence of a future beyond capitalism, is to have walked out on Marxist economics altogether (Choudhury, 1996:121). If Islam 'has the advantage over Marxism of leaving the economic sphere more or less alone' (Gellner, 1991:6), then it does so only by leaving it to capitalism, however regulated and controlled.

What is especially noticeable is the way in which Garaudy *replaced* Marxism with Islam, for example in the quite explicit claim that: 'Islam can bring the world to a different future' (Garaudy, 1985:174). As Garaudy explained a decade after his conversion in relation to *Les Fossoyeurs*, 'This book indissolubly associates political problems and religious problems' (Garaudy, 1992:11). Minard agreed: for Garaudy, 'it's in the Islamic religion, which confers all authority on God and highlights the principle of 'consultation' (*shura*) of believers, that can be found the principles of a real egalitarian, anti-authoritarian democracy' (Minard, 2019:6). It is therefore interesting to compare the view of Lash that 'Today, forms of belief in God that have not internally felt the pressure, experienced the persuasiveness and power, of the dominant forms of contemporary atheism, are likely to hinder rather than to help the human quest for truth, justice and freedom' (Lash, 1981:6), with Garaudy's tacit recognition that emerging radicalism within Islam would be of far greater political significance in the 21st Century than Marxism, let alone the relationship between Marxism and Christianity.

Yet the actual state of Islamic politics or economics does not enter into Garaudy's calculations. It is what Islam is capable of delivering without utilising Marxist categories such as class or alienation

to which he has turned. It was clear very early on that not only was Islam to be a refuge for Garaudy, but one to which the same rigorous moral and critical criteria that he applied to the West, France in particular, would not be applied. Hence the accusation that in Garaudy (1981) he made 'frequent comparison of the actual history of the West with the principles (heavily idealised, too) of Islam' (Morabia, 1983:343). If both the politics and the artistic creation of the past were irreparably damaged, Garaudy was open to changing the third, his faith, in order to recapture them in another form, with the added advantage now of mutual consistency between all three. Neither did Garaudy seem to have wanted to subject Islam to the same kind of progressive sociological criticism to which he was subjecting Christianity. No clearer example of this can be provided than his attitude towards women and feminism. As late as *Appel aux vivants*, he was arguing that women lived in a really degraded way through their subordination to men within the family as well as in society more generally (Garaudy 1979:36). After his conversion he is largely silent on the question of women, if vociferous about human rights in general (Garaudy, 1990a). In regard to other radical causes that might not find favour with Islam, such as LGBT rights, he is completely silent.

After his conversion to Islam, those who read his enthusiasm for his new-found religion were sharply critical. 'These works, however, echo an uncritical and uncritical exaltation of Islam, making us remember, *mutatis mutandis*, the Garaudy of the Stalinist phase' (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:452). This accusation could certainly be levelled against the suggestion, for example, that 'Islam must be presented not as a religion among others. Rather, it must be seen as the point of convergence of the faith that upholds the world, as the climax of all forces leading toward that ideal faith' (Garaudy, 1985:174), an argument that Garaudy was subsequently to put to use in justifying the restriction of religious freedom in Islam (Garaudy, 1990). This puts one in mind of Collier's argument that both religion and politics should be subject to reason: 'Neither Christianity nor Marxism can accept that human ends are exempt from criticism, and hence both, at least implicitly, are committed to a dialectical rather than an instrumental conception of reason' (Collier, 2001:137). A secular Marxist

went further: 'Progressive ideas cannot be derived from dogmas that claim divine origin, and which include so many obviously reactionary and oppressive ideas' (Halliday, 1987:14).

Another surely remarkable aspect of the conversion was Garaudy's failure to apply the principle of community to *himself*. He tells us that we should: 'realise that a 'conversion' is not necessarily a change of faith, but of the culture in which it is expressed' (Garaudy, 1989:228). Changing communities, however, is not necessarily so easy: Garaudy seems to have thought that his own racial, national, linguistic and indeed biographical aspects should be no obstacle to his conversion. To anyone who thinks of faith being expressed through culture this is surely remarkable — he seems to have tried to become a living denial of precisely this assertion. He particularly underestimated the backlash that would follow his conversion from his Christian friends. They had gone out of their way to welcome him back into the faith during the years of the project. One had written: 'The case of Garaudy, my teacher, my brother, is not only the case of an adventurer; it is our case, the one that we celebrate and suffer, we enjoy and appreciate, that of the restless and those always 'frowned upon', those born in the cursed village 'from where nothing good could come' (De Llanos, 1975:25). His former allies would be forgiven for thinking that Garaudy's conversion to Islam implied that those left behind by capitalism might have to be left behind, yet again, unless they too were to convert to Islam.

Finally, for his attitude towards Marxism *after* his conversion, we can look to *Les Fossoyeurs* (Garaudy, 1992). Even if I do not agree with Robinson (2004) that it was written as a reaction to adverse experiences with Muslim scholars, I concur that this particular work does often seem as if it was a revival of the project — what Robinson decries as a lapse — rather than a work from an Islamic perspective. It is surely remarkable that a Muslim could write a book on politics mentioning Marx but not the faith. Nevertheless, there are still major differences: Marx does now have to take his place alongside Nietzsche and others, there is no suggestion of 'Marxism' in the book. What remains of Marx there is very tame — just a commitment to the future and a break with historical determinism. 'This

eruption of the future in the present is the ferment of history'²⁰⁵ (Garaudy, 1992:223). Whatever of Marx Garaudy had retained, it was *not* the Marxism of the project that preceded it. We should conclude at this point that in converting Garaudy *substituted* political Islam for Marxism.

The turn to the Right

The conversion to Islam therefore ended Garaudy's Marxism, both economics and politics. In doing so it paved the way for a very different politics. Reference to Nietzsche might have been recognised as a significant harbinger of change in Garaudy's politics, as a persistent theme of critics is that Garaudy's defection to Islam flowed through association with nationalist and others of the 'rouge-brun' movement, an alliance between ex-communists and the extreme political Right (Prazan & Minard, 2007: 42). Politically, there was in his writing a new note of angry, nationalistic pessimism, illustrated by sympathy with a strident criticism of everything American (Fumaroli, 1991; Garaudy, 1992:83). This was the language of Alan de Benoist (2003:467) and has the same unmistakeable whiff of the *Nouvelle Droit* about it. Garaudy even talked of a new, deplorable species of human being — that of the 'cyberman'²⁰⁶ (Garaudy, 1990; 1992:97, 2004:346) concerned only with means, not ends. New pessimistic, positivist postulates of the alleged progress of Western civilisation were introduced: those of Descartes — mastery of nature — Hobbes — the law of the jungle — and Faust — the death of God. All of these are said to have generated the atrophy of the transcendent dimension of Man (Garaudy, 1992:101–2), still derided as constructed within the logic of the market decried by Marx (Garaudy, 1992:105) but now with no plan for its complete replacement. The measure of his continued association with the political Right was that his eventual death was first announced by an organisation which belonged to it (Cédelle, 2012).

²⁰⁵ Cette irruption du future dans le present est le ferment de l'histoire

²⁰⁶ ordianthrope

What permanently blocked any retreat to the project, however, was the consequence of Garaudy's alignment with Holocaust denial (Garaudy, 1996). One of the most prominent sympathisers of the Palestinian struggle responded by arguing that any such engagement with negationism was both morally repugnant and politically suicidal (Said, 1988). Though there were Muslims and others to be found to argue against the former, it was certainly the latter. A positive evaluation of Garaudy's legacy as a Muslim by a prominent negationist is therefore not unexpected (Poumier, 2013). For Poumier, there is nothing for which to apologise, and no difficulty in accepting Garaudy's Islam: 'Misunderstood by his peers, expelled from the Communist Party, Garaudy was looking for another horizon to embody the purity of his research. He encountered Islam, and devoted himself passionately to Islamic studies' (Poumier, 2013: n.p.). Whilst it has been claimed that Garaudy's descent into perceived anti-Semitism was gradual (Prazan & Minard, 2007:14), it is in fairness worth remembering that Gauvin, who knew him personally, believed that at a personal level he was not anti-Semitic, and that it was now sad that to discuss Garaudy today, 'one must accept the official dominant thesis of a man who fell into one of the ideologies of hate that he fought all his life'²⁰⁷ (Didier Gauvin, personal communication, 27 June 2019). Sad, gradual or not, the practical significance of his conversion and his subsequent career lies in how he was and is still generally perceived, and the facts of his political move to the Right cannot simply be glossed over.

The rejection of Christianity

From a Muslim perspective came the suggestion that it was the project itself that drove Garaudy to reject Christianity: 'Having separated from communism, Garaudy turned to studying other religions and creeds. His religious tendencies became deeper day by day and this drove him towards

²⁰⁷ on doit accepter la thèse dominante officielle d'un homme tombé dans une des idéologies de haine qu'il a combattues toute sa vie

truth' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.). I would disagree: Garaudy's 'religious tendencies' were already very much in evidence during the project, and even before during his Marxist humanist phase. On the other hand, for some his conversion was unexpected, a great surprise (Rodriguez, 1984:12). It should not have been, even from his published work during the prophetic phase that his conversion ended. Garaudy's project was certainly not *restricted* to Marxism and Christianity. Consistency between Marxism and Islam, if not the mutual dependence envisaged for Christianity, was also part — arguably an increasing part — of the project. I do not agree however with Robinson that it was Garaudy's perception that Christianity no longer had the capacity to be a religion of revolutionary change which led him to embark on research on other religions like Islam, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism, which concluded when he found his ideal in Islam and converted. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, Garaudy's interest in other religions operated in parallel with his self-identification as a Christian. With the conversion did come a rejection of the principle within the project noted in Chapter Three, that of selecting ideas from religions, in favour of adopting just one. If my argument in Chapter Three above that Garaudy was certainly not a Christian supersessionist during the project is correct, then there was also no supersessionist logic for him to follow when he now substituted Islam for all religions. On both counts the conversion marked a break with the project, not a continuity.

I do not therefore wholly agree that Garaudy's conversion was a biographical trajectory somehow independent of analysis, ontology or eschatology (Fleury, 2004). In Fleury's constructivist view, individuals associate with people who seem to share the same representations as they do. In doing so, they engage in social enterprises where they pursue objectives that in many cases reinforce their personal identity. Intolerable conflicts of interpretation linked to ethics changed the relational dynamic in which they evolve, to the point where they will no longer recognise the adherence of others to their values (Fleury, 2004:130). Fleury's argument is that Garaudy's membership of the one epistemic community, Marxism, was essential, given his overall project, to his membership in the other, Christianity. Bereft of the community of the PCF, whilst confronted with the reality of its declining power and the inefficacy of the Soviet Bloc, the Marxism Garaudy could defend by the 1970s

was already a shadow of its former self. Whereas I see Garaudy's conversion as essentially a political response to the failure of Marxism, Fleury therefore effectively argued that the two boxers in the ring knock each other out: Garaudy ceases to be a Marxist because his Christianity, eventually, will no longer let him — but not before his Marxism delivers a knock-out blow to his Christianity. He had reached not just one dead end, but two. From the moment this vision of the world collapses (Fleury, 2004:125), Islam seems then to him be the way forward: 'Garaudy's religious conversion in 1982 allowed him the possibility of publishing his writings again, but this time, from within a new epistemic community'²⁰⁸ (Fleury, 2004:109).

This seems *too* constructivist an argument to me. It is true that Garaudy was also dissatisfied with institutional Christianity more widely — his work both during the project and before provided ample evidence of his criticism. Robinson suggested that there were three reasons for his dissatisfaction:

First, ever since his Communist days, he had held that the Roman Emperor Constantine had adopted Christianity for political ends and that throughout history the high ideals of Christianity had frequently been used by those in power to manipulate the down-trodden and oppressed and keep them in their place (Robinson, 2004: n.p.).

In practice, 'The Catholic church has chosen since Constantine to follow the 'way of power'²⁰⁹ (Garaudy, 1992:139). All liberation theory has been in vain, as 'Mercilessly, the old Roman tradition is determined to extinguish this "fire on the earth"'²¹⁰(Garaudy, 1992:140). For Garaudy, as a Muslim, there was no need either to revise his opinion of the deleterious effect of the Romanisation of the Church and the Hellenisation of its doctrine (Robinson, 2004). In direct reply, one Christian reviewer declared that: 'Christianity could not have developed into the worship of the universal Christ without Paul's Christ-centred mysticism, which discloses God as Holy Love and secures free access to God's redemptive and re-creative grace' (van der Bent, 1993:123). Garaudy might even agree, but only to

²⁰⁸ La conversion religieuse de Garaudy, en 1982, lui offre la possibilité de publier à nouveau ses écrits, mais cette fois, à l'intérieur d'une nouvelle communauté épistémique

²⁰⁹ les voies de la puissance

²¹⁰ impitoyablement, la vieille tradition romaine s'acharne à éteindre ce « feu sur la terre »

reinforce his argument, not to regard it as refuted: the worship of the universal Christ *in practice* was exactly his complaint against Christianity. In sum, therefore, Garaudy was attracted to Islam because it seemed still to have the moral influence which Christianity had lost (Robinson, 2004).

Moreover, once he converted, his attitude to other religions changed. In particular he became noticeably unsympathetic towards Judaism, arguing that: 'Jesus broke with the idea of God inherited from the Torah, this vengeful God, commanding sacrifices and imposing His will from on high towards us below like a Moloch'²¹¹ (Chelain, 1996:5). Garaudy himself openly admitted that he wanted to dissociate himself from Christianity, which relays a certain Zionist ideology. For Garaudy the convert, Islam is, in the Abrahamic tradition, the most integral faith (Guetny, 1982:52). This is not the Garaudy of the project, who dedicated an entire chapter in *Appel aux vivants* to the role of the Jewish faith in the project. It is a different and I would contend an at least arguably anti-Semitic Garaudy.

Second, he was highly critical of the Church's attempt to define the person of Christ using the static terminology of Greek philosophy. He argued that the formula adopted by the Council of Nicea in 325, which stated that Christ was 'of one substance with the Father', had been unintelligible to the masses at the time and had given rise to a whole series of 'heresies' whose adherents were brutally persecuted. He asserted shortly after his conversion that 'My arrival at Islam is not a rupture, but a culmination. It does not imply any rejection, either of JESUS or of MARX'²¹² (Garaudy, 1983:65), and qualified this later only by observing that he had not intended to deny Christianity, but only its European cultural form. Calling himself a Muslim was a kind of challenge, a provocation, which without changing his attitude to Jesus represented what Islam means — abandonment to the will of God. On this basis, he maintained, there was no rupture in becoming a Muslim (Garaudy, 1994a: 10).

²¹¹ Jésus rompait avec la notion de Dieu hérité de la Thora, ce Dieu vengeur, ordonnateur de sacrifices et imposant sa volonté du haut vers le bas comme un moloch

²¹² Ma venue à L'Islam n'est pas une rupture mais un accomplissement. Elle implique aucun reniement, ni de JESUS, ni de MARX

Third, he realised that although individual Christians might still strive to live out their faith for the good of humanity, institutionalised Christianity was a spent force which had ceased long ago to influence Western economic and social life and relations with the Third World (Robinson, 2004, n.p.). Robinson argued that Garaudy's conversion rested on 'his conviction that Western civilisation has reached an impasse from which neither Communism nor Christianity can provide an escape route' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.). Robinson is surely right that Garaudy thought so, when he converted. The whole of Western civilisation, including both Christianity and Marxism, was now on trial in his mind (Garaudy, 1979). On trial, and eventually found guilty: 'The Western countries are sick' (Garaudy, 1987:x), a judgement that found its way into both the media and academia (Rorty, 1992:582). By contrast, 'The love of his Arab grandmother and the recognition he feels for those Muslims who refused to take his life are two feelings that will eventually triumph over his long and fruitless attempts to conciliate Catholics and Communists incarnating, in his eyes, the institutionalization of two systems of values which seemed to him perfectly compatible'²¹³ (Raveault, 2004:9).

In my view there is, however, an insuperable obstacle to accepting Robinson's analysis thus far as a reason for his conversion. *All three of these arguments against Christianity dated from Garaudy's Marxist humanist period.* They all therefore pre-dated the project and his announcement that he was a Christian (Garaudy, 1975). As shown in Chapter Three, Garaudy's Christianity was always of a very different stripe from that of the Christian church that Robinson highlighted Garaudy criticised. His criticisms are directed at institutional Christianity, not that of the project. Unless mixed with some other factor, *they cannot, therefore, have been sufficient reasons for Garaudy to convert to Islam.*

Admixed with these three arguments, however, is another. Robinson's implicit fourth reason for Garaudy's rejection of Christianity was that by the time he converted to Islam, Christianity now seemed to Garaudy so fatally intrinsically flawed that even independent of its institutional practice

²¹³ L'amour de sa grand-mère arabe et la reconnaissance qu'il éprouve envers ces Musulmans qui ont refusé de lui enlever la vie sont deux sentiments qui vont finir par triompher de ses très longues et infructueuses tentatives de conciliation des Catholiques et des Communistes incarnant, à ses yeux, l'institutionnalisation de deux systèmes de valeurs qui lui semblaient pourtant parfaitement compatibles

through the Church, it could no longer be reasonably supported as the bearer of his own ideals for a human community. Could this analysis provide the necessary touch-paper for the rejection of Christianity? For an answer to Garaudy's attitude towards Christianity in the years after 1982 we may justly raid his subsequent work. We need not be as sympathetic as Da Costa Pinto (1994) in regarding his entire work as a consistent whole, but at least during that period which Robinson wished to characterise as a lapse of Islamic faith, Garaudy's view of Christianity appears little changed. He still wished to separate the example of Jesus' life from the teachings of St Paul, the Jewish tradition, and the Greeks — and through that separation 'decolonise' the Christian faith. For Garaudy, Jesus still 'opens the perspective of another society, of another form of community, radically different from that [Roman] Empire, that of a Kingdom of God'²¹⁴ (Garaudy, 1992:142). St Paul's message, and indeed Christianity itself, has been distorted to fit a Jewish prism. 'The Evangelists bring, through their testimony on the life of Jesus, new arguments to the central idea of St. Paul: to integrate Jesus into the Jewish tradition' (Garaudy, 1992:234). This Garaudy says applies especially to the Gospel of St Matthew, where each action and each word of Jesus is presented as an illustration of a text from the Old Testament (Garaudy, 1992:234–5). Hence the need, Garaudy says, to establish Jesus as Joseph's son to legitimise his descent from David. Conceding that in the Pauline version of the Divine story, accomplishment is not the restoration of the kingdom of David triumphing over his enemies, but the Resurrection of Jesus triumphing over death, Garaudy placed this entirely in a Jewish (and Greek) context. And this is not without political significance as 'Such is, without the slightest equivocation, the foundation of all theology of domination. From this sacralisation of authority flows a practice of resignation and submission'²¹⁵ (Garaudy, 1992:240). The dualism of this theology of domination over all of the State and its subjects, of the master and the slave, men and women, said Garaudy, stems from a fundamental dualism: that of the soul and the body, of God and of Man. He argued that

²¹⁴ ouvre la perspective d'une autre société, d'une autre forme de communauté, radicalement différente de cet empire, celle d'un Royaume de Dieu

²¹⁵ Tel est, sans la moindre équivoque, le fondement de toute théologie de la domination. De cette sacralisation de l'autorité découle une pratique de résignation et de soumission

whereas the Greeks, Romans and Jews thought of God as an omnipotent king and lawgiver, Jesus reveals God not through power, royalty and commandment but on the contrary in the most impoverished man, born poor and working class, then a wandering preacher, and finally, victim of the powerful, held up to ridicule, and dying by the most ignominious means of execution reserved for slaves, namely crucifixion. This could well lead to the conclusion that: 'Christ, were he to return, would surely be more comfortable amongst the despised and impoverished British Muslims than the Anglicans' (Akhtar, 1991:15).

But even this argument, though undoubtedly more powerful, is not to my mind conclusive. Robinson's analysis is no doubt substantially correct insofar as Garaudy's dissatisfaction with institutional Christianity is concerned, although criticism of St Paul might be open to the charge that there was little in the way of developed Christian doctrine by that point. He is right, too, to raise Garaudy's concern that Islam risked losing Jesus' message, in particular the mystery of love, which he held had become through Jesus the warp and woof of every life (Robinson, 2004: n.p.). But he has overlooked the other dissatisfaction, that with Marxism. What Robinson therefore missed, I argue, is that Christianity's unique place in Garaudy's thought principally derived from its essential contribution to the Marxism of the project. Once Christianity is no longer needed for that purpose, there is no reason for Garaudy to continue to attempt to rescue it from St. Paul. I would similarly argue that this summary is open to the same criticism: 'In 1982, he converted to Islam without renouncing his previous ideals. Islam is a religion that "subsumes" the other two, which completes the revelation. He also wanted to be on the side of the "dominated" and those who once spared his life'²¹⁶ (Collès, 2013:123).

I argue that it was the failure of *Marxism*, in his eyes — the failure of political parties derived from class analysis and then wider political movements, both aiming at the replacement of capitalist society — that left a huge hole to be filled. It was not a failure of Christian faith, and certainly not of the

²¹⁶ En 1982, il se convertit à l'islam sans renier ses idéaux antérieurs. L'islam est une religion qui « subsume » les deux autres, qui parachève la révélation. Il veut aussi être du côté des « dominés » et de ceux qui lui ont jadis épargné la vie

example provided by the life of Jesus Christ. Even as a Muslim, Garaudy asserts that Jesus was a man inhabited by the presence of the divine, and conscious of not existing except in relation to the divine; that it is by his death that he is fully divine; and that his death shows that the omnipotent God of the ancient theisms is dead (Garaudy, 1992:162). The conclusion I draw is that *the rejection of Marxism entailed the search for a political replacement, not a spiritual one.*

Did Garaudy really convert?

Those who would prefer to support a narrative of continuity for Garaudy's biography (Gauvin, 2018; Reynaud, 2019) could point to those Islamic commentators who argued that that for all his protestations and enthusiasm, Garaudy had not actually converted at all. Whereas Robinson regards Garaudy (1992) as a temporary lapse of Islamic faith, it has been suggested that even after his conversion, several important aspects of his faith remained unchanged. These were those that led him into conflict with Islamic authorities (Da Costa Pinto, 1994), so that he was a relatively unconventional Muslim, both in theory and practice, throughout the remainder of his life (Didier Gauvin, personal communication, 21 December 2018). His conviction that Islam, as much as Christianity, stood in need of a theology of liberation (Garaudy, 1990:135) was one such, his continued support in principle for feminism (Garaudy, 1995b:37) another.

Islamic criticism of Western intellectuals for their dilettante attitude to Islam — 'nothing exasperates Muslims more' (Arkoun, 1979:349) — could be readily found, had Garaudy looked. It was not therefore surprising that Garaudy's early Muslim pronouncements found no contemporary shortage of stern critics:

From his work on the historical contribution of Arab civilisation [Garaudy, 1946a] to his recent apologetic book *Promises of Islam* [Garaudy, 1981b], R. Garaudy constantly grafted his Stalinist–progressive convictions onto a fascination, now a majority in the intelligentsia, exercised by Islam as faith and civilisation. The Arab–Islamic civilisation is held up as a source

of redemption for a West that "represents a failure on all levels" (Bani Sadr, quoted in Garaudy, 1981b: 175). The revolution itself can only succeed by taking the example of the "Islamic revolution": reflection on it "allows us to recover a full conception of the revolution, which is not only a subversion of structures but, at the same time, a transformation of Man" (Garaudy, 1981b: 176. I underline). No more no less. In short, Islam is the future of Man, and the only way to his salvation. (See the title of an abbreviated version of *the Promises of Islam: Islam lives in our future*, (Desclée de Brouwver, 1981)²¹⁷. (Taguieff, 1982: n3).

After his public declaration of Islamic faith, criticism was redoubled: 'At the discretion of his needs, he "sails" from principles to reality, and constrains his readers to a real winding course, where everything is placed pell-mell, where all the heritage of the East is subtly baptised "Islam"²¹⁸ (Morabia, 1983:342), in what the reviewer describes as a mass of contradictions and debatable assertions. In particular, lumping together theory and practice within Islam into an idealised amalgamation where Sufism seems to stand in for Islam as a whole, facts are twisted or ignored, and Islam is made to serve, in the end, simply as a synonym for 'good'. Better should be expected than 'a Manichean painting, a landscape in black (West) and white (Islam)! We expected better from Garaudy, who is usually more inspired and more critical'²¹⁹(Morabia, 1983:343).

Subsequently, Garaudy's presence within Islam was not itself without sufficient negativity that he might be excused for wondering whether he had made the right decision after all (Robinson, 2004). Certainly, the outcome of his engagement with conservative Islamic scholars was mutually unsatisfactory. It was exemplified by his argument with a Wahhabi scholar from Qatar, who criticised him for speaking of the role of the love of God in Islam (Garaudy, 1989). More seriously, his principal mentor, the Saudi Grand Mufti Sheikh Bin Baz, declared that he was a hypocrite, a syncretist and in

²¹⁷ De sa *Contribution Historique de la Civilisation Arabe* (Alger, 1946) à son récent livre apologétique *Promesses de l'Islam* (Paris, Seuil, 1981), R. Garaudy n'a cessé de greffer ses convictions stalino-progressistes sur une fascination, désormais majoritaire dans l'intelligentsia, exercée par l'Islam comme foi et civilisation. La civilisation arabo-islamique est érigée en source de rédemption d'un Occident qui « représente un échec sur tous les plans » (Bani Sadr, cité par R. Garaudy, 1981, p. 175). La révolution elle-même ne saurait se réussir qu'à prendre exemple sur la « révolution islamique » : la réflexion sur celle-ci « nous permet de retrouver une conception plénière de la révolution, qui n'est pas seulement subversion des structures mais, d'un même mouvement, mutation de l'homme » (1981, p. 176. Je souligne). Ni plus ni moins. En bref, l'Islam c'est l'avenir de l'homme, et l'unique voie de son salut. (Cf. le titre d'une version abrégée des *Promesses de l'Islam: L'Islam habite notre avenir*, Desclée de Brouwver, 1981)

²¹⁸ Au gré de ses besoins, il « navigue » des principes à la réalité, et contraint ses lecteurs à un véritable parcours sinueux, où tout est placé pêle-mêle, où tout l'héritage de l'Orient est subtilement baptisé « Islam »

²¹⁹ un tableau manichéen, un paysage en noir (Occident) et blanc (Islam)! On attendait mieux de M. G. qui est, à l'accoutumée, mieux inspiré et plus critique

fact, not a Muslim at all but an unbeliever, who hated Muslims and Islam. Eventually he made Garaudy the subject of a fatwa, explaining his reasoning thus:

‘Garaudy believes that the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and the Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) deducted from the Quran and the Sunnah cannot be applied in this age as they were revealed for a certain age. He calls for the deduction of new laws, thus abandoning the religion of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), because, according to him, it cannot be applied in this age. He calls for the invention of a new religion’ (Bin Baz, 1997:195).

And further, that:

‘He [Garaudy] says: "During my membership of the World Supreme Council for Mosques, I have discovered that they are the most ignorant people. They mechanically repeat Prophetic Hadith and the juristic views [of people] who lived in the middle age which they memorize by heart. I do not think that I can cooperate with those people, because of the bad impressions they gave me". This is Garaudy's view of Muslim scholars who were deceived by him, thought highly of him, honored him, and made him participate in their conferences. This is a lesson to all the scholars, so they will not trust whoever pretends to profess Islam easily, such as Garaudy, who were known for their apostasy before professing Islam until they become sure of their belief...One of the issues that proves Garaudy's disbelief is his call of disabling the penalty of theft and the change of shares of inheritance...Garaudy says that he would give a woman double the share of a man, if they both were disputing over the inheritance’ (Bin Baz, 1997:198).

In conclusion, the Grand Mufti declared that:

‘Roger Garaudy is not a Murtad (apostate) but he is a Kafir (disbeliever), as he did not embrace Islam, for he says, "I accepted Islam finally, but I did not disavow my personal views and beliefs”’ (Bin Baz, 1997:199).

What perhaps surprises an outsider is that having decided upon Islam, he did not move towards Sufism, and then from that, to the unity of all religions. He evidently came close: ‘This is a definition of the Trinity that can bring all people together, I do not say such or such religions, or such and such wisdoms, but of all who believe in God, that is, to say of all those for whom life makes sense’²²⁰ (Garaudy, 1995a: n.p.). But in fact, as Robinson (2004) observed with satisfaction, ‘Judging by *Grandeur et décadence de l’Islam* [Garaudy, 1996], however, he then reverted to a more orthodox Muslim attitude to divine transcendence and to the role of Jesus, on him be peace’ (Robinson, 2004:

²²⁰ C'est là une définition de la Trinité qui peut faire l'unité de tous les hommes, je ne dis pas de telles ou telles religions, ou de telles ou telles sagesse, mais de tous ceux qui croient en Dieu, c'est-à-dire de tous ceux pour qui la vie a un sens

n.p.). For an explanation, it might not be too far-fetched to look at surrounding events, and in particular, the furore surrounding his publication of what was eventually to prove the final undoing of his reputation in France, *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne* (Garaudy, 1995). Bereft of friends in the West, the loneliness of a war on two fronts might have seemed too much for one elderly man to endure.

Subjectivity and transcendence in Garaudy's Islam

As discussed in Chapters Four and Five, subjectivity and transcendence played a decisive role in the project. Christianity provided both to Marxism in exchange for social justice and political goals. As the role of Marxism receded, and the project collapsed, there was therefore less *need* for a special place for Christianity, leaving the way open to a conversion to Islam to replace it. Within the project, subjectivity had provided the motor for historical change — for revolution. By contrast, in Garaudy's Islamic worldview, revolutions in the Western sense of the word are now indeed impossible (Garaudy, 1981b:35). One of the principal reasons for Garaudy's Christianity has therefore evaporated. Alternatively expressed, if Christianity has provided the individual to remedy the deficit in Marxism to which Sartre had pointed, then Islam is the religion of community, and subjectivity is no longer even necessary — not least because there is no longer a need for political revolution. In Garaudy's new Islamic vision, there is therefore neither room nor need for the previous concept of subjectivity, which disappears from his work henceforth, except for a subterranean existence in *Les Fossoyeurs*, Garaudy's solitary post-project work that harks back to it, where Garaudy suggested that 'God is not a being but an appeal to being'²²¹ (Garaudy, 1992:113). Its replacement is the Islamic sense of community: the rejection of anyone who proclaims themselves an individual rather than recognising their dependence on absolute values and their responsibility towards the community and its members. In the project,

²²¹ Dieu n'est plus un être, mais un appel à être

this is a progressive conception of individuality, indissolubly bound up with subjectivity and revolutionary change; after the conversion it takes on the status of a static end-in-itself.

The fate of transcendence in the conversion was quite different. Although Garaudy (1981b) was written before he announced his conversion, he was already of the view that Islam had an important contribution to make to the future of the world because it valued transcendence and community, two vital dimensions which contemporary Western society neither valued nor much possessed. For Robinson, Garaudy's enthusiasm for Islam, evidenced in this text even before his official conversion, was based on both his rejection of Marxism and his implicit denial that Christianity could bring, or encompass, transcendence. His conversion therefore actually rested upon 'his conviction that Western society is based on a false understanding of man, and his own life-long quest for transcendence' (Robinson, 2004, n.p.). For Robinson, Garaudy's concept of transcendence is not only a constant, but also a star that helps him eventually to his conversion, the struggle he says he has led throughout his life to recognise the transcendent dimension of man.

I argue for a different balance of causes for the conversion, but I agree that Garaudy both continued to promote the importance of transcendence, and also asserted that Islam could deliver it. Mention of transcendence in Garaudy's later, post-conversion, work is however relatively scant, and almost completely confined to his one excursion from conventional Islam, where he returned to an old theme by arguing that 'A revolution has more need of transcendence than of determinism'²²². (Garaudy, 1992:50). Where this text treats of religion and belief, it does read as if written much earlier, notwithstanding that its politics are very contemporary.

Whereas for Robinson, the concept of transcendence remains, but the means change, for Gauvin, the concept of transcendence in Garaudy's thought is itself fluid:

'However, in *Biographie du XX^e siècle, le testament philosophique de Roger Garaudy*, (Garaudy, 1985) while he had already defined himself as Muslim for four years, the philosopher still defines the transcendence, following Islam, by the "dependence of Man in

²²² une révolution a plus besoin de transcendance que de déterminisme

respect of its creator, with regard to God and his plan beyond any human project " [Garaudy, 1985: 272]; and by the existence of "absolute norms, not deductible from reason" [Garaudy, 1985: 274]. This makes it difficult to concur with the idea that his definition of transcendence "has not varied in [his] approach to Christianity, Marxism or Islam, but [. . .] has become clearer thanks to it" [Garaudy, 1985:264]²²³(Gauvin, 2018:398).

He concluded that 'This concept has evolved significantly as Garaudy rediscovered his initial faith and developed it, in contact with Christianity and then Islam, towards an increasingly radical conception — the exteriority and superiority of God in relation to the world'²²⁴ (Gauvin, 2018:398). The significance of accepting the Islamic concept of God is recognised here. The Islamic community serves ends which go beyond it, ends fixed by God; the community transcends the individual and God transcends the community. 'Islam is the vision of God, the world and Man which assigns to the sciences and the arts, to each man and to each society, the project of building an indivisibly divine and human world comprising the two major dimensions of transcendence and community' (Garaudy, 1981:23).

These words are not sufficient, however, to persuade Robinson that the idea of transcendence itself transformed once Garaudy has converted. They do persuade me: this is not the transcendence of the project, whereby God-given human capabilities enable the transformation of the world, and in particular, the eventual replacement of capitalism. In Garaudy's Islam, by contrast, the idea of revolution has died a death: transcendence intersects directly with the divine; it implies no secular transformation of the world. Garaudy has replaced the subjectivity of the project with the community of Islam. Robinson argued this:

'his Marxist background made it very difficult for him to countenance a transcendent Deity above and independent of the universe. Shortly before his conversion, however, he appears

²²³ Cependant, en 1986, dans *Biographie du XXe siècle*, alors qu'il se définit comme musulman depuis déjà quatre ans, le philosophe définit tout de même la transcendance, à la suite de l'Islam, par la « dépendance de l'homme à l'égard de son créateur, à l'égard de Dieu et de son dessein au-delà de tout projet humain » (p. 272) ; et par l'existence de « normes absolues, non déductibles de la raison » (idem 274). Ce qui rend difficile de le suivre dans l'idée que sa définition de la transcendance « n'a point varié dans [son] approche du christianisme, du marxisme ou de l'Islam, mais [...] s'est précisé grâce à celui-ci »

²²⁴ Ce concept a nettement évolué à mesure que Garaudy retrouvait sa foi initiale et la développait, au contact du christianisme, puis de l'Islam, vers une conception de plus en plus radicale — l'extériorité et la supériorité de Dieu par rapport à l'homme

to have become convinced that such a belief was morally necessary and that the Islamic tradition had within it the resources for making it intellectually tenable' (Robinson, 2004: n.p.).

There is no doubt that this represents a key change in Garaudy's thought. I argue, however, that this argument has the process upside-down. The collapse of the 'Marxist background', the possibility of Heaven on Earth, allowed the conversion to Islam. Islam filled the gap left by the Heaven on Earth of the project with a transcendent Deity above and independent of the universe. Only now in his historical review of the Russian revolution can his previous conception be located: 'the revealing of the transcendence of Man in relation to the sectoral determinism of nature'²²⁵ (Garaudy, 1994:125). In his Islamic work more generally, transcendence has, one might suggest, become something of an embarrassment, with its connotations of humanism and inextricable connection with revolution and socialism. If it is to be retained, it must be drained of its secular content. Transcendence must be pressed into service for the purposes of God outside of the universe, not of Man within the universe. This is surely a very significant difference indeed.

Conclusion

The temptation to assert continuity in Garaudy's thought is evidently strong. For example, Robinson rightly noted that:

'In many respects, his views have remained remarkably constant throughout the Communist, Christian and Muslim phases of his life. He has persistently favoured revolution; opposed the USA and Zionism; criticised the Romanisation of the Church and the Hellenisation of its doctrine; and attributed the global crisis to the false view of Man which has dominated Western thought since the sixteenth century' (Robinson, 2004, n.p.).

It is a view with which Gauvin (2018) wholly concurs. But, I think, this argument overlooks what is *not* consistent. In particular, it fails to give sufficient weight to Garaudy's eventual rejection of Marxism, especially the core questions of the abolition of wages, alienated labour and private property (Singer,

²²⁵ l'affleurement de la transcendance de l'homme par rapport aux déterminismes sectoriels de la nature

1980:27), in short, the overcoming of capitalism itself, with its panoply of social classes and individual alienation. Between Garaudy's espousal of *shura*, *zakat* and the injunctions of Islamic economics on the one hand, and Marxism on the other, lie a gulf: enormous and unbridgeable. In the project, the overcoming of capitalism is quite clear. Dom Camara sets out the core of the project as shared by liberation theology in a letter to Garaudy:

'The next step we Christians have to take is to proclaim publicly that it is not socialism but capitalism that is 'intrinsically perverse' and that socialism is not condemnable but in its perversions. And the next step that you have to take, Roger, is to show that the revolution is not tied with an essential but only a historical bond, with philosophical materialism and with atheism, and that, on the contrary, it is consubstantial with Christianity' (Garaudy, 1975:118).

But the problem was that Garaudy seems to have lacked patience, what could be expressed as a sense of historical perspective, the very thing Marxism might have been expected to provide. After a decade of no doubt exasperating political failure, he appeared only to be able to see the here-and-now: 'Islam is the only faith capable of effectively countering the fatal implications of Western dominion. Against positivism, it gives us transcendence; against individualism, it gives us the *ummah*' (Garaudy, 1985:174). For him, if revolution were to recede so far into the future as to become irrelevant for practical purposes, then although Christianity could even still be the revolutionary religion of the future, there was a more immediate, and more important, requirement for a reformist religion of the present, which was met by Islam. The rejection of subjective, liberal, Western Marxism was both a necessary and, it seemed, almost a sufficient reason for the conversion, granted Garaudy's continued need for an immediate politics of social transformation.

Christians may yet want to satisfy themselves as to why Garaudy felt so little apparent remorse at leaving the faith. His own explanation throughout was that Christianity and Islam were not faiths, but religions — communities of worship — and that his own views had not changed. This may not satisfy Christians or Muslims alike, but Garaudy certainly wore his Christianity lightly, mainly for what it had to offer to his project, and not therefore for long. His was never an exclusivist faith: he did not believe in the Resurrection literally, nor in any other tenet of Christianity that might have given him significant pause before converting. Once Garaudy dispensed with Marxism, Christianity, its twin

within the project, was dispensable. If, as he claimed, he 'entered Islam with a Bible under one arm and Marx under the other'²²⁶ (Garaudy, 1998:126), he left both at the entrance to the mosque. The collapse of the project permitted Garaudy a position closer to the early Islamic teaching of *tahrif*, that 'the scriptures of other monotheists and/or their interpretations have been corrupted, and thus obscure the message that had been previously sent by God' (Keating, 2014:203) albeit that such teaching has frequently been tempered with the injunction that, however much Islam may recognise Mohammed's succession to the Judeo-Christian line of prophecy, 'the Quran makes of Islam 'a "guardian" (*muhaymin*) over the surviving advocates of the earlier versions of faith' (Winter, 1999:139), and there are certainly radical Islamic scholars who can be found to object even to this degree of Islamic supersessionism, in particular its political implications for *jihad* (Sachedina, 1996:159). Nevertheless, Garaudy's position after his conversion can be sharply compared with the comparatively equal, and certainly more open, inclusion of different religions within the project. For Garaudy the new convert, Islam not only provided an effective substitute for Marxism, it also represented the apogee of religions. Christians can perhaps only take comfort in this: Garaudy's religious conversion owed more to politics than it did to faith, and certainly than to theology.

Islam by contrast presented to Garaudy as a faith with the enormous advantage of ready-made economic and to his mind favourable political ideology. It appealed as a synthesis, in the way that the mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity within the project had explicitly lacked. Garaudy would still have argued that by contrast to others (Garaudy, 1996), his synthesis, at least, was not an example of 'intégrisme', although we may query how plausible would such a denial be, and whether he is simply using the term to refer to his political opponents within Islam and outside it. But we must recognise that no longer did Garaudy conceive of himself as the centre of a project, using historical bias even-handedly to dispense largesse between different sources of ideas. It is hard not to read in Garaudy's writing an enormous sense of relief after his conversion, as anyone in the position

²²⁶ Venu vers l'Islam avec la Bible sous un bras et Marx sous l'autre

he had been throughout the 1970s might easily be forgiven for experiencing. No longer did he have to advocate revolution, nor in isolation try to sculpt strategies appropriate to a politically difficult period for the Left in France. He could also now participate again in a community, and perhaps more importantly, a struggle against established ideas and political practice in the West. No doubt his association with the anti-Zionist cause of Palestinians made it easier, but the trajectory did not depend on his marriage to a Palestinian — it simply crystallised the decision. Not everyone has been impressed by this self-abnegation; one liberal academic for example quipped that: ‘He sounds like a man who needed to be told what to think’ (Anne Schwenkenbecher, personal communication, 2 December 2017).

But for Garaudy there could be no political adherence without spiritual adherence. One attraction of Islam, therefore, was its provision of a ready-made integration between the religious and the political, Foucault’s option as an atheist, to identify ‘political spirituality’ without necessarily sharing it in any specific form, was not open to him. In Garaudy’s quite different perception, if the correct political path to follow was that of the political Islam of the Left, then he *had* to convert, given that the choice of religion was only one of community, not what has been described as spirituality, as distinct from religion (Zinnbauer & Pargement, 2005), ‘a personal, subjective, and flexible means for an individual to experience and connect to a transcendent spiritual force’ (Snook et al., 2018:225).

Once he became a Muslim he therefore no longer had to wrestle with ‘the two ends of the chain’ but had instead a ready-made and evidently durable set of values, principles, duties and rules that applied within capitalism, and which therefore in no way required the constant insertion of revolutionary or other methods of overcoming it. ‘Muslims have never developed a theory of powerlessness’ (Akhtar, 1991:73). We might even remind ourselves of the old adage that many people become right wing in their old age, Garaudy just took a lot longer about doing it, and succeeded in temporarily disguising it — possibly even to himself — by cloaking his retreat in an Islamic veil.

The decision to convert nevertheless brought serious adverse consequences. It is at least surprising that Garaudy, as a former Marxist, never seemed to appreciate, or even acknowledge, that the association of religious community with political logic surely has a consequence: if the political logic turns out to be flawed, then the decision to convert must similarly be flawed. Garaudy was certainly right that the often-used measure of government success, GDP, includes 'counter-productive' efforts, illustrated by apparent paradoxes such as the famous broken window fallacy — the misguided notion that destruction or military expenditure are both economically desirable (Bastiat, 1850). However, despite Garaudy's early optimism about Islamic economics (Yurdakök, 2015) and his insistence that: 'Islamic economics, following Quranic principles, takes as its aim balance not economic growth (Garaudy, 1981), there is little to suggest, from the standpoint of the 2020s, that Islam has provided any alternative economic model. Far from it, Islamic countries, notably those confronting high rates of population growth such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Indonesia (Looney, 1982) have consistently been amongst countries adapting Islamic legal and banking systems to reach the goal of economic growth (Zare, 2018:429). One might only add that results have been very mixed (Ahmad, 2004), especially in respect of income and wealth distribution, one scholar finding that whereas at the time of Garaudy's conversion, inequality was on balance lower than in the Western world, 'Muslim societies have experienced the highest rise in income inequality of all religions since 1990' (Navarro & Skirbekk, 2018:196).

As if this were not sufficient to indicate the flaw in Garaudy's replacement of Marxism by Islam politically, Garaudy separated himself abruptly and totally from his community, through the widely abhorred narrative of Holocaust denial, and implicitly by rejecting France, as 'God is above patriotism' (Akhtar, 1991:17). As a result, Garaudy lost his main opportunity for influence and ended up disgraced and rejected in the country and in the community where he had the most potential ability to do good, that of France. As the head of the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions was quoted in one of his obituaries, 'He ended up pitifully, on an intellectual level, with the lowest kind of revisionism' (Prasquier, 2012). No doubt the project did not die easily in Garaudy's mind, as *Les*

Fossoyeurs (1992) demonstrated. No doubt too his approach to Islam was both iconoclastic and wary of 'intégrisme', (Garaudy, 1995b, 1996, 1998). But once his obsessive Anti-Zionism (Godin, 2011:222) resulted in his intellectual isolation in France, except for the extreme Right (Taguieff, 1996:208), there was no way back.

In the light of both of these flaws with the logic of Garaudy's conversion, I will now in the next chapter pick up both ends of the chain again and turn back to Garaudy's project. What might emerge from an attempt to revise and update it?

Chapter Seven: The project revised

Where to begin

The preceding Chapter portrayed how Garaudy's development of his original Marxist humanist project of consistency between Marxism and Christianity into a relationship of mutual dependence came to an abrupt end with his conversion to Islam. It might therefore seem obvious that any attempt to revise the project must pick it up where he left it, the end of the 1970s, albeit that elements of his subsequent work hark back sufficiently to the project as to warrant inclusion in any revised project. This Chapter has that aim.

There is a need to answer key questions. What lessons does subsequent history provide for anyone who might want to pick up the pieces where Garaudy dropped them? Could the concerns that emerged in previous chapters — in particular that subjectivity and transcendence were both insufficiently specified so as to be put to the service of the project and made to do too much work once they were — be allayed? Is it possible to develop a revised project? And could such a revised project be rendered sufficiently robust that even Garaudy himself would not have found it necessary to abandon either his Marxism or his Christian faith?

There are clear dangers here. First, of reincarnating the project as one or more of a purified, sanctified, ahistorical, or even omnipotent source of wisdom, useless in practice. Second, of presenting revision in the guise of an entirely subjective and equally contemporary version of 'improvement', destined in its turn to be rapidly eclipsed by events and replaced by another. There is even perhaps a third risk, that in accepting the argument that Garaudy's objective all along was that Marxism should 'cease to be an ideology and become a critical philosophy' (Cranston, 1970:18), it may become incapable of

providing answers to the very questions it posed. If so, a revised project may end up so elusive as to deliver nothing at all.

What did the critics of the project eventually do?

The subsequent paths followed by those who criticised Garaudy's project may perhaps illustrate the enduring merit or otherwise of their criticisms as a potential basis for a revised project. Three examples may suffice as examples.

Lucien Sève, Garaudy's principal critic, eventually took the view that we should think 'with Marx' — no longer as Marxists ourselves. In the first volume dedicated to this task, he belatedly discovered that, at the end of their lives, Marx and Engels already envisaged possible non-violent ways forward, carried out through democratic politics'²²⁷ (Sève, 2004:11). He concluded, in terms reminiscent of Garaudy's original project, that to think with Marx now must be a combination of 'political clashes, bioethical debates, scientific exchanges'²²⁸ (Sève, 2004:264). In the second volume, although he remained firmly atheist, he no longer talked of 'the militant life'²²⁹ (Sève, 1969 [1978:368]) but instead of 'the committed life'²³⁰ (Sève, 2008:510) and the fate of the earth, in terms very reminiscent of Garaudy's project that he so denounced at the time.

Louis Althusser preferred the more dramatic route of killing his wife and admitting his intellectual dishonesty (Althusser, 1994). His colleague Pierre Macherey referred to himself even in the 1990s as a 'dinosaur', a survivor of the 'structuralist epoch, the textual monuments of which are regarded by contemporary readers as curiosities, as puzzling in their complexity as the simultaneously strange and

²²⁷ Marx et Engels envisageaient déjà de possibles voies pacifiques frayées par un combat démocratique

²²⁸ affrontements politiques, débats bioéthiques, échanges scientifiques

²²⁹ la vie militante

²³⁰ la vie engagée

familiar skeletons exhibited in a museum of natural history' (Montag, 1998:3). More recently there has been what might be seen as a rewriting of history, when structuralist Marxism was described as in retrospect 'a way of wresting the historicity of class struggles from linearity, predetermination or prophecy, so as to restore to it its character of unpredictable eventfulness and perpetual "beginning"' (Merrick, 2017, n.p.), a telling suggestion, which even if true would have the extraordinary result of rendering the entire debate within the PCF otiose, as everyone would 'really' be in agreement.

Finally, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, student hero of the May 1968 uprising in Paris, eventually became a Green politician and centrist critic of the populist 'Gilets Jaunes' movement (Willsher, 2018). His political direction closely mirrored that of Garaudy's project in his rejection of economic growth, emphasis on ecology and co-operatives, all in the hope of creating 'a breach'²³¹ in capitalism capable of placing the entire system in jeopardy (Castoriadis & Cohn-Bendit, 2014:55).

The conclusion that it is very tempting to derive from these three very brief subsequent biographies is that leaving the Communist Party earlier rather than later, prompt admission of the faults of Soviet Marxism, and appreciation of the transformed agents and limited prospects for resistance to capitalism in the short to medium term might not have done anyone much harm, and probably quite a lot of good. One cannot help but wonder too what might have happened to Garaudy himself, had he been applauded by the delegates to the PCF Conference in 1970, instead of being listened to in stony silence. Garaudy alone could neither have saved the PCF from political oblivion, nor led it to a promised land, but the Party's trajectory would certainly have been very different had his views been in the majority. As it was, any possibilities of reconciliation, even of rejuvenation, between Garaudy and his former PCF comrades were never taken up. Garaudy was left, as the title of one of his autobiographies heralded, to pursue his journey through the century on his own (Garaudy, 1989).

In fairness, it is easy to criticise with the benefit of hindsight. Sève himself used the examples of Garaudy and Althusser to observe that 'an extremely important point appears certain: a marked

²³¹ une brèche

change in the ideas to which one is attached essentially has everything to do with a no less notable biographical change for the simple reason that the ideas to which one is attached are themselves in many ways due to life experiences' (Sève, 2008:526). This may readily be conceded, but we are still left with the conclusion that none of Garaudy's critics within the PCF or on the contemporary Left seem to be able to offer anything of significance for the project beyond some possible political strategies, either then or now.

Žižek and Eagleton — can a 'turn to religion' revise the project?

One way to envisage how Garaudy's project might be improved, or at least altered, is surely therefore by drawing comparisons with other work specifically encompassing both Marxism and Christianity. Those 'post-secularists' (Braidotti, 2008:2) who remain on the Left (McLennan, 2010:4) yet who embrace 'the new visibility of religion in politics' (Sigurdson, 2012:xi), including in France (Breckman, 2005:74) are keen, one suspects, to return to religion, Christianity in particular and specifically theology, in order to enlist their support for whatever kind of contemporary left-wing politics that can oppose capitalist hegemony. Jürgen Habermas, for example, seemed to have reached the position of 'dialogue' between theology and philosophy, reason and revelation (Habermas, 2010:18). Others have even moved heaven and earth to bring Marxism and Christianity into some kind of political alignment, for example what has been described as Boer's 'theologism': whereas 'Marxism should recognize its theological bearings and ambitions, theology for its part must fully internalize a strong materialist, Marxist perspective on ideology and emancipation' (McLennan, 2019:83). Throughout an extensive examination of the engagement between Marxism and Christianity, however, Boer still seems to have concluded that providing we reject exceptionally narrow definitions of both Marxists and Christians, which actually exclude virtually all who have ever called themselves either, we can all agree on struggle against oppression, to which the logic of both positions should send us. Nothing else much matters,

even ethics, and certainly not belief in anything close to a traditionally conceived God. Both the approach of pure dialogue and that of 'theologism' are evidently a long way away from the project altogether.

I have chosen instead to focus on the work of Slavoj Žižek and Terry Eagleton, who stand out amongst those who have taken the path of engagement between Marxism and Christianity, not least because of the ability they share with Garaudy to reach a wider audience than the overwhelming majority of professional philosophers. In engaging with their work, I should at once admit that brevity has imposed an undoubted unfairness in my summary treatment of them both. For example, I have not been able to pay close attention to the evolution of their views over time, nor therefore any incompatibility between their earlier and later work, although there is evidence that both of them have altered their views over time, albeit less spectacularly than did Garaudy. Again, I have followed Boer (2007) in focusing only on that part of their work concerned with the relationship between Marxism and Christianity: a wider perspective might conceivably bring a different judgement, although it would not of course erase what they have written. With that caveat, what contribution to a revised project might each of them bring?

Reversing their original roles in the metaphor of puppet and dwarf (Benjamin, 1940 [2009:2]), Žižek's suggestion has been that contemporary theology is to win all the time, by enlisting the secret service of historical materialism (Žižek, 2003:3). In this 'modern' world, religion globalises, but is 'reduced to a secondary epiphenomenon with regard to the secular functioning of the social totality' (Žižek, 2003:3). Hindsight has always been said to be a wonderful thing: but its wonders do not necessarily advance linearly, and on this point developments since would seem to reinforce Garaudy's prior view in the project of the importance of actual religious belief, by comparison to Žižek's globalist vision of the decay of genuine faith. This in turn might raise doubts over Žižek's reincarnation of dialectical materialism as a reconciliation and proposed synthesis between Hegelian dialectics and Lacanian psychoanalysis (Žižek, 2012), a psychoanalytic approach which leads to a unitary conception of

subjectivity, which though 'it continues to haunt every effort to overcome it' (Žižek, 2012a:76) can only be Lacanian 'doubts, questioning, inconsistency' (Žižek, 2012a:20) or a Hegelian 'gesture of withdrawal' (Žižek, 2012a:94) from the real world. For Žižek, subjectivity cannot therefore play the positive, directive role that Chapter Four showed a *particular* version plays in Garaudy's project. Similarly, love, the positive force so essential for Garaudy's Marxism, is dismissed as 'beyond Good and Evil' (Žižek, 2012a:81) or merely inviting ridicule (Žižek, 2012a: 191) and the intrusion of an alien third (Žižek, 2012a:37). Likewise, the suspicion of technology and demand of the project that humanity be concerned with ends not means is reproduced in a much paler and transient way by Žižek in his referencing of Heidegger's *Gestell*: 'the human being reduced to an object of technological manipulation is no longer properly human' (Žižek, 2012a:31).

Transcendence serves as another point of opposition to the project: Žižek's move to accepting a concept of an Event — 'something shocking, out of joint, that appears to happen all of a sudden and interrupts the usual flow of things; something that emerges seemingly out of nowhere, without discernible causes' (Žižek, 2012a:2), that is close to the very different version of revolutionary subjectivity propounded by his original source (Badiou, 1988:213; Harrison, 2011:8). This is by his own admission a recognition of transcendence, albeit a determinedly materialist one (Žižek, 2014:72). For Žižek, however, the existence of 'the effect that seems to exceed its causes' (Žižek, 2012a:3) poses a philosophical problem for transcendence, that of causality. But where the Garaudy of the project rejects dualism — and therefore the problem itself — Žižek has revelled in it (Žižek, 2012a:91). In this bleak philosophy, transcendent events are reduced to random, unplanned demonstrations of universal human freedom (Žižek, 2012a:88). The claim that the final crisis of capitalism — a prolonged process of delay and disintegration — is upon us therefore sits uneasily with the admission that there is 'no agent to give this decay a positive twist and to transform it into a passage to some higher level of social organization' (Žižek, 2019:24). *No agent at all*, is surely Žižek's eventual problem, as I suggest is demonstrated by the admission that with the failure and even dissolution of the traditional proletariat, 'The problem of western Marxism (and even of Marxism tout court) was the absence of

the revolutionary subject' (Žižek, 2019:50), so that all we are left with is a problem, with no solution in sight (Žižek, 2019:57).

As for Christianity itself, having previously damned most practising Christians with faint praise (Žižek, 2000; Kotsko, 2008), he initially took precisely the opposite view from that of Garaudy in his prophetic phase. Sigurdson pointed to his claim that 'there is no Christ outside Saint Paul' (Žižek, 2000:2), and equally that there is no 'authentic Marx' beyond Lenin's lens. Any view to the contrary is simply a fetish (Løland, 2018:65), 'an attempt to escape the uncomfortable dimensions of religion in favor of a mere thought experiment without any social consequences' (Sigurdson, 2012:26). Žižek later adopted a perspective on Christianity as a religion based on the Event of the Incarnation (Žižek, 2012a:38) where 'God dies and is resurrected as the Holy Ghost, as the *form* of collective belief' (Žižek, 2010 [2011:118]). In confronting Christ, 'we become aware of our own freedom' (Žižek, 2014:47). But the perspective is ontological, not eschatological: 'the ultimate Event Is the Fall itself' (Žižek, 2012a:49), which we can all echo (Žižek, 2014:292).

Similar ideas surface in Žižek's work and Garaudy's project, and they are equally at home with artistic metaphors, but in Žižek's hands they both take on a darker, less optimistic hue, and often with a diametrically opposite interpretation. For example, Garaudy and Žižek would surely agree that St. Paul is a pivotal figure for Christianity. But whereas for Garaudy he represents the perversion of the original Christian message, for Žižek he is a Leninist to be admired, intent on building the church amidst adversity. So too, whereas the project stands at the edge of Christian belief and openly revises Marxism, for Žižek, Christian orthodoxy is both 'daring and perilous' (Žižek, 2003:35), a 'thrilling adventure' (Chesterton, 1908 [2009:152]), just as Marxist orthodoxy should be done 'shamelessly' (Žižek, 2014a:32). Nor is it any surprise that disagreements over religion do not end with Christianity. Islam suffers from the 'traumatic presence' of the feminine (Žižek & Gunjević, 2012:123), whilst Christianity must also be distinguished from 'so-called Oriental spirituality' (Žižek, 2000 [2008:vii]) — scarcely surprising when, for Žižek, Western Buddhism is 'arguably the most efficient way for us fully

to participate in capitalist dynamics' (Žižek, 2003:26), a form of militaristic Zen that justifies cruelty through detachment. Within the project, by contrast, as discussed in Chapter Three, Islam is praised for its sense of community, whilst Zen enjoys a more peaceable reputation in a panoply of different religions: each religion has something to offer humanity.

Differences over theology emerged onto practical terrain with the suggestion that we should celebrate violence as the means to achieve freedom (Žižek, 2003:31). Whereas anti-war demonstrations are dismissed as self-indulgence, they would only have 'saved their beautiful souls'... Žižek (2007: n.p.), he can eventually only suggest that Christians should admire, and even themselves form, armed resistance against capitalism. This is a resistance which does not appear to be part of any organised political programme, Marxist or otherwise, as the continued failure of highly visible and sporadically popular movements such as the Arab Spring and Extinction Rebellion to confront or even denounce *capitalism* demonstrate. Hardly surprising, if neither they nor those that do, such as Occupy, nor Žižek himself, has any idea any longer of even the solution to the world's ills (Žižek, 2019:57), let alone the means to achieve it. Marxism is confined to an historical ghetto, in the absence of solidarity or a united front against capitalism (Žižek, 2019:56).

Like Garaudy, Žižek has sought to bring the two ends of the chain together. But whereas Garaudy reaches out for those two ends that are nearest each other, Žižek's two ends have been those furthest away from each other. Such a goal is not unique: a contemporary wrote of his wish that Lenin and Althusser should meet Augustine and Luther (Collier, 2001:1). But whereas for Garaudy, Marxism stands in the greater need, for Žižek it is precisely the opposite. To attack 'the religious hard core that survives even in humanism' (Žižek, 2003:171), Christianity must follow Christ's example. It must sacrifice itself to save its treasure, which is the destruction of the traditional form of hope, in favour of a reformulated communal Holy Spirit that looks only to itself for salvation and adopts Leninist politics, none of which, I suggest, is at all likely to happen within any reasonable timeframe. It is telling

that in an entire book devoted to Žižek's engagement with Christianity (Mitralexis and Skliris, 2017) there is no optimism derived from Žižek himself.

Yet at the risk of possibly dangerous mixed metaphors, and possibly also of landing a low blow, it is hard not to reverse the accusation against Garaudy made at his trial cited in Chapter Two, that of supporting totalitarianism in the name of liberty. Both the contention that 'there has been a marked revulsion from the Promethean ethic of human liberation on the ground that it provides no built-in check against such horrifying excesses' (Kamenka, 1969:22), and Boer's suggestion in relation to Bloch, that 'the elevation of 'man' in God's place, or matter in place of spirit, has all the potential for totalitarian and oppressive politics that can now be justified by such an ideology, for this 'man' can behave as though he were God' (Boer, 2007:52), are criticisms that could have been directed against Garaudy's original project. But Žižek's revised conception of theology is equally open to the objection of the Russian doll. Within his sober anti-humanist historical materialist dwarf, in turn allegedly controlling a puppet theology, there seems to me to be an exuberant humanism, a faith in humanity and an ethical impulse. All three must be suppressed, lest they burst forth and the entire hierarchy be overturned, Christianity take charge of Benjamin's chess game, Marxism veer in a revisionist direction, and Leninism be lost forever. That must remain tantalising conjecture, however: if we are to take Žižek at his word, he has nothing to offer the project except direct criticism. Wherever one turns in Žižek's work, there is in fact an almost uncanny inversion of anything resembling Garaudy's project. Hence his comparison to his assertion that 'the subversive kernel of Christianity is accessible also to a materialist approach' (Žižek, 2003:6); he points dismissively to 'how much less risk and theoretical effort, how much more passive opportunism and theoretical laziness, is the easy revisionist conclusion that the changed historical circumstances demand some "new paradigm"' (Žižek, 2003:35). No doubt, a revised project should beware both theoretical laziness and political opportunism, but that is surely self-evident, and if Žižek's humanism is to be forever concealed, so that such advice is the sum total of any contribution to a revised project, it does not amount to much.

If Žižek has little to offer, what of another leading contemporary avowed Marxist with a strong interest in religion, Terry Eagleton? His case for a fresh look by the Left at religion is beguilingly straightforward: Marxism was never intended to be a theory of everything (Eagleton, 2011:34), whereas ‘Jewish and Christian scriptures have much to say about vital questions — death, suffering, love, self-possession, and the like — on which the Left has for the most part maintained an embarrassed silence’ (Eagleton, 2009:xii). It is a silence that he argued should end. For Christianity, the example of Jesus — not only his behaviour but his morality, described as ‘reckless, extravagant, improvident, over-the-top’ (Eagleton, 2009:14), ‘with very little to say about sin at all’ (Eagleton, 2009:20) — is the first place to look. The extreme sacrifices made by Christian ‘martyrs in the struggle against US supported imperialism’ (Eagleton, 2009:98) are also clear examples. Hence it is in the struggles of every everyday life (Eagleton, 2009:19), in the love for fellow human beings that Christianity places at the centre of its vision of the world (Eagleton, 2009:31) and not in religion, and certainly not in a church which has been ‘oily, sanctimonious, brutally oppressive, and vilely bigoted’ (Eagleton, 2009: 56) that salvation lies. Thus far, Eagleton may seem to be in step with any revised project. His emphatic rejection of both Islamic radicalism and Christian fundamentalism as seeking to replace politics with religion (Eagleton, 2009:43–44) further identifies him with the project rather than sympathetic to Garaudy’s conversion. The identification of ‘the impending upheaval which Marx calls communism [with what] the Christian Gospel calls the kingdom of God’ (Eagleton, 2018: 279) might seem conclusive evidence of common ground.

Below the surface, however, and despite his denial that Christian faith is not primarily about ontology, I follow Boer (2007:275) and Sigurdson (2012:81) in recognising that Eagleton’s latent Catholicism is never far from the surface, which in turn, I argue, limits his potential contribution to a revised project. We find for example in his now disavowed early work advocacy for the priesthood to migrate into a political vanguard akin to the Party (Eagleton, 1970:92), both of which will eventually wither away (Eagleton, 1966:114). And so to some extent they have, though certainly not after a revolution: the Party now broken by history into many ineffectual pieces, and the priesthood under significant threat

in developed countries (Schoenherr, 2002:4), even allegedly in need of reinvention (Higgins, 2017), this simulacrum of orthodoxy now seems wholly of its time. We also observe this more recently in Eagleton's conviction that a 'lordly, overweening humanism' (Eagleton, 2009:15) is no improvement on orthodox theology: it may even be a servant of liberal reason and one of the driving forces of Western neo-imperialism, and even more overtly in his assertion that Christianity holds that there are 'flaws and contradictions built into the structure of the human species' (Eagleton, 2009:48). All that is missing — and we may regret it, given its relative absence in the original project as well, is a considered analysis of sin flowing from this observation, and perhaps a reappraisal of the view from long past that original sin implies that the possibility of exploitation is built into 'all human relationship' (Eagleton, 1970:52), at least outside Christian salvation. But as Boer observed, in his recent work 'Eagleton produces a range of substitutes — history, confession and forgiveness — that turn around the absent centre of sin itself' (Boer, 2007:295). We do not find, for example, a discussion of Pelagius; rather, we are exhorted to beseech God's grace, albeit most surreptitiously, via literary commentary (Eagleton, 2014:102). When this subterranean orthodoxy is adduced in addition to consideration of Marx again on the basis of the plausibility of historical materialism, albeit aimed at 'the cultural and political Left' (Boer, 2007:277), it is clear that Eagleton's turn to religion is much less ambitious than Garaudy's bold attempt in the project to use Christianity to provide Marxism with new foundations. Nor does Eagleton suggest that Marxism has anything particular to offer Christianity beyond its allocated level — the traffic he is interested in is all one-way. It would seem that Eagleton is indeed a leading practitioner of 'compatibilism' — 'the idea that Marxism (still) gives us the best analysis of capitalism and its discontents, plus some historical grounds for social hope, but that it is religion that (still) more directly and independently deals with life's big issues and the angst of subjective commitment' (McLennan, 2019:82).

We should not be surprised. With the collapse of organised Marxist political parties, and the collapse of the Marxist political enterprise of the last century, Eagleton has found himself in the political wilderness along with many on the political Left. But not for him the advocacy of a revised Marxism

that incorporates patient, fragmented resistance to oppression and capitalism, even if he himself has tried to do so. I suggest that what Boer takes for a less convoluted and 'more relaxed' (Boer, 2007:279) style in his later writings is actually something much more serious, though scarcely uncommon: *the loss of political faith*. Eagleton's 'return to religion' is inescapable: there is nothing else left for him. So when Boer observed that 'the crux of Eagleton's theological recovery in the later works is that Christology has a distinct political dynamic that the Left ignores at its own peril' (Boer, 2007:277), even that 'Eagleton holds out Christ as a political model' (Boer, 2007:307), the problem here is not really as he suggests a cult of personality, or even an obsessive focus on Christ. It is certainly not the re-introduction of traditional personal ethics (Eagleton, 2009a), which as I will argue below, is not the flag of surrender that Boer has suggested it represents (Boer, 2014:264), but a welcome development if it serves to provide further impetus to the overthrow of capitalism as envisaged by the project. Rather, it is a much larger problem with the very term 'the Left'. The close attention to Christianity in Eagleton's later work stands in contrast to indifference towards actual politics. By separating out Marxism (and much else political) from Christianity in his later work, he has run the risk of defining 'the Left' himself, leaving it in what seems to me a distant and abstract limbo, which rather reduces the impact of any supposed alignment with any form of Christianity and dilutes any practical significance of his 'compatibilism'. A similar complaint has been made elsewhere: in commenting on Eagleton's study on hope (Eagleton, 2015), a reviewer suggests that they are 'desirous to know the precise details of this structure and how it affects everyday practice' (Cooper, 2016:993) The faintest of suspicion even arises that today's Eagleton would actually prefer 'the Left' to remain in limbo, so such details never need to be elucidated.

Apparent similarities between Eagleton's work and the project are therefore deceptive, concealing a difference that is in fact stark. The project puts political action at its centre; fully prepared to disagree with Marxists, starting with Stalin but eventually reaching to Marx himself, its goal is to revise Marxism not to bury it. As time has gone by, Eagleton has become the opposite, increasingly removed from the difficult political choices of a long opposition, always keen to cite Marx and to use his insights for

economic explanation, or indeed literary or artistic criticism, but with an interest in Christianity and its ethics that seeks to use it as a substitute for Marxism, not a support. Or, to put matters slightly more generously, far from trying to bring the two ends of the chain together, Eagleton has resigned himself to an attempt merely to keep them within sight of one another.

What can be derived from this brief analysis of Žižek and Eagleton? Two ostensibly very different perspectives, certainly, but as time has passed, I suggest, they have edged ever closer, with recently even explicit recognition of the similarity between them: 'Jesus, to adopt a phrase from Slavoj Žižek, must accept the Real in all its brute meaninglessness' (Eagleton, 2018:46). My conclusion is that insofar as the original project stands in need of revision, Eagleton no more than Žižek offers anything much from their respective Christian orthodoxies, except in Eagleton's discussion of ethics, and even that must be treated with caution lest it develop an independent life of its own, away from the central concerns of the project.

The differences between Garaudy's project and the work of Žižek and Eagleton might therefore lead to the surprising conclusion that the project is more hopeful, in exactly the sense of one critic of them both, 'a mutual expectation, beyond mere wishful thinking, that something new is possible, a better society than the current alienated and social existence of humankind' (Sigurdson, 2012:5) and presents a more ambitious relationship between Marxism and Christianity than either of their own contributions. This is not to say that the project as Garaudy developed it was perfect, needing only to be disinterred and dusted down to be completely serviceable half a century after its interment. Elements I argue would need substantial revision, whilst there were also important omissions that would need to be included. The starting point, as with the original project, but sharply distinguished from the way the work of both Žižek and Eagleton has evolved, must be politics itself.

A revised political analysis

The radical politics that Garaudy himself clearly viewed as an essential component of the project, although relatively unusual at the time, have a contemporary feel in their general emphasis on the environment, on building international political consensus, and on the autonomy of local organisations rather than a traditional Marxist emphasis on state control. Others who have considered themselves Marxists and Christians have more recently concurred: 'Where Marxists were to be politically effective — as in the Communist Party of South Africa — it was always because they had adopted programmes and forms of action only connected with Marxism in the loosest and most indirect ways' (MacIntyre, 1995 [2008:421]). True then, and I would argue even more true now: the utter failure of socialist practice does often blind observers to achievements in other directions, such as the ending of apartheid and the winding-down of the nuclear arms race. Is it not interesting, to say the least, that these are precisely the political areas in which collaboration between Christians and Marxists has always been most readily achievable?

But here, perhaps, we stumble, because the political trajectory of those such as Eagleton and Žižek, has varied little, in practice, from that of Critchley or MacIntyre, or the 'prophetic' character of Garaudy's own existence during the period of the project. None of them, nor the Left in general, has been able to make political capital out of any accommodation with Christianity, or any other religion. It must be conceded: nor might the advocates of any revised project. Yet the task of revising Marxism has not gone away, and the politics of the original project do however now seem, with the benefit of hindsight, partially incorrect and exaggerated in three important specific respects, all of which do tend towards alignment with much of what has been regarded as radical Christian politics.

First, *the question of the environment and the role of technology*. Garaudy's relationship with technology in the project was evidently awkward. His Malthusian worry about famine in the developing world has been continually defeated by the very technology he denounced in *Appel aux*

vivants (Garaudy, 1979). Criticism of ‘a civilisation dominated by science and technology’²³² (Garaudy, 1992:108) begs the question of which sciences and which technologies are to be kept and which jettisoned. The global population has passed the five billion mark he forecast, and gone on to seven billion, whilst the number dying from famine has regularly diminished, albeit unevenly, whilst United Nations agencies agree that ‘Conflict remains the main driver of food crises’ (Food Security Information Network, 2018:33), not development or economic growth. Whilst for Garaudy, ‘Choosing this model of growth makes the status quo immutable and revolution impossible’²³³ (Garaudy, 1979:15) he was evidently only half-right — revolution became impossible, but the status quo, at least for the majority, became much more liveable, not less. Meanwhile the threat of nuclear war, whilst still with us, has so far not manifested. There is always a chance of the threat eventuating — at the time of writing — but it has been mercifully elusive, notwithstanding further international nuclear proliferation. The intense political opposition to nuclear energy that Garaudy put at the front of in the politics of the project evidently needs to be better nuanced. Whilst Chernobyl was a massive ecological disaster by any measure, with thousands of deaths attributable to it (Cardis et al., 2006), and Fukushima taught us that nowhere in the world is immune to a nuclear disaster (Steinhauser et al., 2014), the rise of renewable, especially solar, energy technology (IRENA, 2019) does provide some grounds for believing that with a few exceptions, notably perhaps France, even global capitalism is unlikely to have recourse to further extensive programmes of nuclear power development, at least in the foreseeable future and with existing technology. *A revised project would find itself more easily in alignment with the global climate change movement specifically, adopting a more granular and nuanced focus on the distinction between technology as a potentially positive influence on humanity and its undoubted possible risks.*

Second, *over-optimism regarding the struggle against capitalism*. Religion as protest, the Bible as biased towards the poor, the Church as open and free, God as truly human — decades ago this was

²³² une civilisation dominée par les sciences et les techniques

²³³ choisir ce modèle de croissance c’est rendre le statu quo invivable et la révolution impossible

characterised as ‘an impressive doctrinal system that has proved to be a positive catalyst in Marxist–Christian dialogue’ (McLelland, 1988:182). This view was already looking dated by the time it was written; over three decades later the trajectory of both Marxism and Christianity suggests that it was a blind alley. An honest assessment would highlight the failure of both the political Left and politically engaged Christianity to achieve any progress in the overthrow of capitalism during those decades and even thereafter, where not even the most existential challenges to the global order of war and pestilence have been able to shake its grip on global economics, and even strengthened it.

Third, *the truncated timescale of the project* was completely in error, to a significant degree as a result of Garaudy’s impatience. Joachim de Flore suggested that the Age of the Spirit would begin around 1260 (Reeves, 1980:298). Garaudy, who was familiar with his work (Garaudy, 1980:5), nevertheless suggested that unless action were taken soon, there would be no future even in the 21st Century. Both Christians and Marxists have evidently been very wrong on timescale. Reading Garaudy’s work from his prophetic period — or those of liberation theologians such as Alves (1969) or humanists such as Marcuse (1960, 1964) — is reminiscent of de Flore in this respect. Garaudy’s poor judgement as to the tenacity of capitalism failed to desert him even decades later, when he argued that ‘The restoration of capitalism in Russia has made a new Third World out of the old Soviet Union’²³⁴ (Garaudy, 1994:3). Certainly, Garaudy’s view of the time frame in which change to the capitalist system could possibly eventuate has been proved dramatically over-optimistic. The viewpoint he took in *L’Alternative* (Garaudy, 1972 [1976]), and even in *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979), of basing politics on the need and possibility for immediate change in order to avert catastrophe, now seems ill-judged, even slightly hysterical in tone, the prerogative of distinctly minority movements such as Occupy and Extinction Rebellion. On the contrary, the global dominance of capitalism as an economic form since the project has been accentuated, and has permeated throughout Islam, the alternative that Garaudy sought after abandoning the project. The immediate short-term success of the project

²³⁴ La restauration du capitalisme en Russie a fait en trois ans de l’ancienne Union Soviétique un nouveau tiers monde

was perhaps its highest hurdle, and it failed at it. A more realistic timescale as a starting point, and application to individuals as well as society, will be needed in a revised project that short-term, even lifetime, disappointment cannot defeat. This was quite evident to many politicians, philosophers and economists even throughout the 1970s, although it is fair to observe that it was equally not so obvious to significant numbers either. Whatever any consistency between Marxism and Christianity is now is designed to achieve, politically or theologically, it is not to avert an imminent nuclear holocaust, or to rescue Russia from Third World status, however many nuclear weapons still remain and however poor many Russians remain.

Neither political ideas, nor indeed religions, are refuted because of setbacks, even persistent failures, but if at all because they are 'shown to be pernicious or impracticable' (Collins, 2001:12). It must only be recognised that any contemporary attempt to utilise Garaudy's thought in establishing mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity should be based on at least the reasonable expectation of the continuation of the international capitalist system in more or less its current form for the foreseeable future. Yet it must be compatible with critical analysis of its failings as well as projections and encouragement of its eventual replacement.

This is evidently an exacting requirement with many aspects, some of which are relatively clear, others not. For example, the original project may be seen to be in the vanguard of revisionist approaches to Marxist class analysis, needing only further detailed empirical analysis for a revised project. So too, the importance of international culture was a hallmark of the project. Both indicated an evolution from a narrow conception of the proletariat as the sole class destined to deliver the overthrow of capitalism. Although 'The original advocates of liberation theology ignored central issues in human experience, linked with sexuality and gender, which continue to be key areas of human need and oppression' (Rowland, 2007: xiii), it has now evolved towards 'a multiplicity of liberation theologies' (Boer, 2011:7; Cooper, 2013). A revised project could certainly now draw on Christianity for some of

its politics, for radical theology has not only caught up with Garaudy, but in some crucial areas gone further:

‘The one God of the Christendom that took up the Roman pattern and built empires on the labor of slaves had, through centuries, provoked many rounds of exodus. The US civil rights movement and the birth of Black theology along with Latin American liberation theology churned up new Christian discourses of exodus...God’s faces and names began to proliferate. God’s façade of bourgeois democracy began to slip’ (Keller & Schneider, 2010:5).

Whilst at least the emergence of this frame of reference had certainly commenced by the time he wrote (e.g. Cone, 1969), Garaudy’s attempt to breakthrough such a façade took him in on the contrary eventually to Islam. This in practice also took him away from not only the option for the poor of liberation theology, but also from any opportunity to integrate the real struggles of minorities — and conflicts between them — into the project. *A revised project would have to set this aright, but without losing the central Marxist insight that opposition to capitalism must lie at the centre, not the periphery, of politics.*

No doubt the universal appeal that Garaudy intended the project to have was always one of its more appealing aspects, but at the same time most difficult to achieve in practice. The ‘Dialogue of Civilisations’ Garaudy proposed was either far too parochial and small-scale to have any significant effect, or too vague and lacking in operational detail to be of any practical use. Support for international organisations of many kinds, including those launched by churches as well as between governments, is the closest the 21st Century world comes to anything like a true dialogue of civilisations, and no doubt a revised project should incorporate many of them. But clashes *between* different cultures, religions and sets of beliefs, the majority of which have surely had the tendency since Garaudy wrote to reinforce the hegemony of capitalist institutions worldwide — these are absent in the analysis of the project, and therefore so too any proposal as to how to resolve them. This thesis is not the place to discuss political strategy for the Left. There may not currently be any one satisfactory place, or any good answers (Holloway, 2002:255). *A revised project would however certainly need to be aware of these clashes, and develop responses to them, to become less politically vulnerable and worthwhile pursuing.*

A plausible Marxism for the 21st Century and beyond must therefore surely involve the development of the patience that Garaudy lacked. Any teleology that encompasses the demise of capitalism must therefore be visualised as a very long-term objective, deriving its politics from a realistic appreciation of actual political developments. Marx himself worried that the time for revolution may have been missed: participants in the revised project, as some Marxists have acknowledged, must work out very complex, and quite possibly entirely individual, strategies of resistance to enduring 'universal alienations' (Harvey, 2018:452). 'In this situation [1995, but equally so at the time of writing more than two decades later], 'what is most urgently needed is a politics of self-defence for all those local societies that aspire to achieve some relatively self-sufficient and independent form of participatory practice-based community and that therefore need to protect themselves from the corrosive effects of capitalism and the depredations of state power' (MacIntyre, 1995 [2008:422]).

Patience must not obscure the need to overcome capitalism and the hope for a future beyond it, which should remain as the ultimate goal of a revised project: so too the long-held conviction that Marxism can intrinsically be revised so as to tolerate theism without ceasing to be a philosophy or a metaphysics and yet retain its essential insight into human life on this planet (Adelman, 1968:68). 'Revisionism is, then, a part of the dialectic. This is probably the best insight that the Marxists have had in some time. Marxism in theory cannot stand pat; it must evolve' (Adelman, 1968:69). And evolve it consistently has, in exactly the direction Garaudy argued it must, discarding structural Marxism and with calls to violence largely ignored. Any revised project, now free from any obligation to avoid the charge of revisionism, must confront honestly the tremendous obstacles that capitalism has placed in the way of its own transcendence, the possibility of regress, as well as the dangers of reinventing a form of Marxism-Leninism, and continue the process of revising Marxism until that need is met and hope fulfilled.

In all of these three ways, therefore, a revised project can better be defended against the objections Garaudy himself implicitly raised to his own original project, and further, establish that to abandon

the project in favour of Islam was only to advance the cause of capitalism, not act to defeat it. *The political challenge of the project is to develop appropriate long-term strategies for the Left without losing the Marxist hope at the centre of the project, that capitalism is inherently temporary, and that through transcendence humanity has the subjective capacity to surmount it.*

Christianity in the revised project

There are three ways at least in which the role of Christianity within the revised project needs to be studied beyond its input of transcendence and subjectivity to Marxism.

Firstly, the politics of Christianity. It was the early Marx who argued that Christianity, or more precisely St. Augustine, ‘teaches, as religion is bound to teach: submit to authority, for all authority is from God’ (Marx, 1842 [1975:184]). The Christianity of the project owes nothing to St Augustine except explicitly to maintain that Marxism would be the poorer without him (1965d:70), and certainly does not advocate submission to political authority any more than did Marx himself. This insight, defended by Eagleton and Žižek as much as by Garaudy, must be retained and even if possible enhanced. So too, the very possibility of divorcing Christian principles from practice. It was the early Marx too, who argued that ‘It is the greatest irreligion, it is the arrogance of secular reason, to divorce the general spirit of religion from actually existing religion’ (Marx, 1842 [1975:184]) as Garaudy undoubtedly did. I argue that the revised project must build a successful political engagement within Christianity and other religions in order to avoid accusations of a similar arrogance.

This may be assisted by the fact that the role of Marxism in the decline of Christianity in countries such as France, as argued by Cholvy & Hilaire (1988), was after all surely slight. McLeod, for example, devotes very little space to Marxism, and finds alternative, largely capitalist explanations for the decline of Christianity in the West including for example Pope Paul VI’s conservative stance on clerical

celibacy and contraception (McLeod, 2007:13). Indeed, Marxism may have actually promoted Christianity, albeit indirectly, by giving it a target to oppose, which Pope John Paul II managed adroitly, as a study of the Encyclical *Laborem Exercens* amply demonstrated (Baum, 1987).

Secondly, the relationship between Christianity and Marxism. For Bloch, the absolute rejection of Christianity by vulgar Marxism is not the right critique of religion. Rather, it is to subject Christianity to a class, and by extension an ethical, rebuke. What emerges from the Marxist criticism of Christianity is a religion purified of oppression generated by class. If Christianity should be scrutinised by a theology located in the world, then so long as Marxism was a dominant form of contemporary atheism, taking Marx seriously ought to be important for Christians (Lash, 1981:6). But Lash certainly followed his own dictum: as Marx became less significant in the world, he ceased to engage with it. MacIntyre followed the same path: once he decided that capitalism had the capacity to prevent proletarian revolution indefinitely, he declined to engage much further with it (MacIntyre, 1981), except to reminisce (MacIntyre, 1995 [2008]). The disinclination to engage, both from Christians and many others, became a self-fulfilling prophecy: Marxism beat a hasty retreat to the academy after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, where it has generally remained since.

In response, whereas the original project largely concerned what Marxism could derive from Christianity, a revised project should also concern itself with (amongst many other things) the reverse. It should lean on the repeated insistence of another scholar that a Christian cannot help but be a Marxist (Turner, 1975, 1977, 1983) to attempt to lodge a revised Marxism as securely as possible within the practice of actual Christianity. A great deal of contemporary political theology is structured along similar lines. To take just three examples from the academy: the 'grammar of hope' in the recent work of Emmanuel Katongole (2017:264) in his attempt to come to grips with the lessons of Christianity for politics in Africa, and for another, the work of Peter McLaren (2015) attempting to breathe life into liberation theology in Latin America, and the feminist liberation theology of Marcella Althaus-Reid (2002). The revised project is therefore far from unknown in general terms. In its

contemporary forms, however, it is without any overt recognition of its precursor, almost certainly because of Garaudy's conversion and subsequent reputation. More of concern is that although Marxism and liberation theology share an orientation toward the future, and hope that human action 'will eventually result in improvement for living in this world' (Li & Rowland, 2013:184), recent liberation theology frequently survives without an explicitly Marxist goal of the abolition of capitalism, in turn leading to diverse, fissiparous and potentially even divisive approaches to political goals and action.

Unfortunately too for any revised project, it will continue to have powerful, active opponents. Liberation theology has since the 1970s been firmly a minority pursuit with liberation theologians distancing themselves from Marx (Kee, 1990:xi), even if those examining Marx and religion are on occasion reluctant to recognise the fact (Uchegbue, 2011). Similarly, the tolerant, egalitarian, intellectually sophisticated, liberal Christianity frequently presented in the academy of the late 20th Century (e.g. Altizer & Hamilton, 1968; Hamer, 1967) is simply not the majority Christianity of China, of India, still less of the Evangelical Churches of Africa nor even now of much of Latin America. The majority of believers there would certainly not agree that with the assertion from the time of the original project that the Marxist–Christian dialogue had made it 'abundantly clear that the real division is not between believers and non-believers, but between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat' (Hornosty, 1976:286). Their Christian faith no longer even feels the need for the Marxist hypothesis, notwithstanding — or perhaps because — in many cases much less than perfect regimes professing allegiance to Marxist principles ruled in many of their countries, or parts of them. Nor even, to many of the values that underpin it, if they ever did. As the strongest growth in Christian believers in the 21st Century is amongst this majority, the current task would seem the herculean one of persuading them to take Garaudy's project — or something very like it — seriously.

A realistic evaluation of the revised project must recognise that the relationship between Marxism and Christianity has always depended on *which* Christianity, and *which* Marxism. At the time Garaudy

was about to abandon his original project, Lash argued that for any kind of synthesis, any sufficiently modified Marxism would not be recognisable as a form of Marxism by other forms of the Marxist tradition (Lash, 1981:291). If Marxism and Christianity are to engage in the 21st Century, if any kind of post-capitalist world is even to be envisaged, let alone worked for, Boer is surely right to suggest that there must be *some* kind of confrontation, not only between the traditions, but perhaps even more so, within them (Boer, 2014). Yet if Lenin and Althusser were to meet Augustine and Luther (Collier, 2001:1), most would agree, they would not agree on much. ‘Synthetic dialogue’ demands that ‘good Christians’ repudiate ‘bad Christianity’, and that the ‘good Marxists’ repudiate ‘bad Marxism’ (Vree, 1978:399). But what might these be? Yes, ‘A Pelagian Christianity can meet a Feuerbachian Marxism on the ground of an anthropocentric philosophy’ (Collier, 2001:1) and following earlier attempts by Macmurray (1933), MacIntyre (1953) and Turner (1975, 1977, 1983) the revised project may have to accept that mutual dependence must stop there. A revised project will therefore have to remain insistent that it is possible for an individual or group to claim to be both Christian and Marxist, but only by rejecting certain aspects of what at various times has been claimed as part of both. Garaudy was one of the first to state this clearly and unequivocally. And, as has been argued in previous chapters, there are consequences of this insistence, both theological and political.

Thirdly, the political limits of Christianity. Garaudy seems to have conflated two different components of the relationship between Marxism and Christianity — the one theoretical, the other practical. At a theoretical level it may well be that subjectivity and transcendence make for a better, more humane revolution than do dialectical and historical materialism. They may also be a better analysis of the human condition. They may even be essential for Marxism. So too religion’s continued political ‘power to inspire and incite’ must be recognised (Brown 2010: 83). But to argue that it is necessary ‘indissolubly [to] associate political and religious problems’²³⁵ (Garaudy, 1992: 11) or to argue that religion is the only practical force capable of creating social change seem exaggerated claims,

²³⁵ associe indissolublement problems politiques et problems religieux

especially in relation to developed countries. On the contrary, the decline of both Catholic church attendance and of membership of Marxist parties in France indicates the weakness of both (McLeod, 2007:11). It has been contended that the world can still be set alight by a Christianity that permits 'the possibility of a non-ideological social order modelled on the radical egalitarian collective of the 'Holy Spirit' (Kotsko, 2014:97), evoking that Spirit which is 'a *real* force acting upon *real* minds' (Fielding Clarke, 1977:39). But even if there were an indissoluble connection between faith and political immediacy in an advanced capitalist state, which I doubt, synergies might well be minimal, and the effect possibly even deleterious to both. Garaudy may be right that Christianity might well be required to provide Marxism with theoretical life support, a role of supreme political importance for the project, but perhaps paradoxically it seems ill-placed to provide it with sufficient political influence as well, at least in the immediate future.

I conclude that the idea of using Garaudy's project to identify the mutual dependence of Marxism and Christianity in the 21st Century may still not be that farfetched. If 'Theology that starts from manifold intuitions of multiplicity and relationality is often inspired by stories of liberation, of resistance to some monolithic religio-political rule' (Keller & Schneider, 2011a:3), then Christianity can be expected to continue to place political obligations on its practitioners, but it would equally be naïve to believe that it will ever be easy to build consensus between even sympathetic Christians and those who still consider themselves Marxists as to the right way forward.

Prophecy and the principle of levels

The Garaudy of the project, however, was always too wise to allow the strength of Marxism as a political movement to determine his analysis of Christianity. In contrast to both Bloch and Lash, though not with Žižek and Eagleton, he is at ease with levels of analysis, but as the critic of the original

project has shown, others were not. Since then, the principle of ontological levels has gained wider acceptance. It has for example enabled the Dalai Lama too to call himself a Marxist, and even suggest that at the level of spirituality as everyday practice, a sense of concern over the other's well-being. 'Marxism is spiritual at that level' (Dhar et al., 2016:588).

In respect of epistemology, Garaudy is surely on the soundest ground. Whilst Bonino (1975) argued that Marxism in general and liberation theology shared a critical perspective on absolute truth, the critical position advanced by Garaudy (1970a) seems more logical, but he stringently avoids consideration of almost all theological questions. A revised project cannot altogether hide behind Garaudy's excuse that he was no theologian. To consider two examples. First, nowhere in his project does Garaudy either assert or deny the existence of an immortal soul. As to individual resurrection, certainly Garaudy does deny the likelihood of individual bodily resurrection, but this is a scepticism he shares with many other theologians. A revised project need not exclude such a belief, though it need not be required to underpin Marxism. Similarly, openness to prophecy, though it must not be allowed to employ mysticism in the service of capitalism, so that it 'subtracts everything from poverty, reducing it to misery' (Negri & Fadini, 2008:666) might yet allow that some mythology that Garaudy put in the exclusion zone need not be there: Garaudy is perhaps too swift to attack the miraculous. It will be a delicate strategic withdrawal from materialism, but *the Marxism of the revised project, operating at levels, as Collier and others have suggested, a concept to which Garaudy himself was open, and having left dialectical materialism far behind, could still leave open belief in the possibility that materialist explanations do not wholly suffice, even to explain each and every material event.*

A reinforced subjectivity

General considerations aside, the core of the relationship between Marxism and Christianity within the project has been shown to be transcendence and subjectivity. How should they fare in a revised project? In Chapter Four I argued that for Garaudy, Marx was the pre-eminent philosopher of freedom. Philosophically, however, Garaudy spent little time finessing the degree of individual freedom that history ever permitted, and the extent to which individual creativity is any sense actually compatible with a Marxist economic framework. To tell us that ‘The problem of freedom is for Marx not only an individual problem, but a historical and social problem, a problem of class’²³⁶ (Garaudy, 1977a:142) really does not get us very far. To assign to Marxism alone an especial problem with the question of freedom is evidently unfair: determinism need not be economic, or even primarily economic, to circumscribe the range of individual choice. But to leave entirely unspoken the actual issue of individual autonomy is even less acceptable within any plausible political project than it was in Garaudy’s time. Even the question of the extent to which economics, and class, plays a central role in the personality needs to be elucidated in much more depth than Garaudy ever attempted. Such an attempt would need to avoid the trap, into which arguably Sève and even Garaudy did originally fall, of developing a psychology around the division of labour (Burkitt, 1991:128), that ‘through work man becomes Man, beyond other animals’²³⁷ (Rodriguez, 1981:24), thereby creating no more than a psychological parallel to Lysenko’s discredited views on biology (Kolchinsky et al., 2017). Ironically perhaps, it is Sève whose much more balanced recent work has pointed the way to how a personality ought to be considered from the standpoint of the project, for example the importance of recognising a complex definition of *biography* as a way of understanding individuals and the subjectivity they possess at any one time (Sève, 2008:5). Garaudy himself merely gestures to this when he distinguishes between our true individuality and that imposed by capitalism (Garaudy, 1975:48). *A revised project will have much catching-up to do here.*

²³⁶ La problème de la liberté est donc pour Marx non pas seulement un problème individu, mais un problème historique et social, un problème de classe

²³⁷ mediante el trabajo el hombre llega a ser hombre separándose del animal

On the other hand, advocates of a revised project would surely be gratified to read those of a militant disposition insisting on the importance of love for revolutionary change, for example the assertion, which does read remarkably as if written by Garaudy himself, that ‘Theology becomes important for revolutionary thinking when charity and love (*agape* and *amor*) are assumed to be unrestrainable powers — where, in other words, the same *logos*, the same rationality is placed at love’s disposal’ (Negri & Fadini, 2008:666). Whilst the migration of revolutionary thinkers towards the recognition of the power of love is no doubt a welcome development for any revised project, this cannot serve as an excuse not to pursue more detailed explanation. If love is suppressed within capitalism, how will it eventually rebel against its tormentor? For how long must Marxists look only to the sporadic rejection of liberalism (Fukuyama, 2018) as evidence that history has not ended? *A revised project stands in need of more detail here: in what way does this process work in practice? And where are its limits: why does it not work more successfully?*

A more subdued transcendence

What of the role of transcendence in a revised project? At the conclusion of Chapter Five I noted that Garaudy’s transcendence fails to engage with political reality. The very breadth of the idea militates against its effective application in matters political in a 21st Century world that seems to have rejected equality, and has only adopted a piecemeal facsimile of socialism in response to a global natural crisis. The choice would further appear to range from Negri’s rejection of transcendence as a liberating force (Revel, 2016:474) to accepting that, for the time being at least, its force at a political level is subdued, local, and insufficient for any major achievement. Some explanation must be given for the apparent boisterous progress of capitalism, after all. Garaudy’s transcendence might, however, be viewed sequentially rather than in parallel, as he did: there are times when a common humanity overcomes political difficulties — one thinks of the abolition of slavery or the defeat of Fascism — but there may

also be times when transcendence focuses on science, or even when it can be observed only at the level of individual love. A revised project will take more cognisance of that fluidity, and recognise the impact of different perspectives of transcendence, for example that of feminist theory (Rivera, 2007). That is a positive revision. But if 'Marxism's truncated approach requires the completion of theological transcendence to make the required breakthrough' (Boer, 2014:7), a response is required to the important criticism to which the apparently compulsively optimistic Garaudy provided no answer. That is, 'if transcendence is simply the 'presence of the future in man', the 'prophetic dimension of life', as Garaudy says (Garaudy, 1976:185), nothing allows us to hope that this future will be good, that it will be better than the present' (Masset, 1977:323). As has been observed, the Marxist dialectic of human practice did not leave the possibility of regress as open as that of progress. The result was that the progressive framework of Hegelian dialectic remained unquestioned (van der Bent, 1987:5). Garaudy's transcendence and subjectivity were as open to the same charge: they seem to lack any dark side. And as both natural and political events can conspire to produce outcomes that might be heralded enthusiastically by some yet deplored by others, without any ethical compass it might not even be clear where to find evidence of transcendence. An honest appreciation of humanity in the 21st Century for a revised project would have to resolve this conundrum: although there is no doubt that even under contemporary capitalism, individuals are capable of great acts of creativity, of love, and of sacrifice, there is also great reason to believe that those forces that act in the other direction — towards conformity, tribal hatred and selfishness — will continue to hold the upper ground for generations to come. A strategy to incorporate that reality into version of Garaudy's transcendence stripped of unbalanced optimism, but without introducing unjustified pessimism either — is needed. As has already been suggested, 'we must temper this optimism of the will with at least some pessimism — or, better, some realism — of the intellect' (Hall, 2012:369). A balance would no doubt be difficult to achieve, let alone to maintain, but it is undoubtedly necessary.

Work to place transcendence in a revised project would therefore seek to connect the frontier between economic and political resistance to capitalism, often at the margins, the continued existence of that evidently difficult to define concept, hope, at the individual and collective level, and the role that could potentially be played by a spiritual force such as the Holy Spirit, all of which was all under-theorised in the original project. At the same time, the revised project should also defend transcendence against projected replacements, such as a 'gap in immanence' (Žižek, 2001:99) not least because of the political implications of violent resistance and quixotic political failure that such a replacement may bring.

More recent humanist conceptions of transcendence are unfortunately defanged — detached from Marxism and rendered harmless for capitalism. Hence a concept of 'horizontal transcendence' stretches across the very familiar contemporary territory of interpersonal relationships, concern for the planet and for future generations (Krattenmaker, 2018:28). Transcendence has somehow lost its way here, even being ascribed not just to the mundane, but to conformity itself. It is not surprising that 'transcendental projects such as Karl Rahner's can seem to belong to a bygone era of categories now surpassed' (Crowley, 2010:569), not least because of their apparent parochiality with regard to other religions than Christianity with which a comparative theologian is evidently hardly satisfied (Clooney, 2005:8). All can surely agree that a transcendence that is not only universal, but omnipresent, which ends up dissipating in an ethical swirl that at the social level changes nothing, and at an individual level fuses with moral virtues, yet remains entirely located within one particular religious tradition *in practice* is scarcely likely to command respect as a force capable of overcoming capitalism.

Yet transcendence of human vice, of capitalism, must remain an integral part of any revised project. As the principal force upon which the project relies to change the world, how could it not be? The contemporary study of transcendence, as opposed to that comfortable assumption of revolution which is thought to terminate with Bloch (Agar, 2014), fortunately remains malleable material for the

revised project, with assertions such as: 'After the world—interpretations of the philosophers came the world—transformations of the social and technical revolutionaries. Now, we must interpret the world again, if we want to save it for ourselves. The self-evident existence of our world has become a problem of existential decision for us. The problem of the world was never before the problem of human existence in such intensity and extensiveness. This requires total and global concentration from us, which is possible only in God' (Hegedüs, 1991:103). This formulation would seem to go some way to defending Rahner against the charge of Christian parochiality. But what is still missing is an explanation of how transcendence works in practice, and in particular, an explanation must be found as to exactly why a transcendence that can bring people together to sweep away apartheid, or defeat Fascism, cannot fuse sufficient energy to overcome antagonisms and mobilise global resources to defy and even replace capitalist priorities. For example, why transcendence fails to bring clean water to ever more African villages, rather than leaving the matter in the hands of a transnational institution that by its own admission lacks the resources to do the job (FAO, 2019). *At an analytical level, this is where the revised project must explain transcendence in much more detail than the original, if it is not to avoid the same fate as dialectical materialism in failing to provide a motor for change for good that actually works.*

Ethics — a fourth postulate?

The project stressed subjectivity as a force for change, but as we have now seen, Garaudy's optimism placed too much emphasis on individual freedom and insufficient on individual responsibility. This is partly explained by the most surprising omission within the project, the absence of a treatment of ethics. In a project situated within both the Marxist and Christian traditions, the absence of any treatment of ethics is surely remarkable. The fact that since the time Garaudy wrote there has been an ethical turn in Marxist theory (Bourg, 2007; Blackledge, 2012:3; Thompson, 2015) — what has been

described as ‘snatching Marxism back from its scientific status and restore it to its utopian, or rather ethical, possibility’ (Negri, 2008:130) makes a call for ethics, neglected by Garaudy, to be included in a revised project even more plausible. A revised version of the project proposed in this chapter would answer that need by adopting an ethic derived from Christianity, as challenging to many Christians as to Marxists, but broadening the philosophy of the project onto terrain where Marxist critics would find themselves less comfortable.

In daring to do so, my first observation is that much of the criticism directed against the ‘ethical turn’ has rested on the fear of robbing Marxism of the cloak of invincibility derived from its prediction of the eventual, inevitable demise of capitalism and its ‘cult of the perfectibility of man’ (Kamenka, 1969:26). For Marxism to drop its claims to scientific status — as Garaudy insisted it should — would for many Marxists certainly leave a void. But through the project, Garaudy already offers an alternative to both dialectical and historical materialism, derived from Christianity: as even in his Marxist humanist period he argued that ‘By the questions it raises, Christianity keeps the Marxist awake’. (Allen, 1966:629). For Garaudy’s project, therefore, the fear of dropping claims to scientific status for Marxism dissipates.

Yet it would seem that however strongly he held ethical beliefs personally, for Garaudy, as for Marx, ethics is to be treated with suspicion, and certainly could be relied upon to be at the centre of a revised Marxism or any wider project for the liberation of humanity. As Denys Turner has consistently argued the state of the world demands a moral response for which we still do not have the discourse without recourse to Marxism: ‘it is within the dialectics of the praxis of “strong compatibility” that the materials of that discourse will be forged, or not at all’ (Turner, 1983:250, 2020). As Turner goes on to say, there is nothing to say we will forge them, which leads to little surprise that his recent view is that Marx only sought to establish a kind of pre-morality, to advance demands of a capitalist world ‘that it practice what on its own terms it has to preach, and so conform to the truth of itself which, if Marx is right, it cannot do and survive as capitalism’ (Turner, 2020:154).

Subsequent developments within Marxism have, however, identified, explained and promoted specifically ethical principles within contemporary Marxism which enjoy a potentially close correlation with those advocated within the domain of political theology. The view evinced by one of the leading advocates of the 'ethical turn' in Marxism, Paul Blackledge, is that Marx's central ethical contribution rests on the rejection of 'the modern liberal assumption, best articulated by Kant, that moral behaviour involves the suppression of our naturally egotistic desires on the basis of a disembodied conception of reason' (Blackledge, 2012:4). Marx's ethics, by contrast, although 'he follows Kant in putting human freedom at the center of his social theory' (Blackledge, 2012:24) seeks to develop a collective version of that freedom, and 'amounts to a modern version of Aristotle's account of those practices underpinning the virtues through which individuals are able to flourish within communities' (Blackledge, 2012:3). This in turn involves treading a difficult, if not tortuous, path to avoid both the Scylla of naturalism and the Charybdis of a tyranny of liberal reason in the direction of an ethic that goes beyond Hegel to envisage individual freedom as only possible through intense collective effort in the direction of liberation from capitalism. This path is surely at the very least a reasonable facsimile of the post Marxist–Leninist ethics of Marxist humanism. It now seems unduly harsh to argue that:

'in the work of Marx himself, we find an uncritical conflation of ethical relativism, evolutionary ethics, the ethic of self-determination and self-realisation, utilitarian strains, the ethic of co-operation and a kind of social subjectivism, all assumed or proclaimed rather than argued for' (Kamenka, 1969:2).

Yet for all the efforts of successive writers to extract an ethic from Marx's writings (e.g. Kamenka, 1962, 1969; Fisk, 1984; Lukes, 1985; Churchich, 1994; Sève, 2004:57–67, Critchley, 2007; Blackledge, 2012; Turner, 1983, 2020), an unease remains over the simultaneous insistence upon the historical origin of ethical values and on 'the moral superiority of socialism over preceding systems' (Kamenka, 1969:5). The evidence of successive attempts to present Marx as having successfully transcended diametrically opposite philosophers to placate such unease is surely proof that a coherent and worked-out Marxist position in ethics, if not an illusion (Kamenka, 1969:2), is still a distant goal. An

honest appraisal would be that at the very least the task of creating Marxist ethics is – in common with all non-naturalistic ethical projects — extremely difficult, and the outcome very uncertain.

This unease perhaps explains the absence of ethics within the original project. This was despite the fact that Garaudy's conception of human nature as explained by Marx, the importance of freedom and individual development beyond capitalism as proposed by the economic and social dimension of the project, and his attack on capitalist values at the individual level, are all recognisably ethical conceptions, and together entailed the rejection of the largely consequentialist, and certainly historicist, Marxist–Leninist ethics expounded by Trotsky (1938) or Ash (1964). The abandonment of violence, for example, Garaudy presents as the implication of economic development and political necessity, rather than a break with the kind of ethics promoted by Marxist–Leninists. It is worth noting Garaudy's alignment with Marx, who always rejected any attempt to build a socialist programme on abstract moral demands (Kamenka, 1969:5), by contrast with the suggestion that the Left should reject 'boring ethical considerations' (Žižek, 2008:406), and rather, 'admit revolutionary violence as a liberating end in itself' (Žižek, 2008:380). Only much later, after his conversion, did Garaudy distance himself from Marx by recognising that, 'Socialism, the opposite of capitalism, cannot establish itself except on an ethical basis. When emulation with capitalism is on the same plane as capitalism itself, with its conception of *Homo economicus*, failure is inevitable'²³⁸ (Garaudy, 1994:76).

Although Christianity provides subjectivity and transcendence — replacements within the project for historical and dialectical materialism respectively — Garaudy chose not to engage with Christian ethics, perhaps ironically for a religion high in ethical content. We may conjecture that the cause of Garaudy's silence on the matter was largely political: having already jettisoned so much Marxist philosophy in favour of what he perceived that Christianity had to offer, to insist that ethics, too, should derive its basis from Christianity might well have been a step too far. This despite the fact that

²³⁸ Le socialisme, à l'inverse du capitalisme, ne peut se fonder que sur une base éthique. Lorsque l'émulation avec le capitalisme se situe sur le même plan que le capitalisme lui-même, avec sa conception de « l'*Homo economicus* », l'échec est inévitable

a self-proclaimed Maoist such as Badiou (1993) recognised that it was precisely the failure of Althusserian Marxism to explain away the defeats of the Left, let alone to provide a plausible, even decipherable, way forward, that led to the revival of ethics on the Left.

Such a revival seems tailor-made to the revision of the project. In radical distinction to structural Marxism, Christian ethics would enable the rejection of Žižek's prescription for violence and assist in engagement with religions themselves, notwithstanding the risk of losing some political sharpness of focus. A revised project would still face objections such as the risk of being mired in contemporary political circumstances. However, its rejection of violence would at least rest not on political expediency but on engagement with the distinction between ends and means, and therefore a more complex ethical basis, and ultimately which 'particular vision of man' (MacPherson, 1979:478) would underpin its ethics. Christian ethical principles of respect for individuality in particular could serve to distance the project yet further from its troubled Marxist–Leninist antecedents.

As an important example, recent attempts to place ecological concerns within Marxism seek to extend Marx's method to ecology (Burkett, 2014; Foster & Burkett, 2017; Saito, 2017). Hence the suggestion that 'Marx's critique of political economy, if completed, would have put a much stronger emphasis on the disturbance of the "metabolic interaction (*Stoffwechsel*)" between humanity and nature as the fundamental contradiction within capitalism' (Saito, 2016:26). At the time of the revised project, and even before, supporters of dialogue 'asked themselves if the project of "socialism with a human face", the door ajar for Christians and highly coloured with ecology was very credible'²³⁹ (Gauvin, 2018:36). After more than four decades, such a project now seems more like the *only* possible credible Marxist project, and if modified, it would be through the recognition of individuality that Christianity can bring to socialism, exactly as Garaudy pointed out.

²³⁹ on se demande si le projet de « socialisme à visage humain » mâtiné d'ouverture aux chrétiens et fortement teinté d'écologie est bien credible

Incorporating a Christian ethical focus on respect for individual personhood, by contrast, balanced against a deep and abiding concern for the environment, and 'a communitarian alternative to cosmopolitanism' (Northcott, 2013:200) would provide an alternative, revisionist way to provide ethical impetus for environmental issues within a revised project. Such an approach would continue to place humanity at the centre of Marxism, not at its service. It would chime as noted above with contemporary political practice, and has already been pre-figured by the work of scholars not necessarily convinced that there is a Marxist dialectic of the environment waiting to be uncovered (e.g. Benton 1989, 1992; Löwy, 2008). There is evidently much work to do within a revised project on this subject philosophically as well as politically, given both its importance and topicality.

Their adoption might also reasonably be expected to generate some political synergy with those who combine Christian faith with concern for the environment but who do not necessarily see the world through a Marxist lens. Engagement by a revised project with modern scholarship of Marxist ethics, and the development of ethical principles that would be compatible with subjective action and transcendence in the 21st Century, would therefore appear not only neither unreasonable nor especially problematic, but on the contrary, useful, or even essential, for the defence of the project against criticism, especially from within the Left itself. Marx's own move from ethics to politics may have been 'too quick' (Blackledge, 2012:3), his ethical legacy was certainly complex and uncertain. There are still those who reject the claim that Christ has 'reconfigured geographical space, erasing the distinction between those who are outside and those who are under the law' (Eagleton, 2009a:317), even drawing on theology itself to side with Žižek and claim that they are 'far less enthused with ethics and love' (Boer, 2014: 264). But they are now in a minority: the introduction of a contemporary Christian ethic into Garaudy's project as a fourth postulate appears to be a desirable development which is worth pursuing, at least in the most general sense. *As always with the revised project, proceeding from general moral categories, exhortations and admonishments, to a fully-fledged and genuinely useful ethics is quite another matter. A revised project will have this on its agenda as well as so much else.*

Freedom and Responsibility: a revised subjectivity

The question of the nature of individuality, in particular whether an individuality that is fundamentally based on social relations can ever be compatible with Christianity, was central to the break between the project and other Marxists. The first step, as Garaudy (1959 [1969]) acknowledges, and which Sève (2008) was to say much later, without — too much to bear, perhaps — acknowledging his debt to the by then widely detested Garaudy, is that a psychology informed by Marxism is essential not only to understanding how humanity works, but also to effect man's transformation.

In this context, political expediency may explain the notable absence from Garaudy's work of any conception of individual responsibility. This might appear surprising, given that he was engaged in constant polemics with Althusser and his supporters over the question of individuality in general. It can be perhaps explained by the polemical nature of the broader debate: Garaudy was more interested in presenting possibilities, and urging action, than in attempting to delineate the boundaries of individual responsibility, let alone engaging in dialogue with others on the subject. His reluctance to do so he in fact shared with Sève, for example, equally critical of Althusser, with whom he had an extended correspondence (Althusser & Sève, 2018), but who wrote only one text on the subject, and that narrowly confined to revolutionary obligation (Sève, 1962). In this he follows what has been alleged against Marx himself, that his 'Kantian strain...is a simplified, Prometheanised Kant — a Kant without the conflict between duty and inclination' (Kamenka, 1969:12).

Critics from Lehmann (1967) to Collier (2001) have contended that the Enlightenment forgot the evil in man, and Bloch extended the criticism to Marxism itself. If so, a revised project must take account of the question of sin. Garaudy mentioned Pelagius with approval, but much more needed to be said about sin and the individual. Always an optimist, 'Garaudy picks out the Biblical expectation of an

‘unlimited human community’ in which freedom and love are of the utmost importance. Yet, he refuses to recognize that this expectation is nowhere separated from the concepts of sin and grace, and a relationship with a living Lord’ (Hughes, 1970:61). If salvation, like sin, is collective, not individual, and may equally well be considered to feature in human activity as in the realm of the soul, then there are ethical consequences.

If the environment serves as a prime example of the potential usefulness of Christian ethics in general for the project, a specific concept of individual responsibility can modify the original project in relation to the question of family life. It is noteworthy that during his prophetic period Garaudy emerges as no friend of the traditional family, which he characterises as oppressive, in terms that would find voice in the socialist feminist tradition (Zaretsky, 1976). We may wish for some clarification from him as to how Christian love and socialist feminism might best cohabit, but we do not find it in any of his writing during the prophetic period. It remains an unexplored area of potential confusion. The feminist tradition has contained much with which a revised project must engage: to cite but one example, Ruether contended that Daly’s separatist vision was ‘built on the dualism of transcendent spirit world of femaleness over against the deceitful anti-cosmos of masculinity’ (Ruether, 1983:230). On the other hand, love within a family as well as a wider context, and the responsibility that attaches to it, need not be excluded, or even disparaged, within a revised project.

An inclusive perspective

A major potential obstacle to the success of a revised project is however this. If transcendence, subjectivity and — my addition — ethics must all be derived from Christianity in order to revive Marxism and restore it to a central place within the politics of the Left, what are the implications for those of a different faith, or none? I do not seek to answer the definitional question throughout this

thesis of whether adoption of what I characterised as ‘some beliefs derived from Christianity’ in Chapter Three *is* to become a Christian. But even if not professing Christianity themselves, those who adopt the revised project must be prepared to derive their conceptions of transcendence and subjectivity, and I argue their ethics as well, from Christianity. Prophecy alone of the postulates may be sourced elsewhere, for as Garaudy demonstrated in *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979), each religion is best placed to deliver a particular set of lessons for humanity and a reason for incorporation within the project.

The adoption of a Christianity that is itself open to an historical account of the evolution of different religions allows for a much easier integration with the project than would be the case with a less tolerant and inclusive form of the religion. Recently this has been described as polydoxy: ‘multiplicity itself has become theology’s resource’ (Keller & Schneider, 2011a:1). In developing a ‘responsible pluralism’, they point out that heresy is nothing new, and that Christians do not speak with one voice. ‘In this sense, the Christian tradition is already polydox; it is irreducible to any one voice or lineage that may claim exhaustively to represent Christian faith, thought, and practice’ (Keller & Schneider, 2011a:2). The connection to feminism and ecology is quite explicit — ‘polydoxy understands unknowing to have a deep relation to creaturely interrelations’ (Keller & Schneider, 2011a:3). There does seem some understandable confusion here. Relationality, polydoxy and resistance are not automatic allies, as has been optimistically argued elsewhere (e.g. Edwards, 2013). Nor are they even completely consistent concepts, as Keller & Schneider seem to imply (Keller & Schneider, 2011a:11). Notably for example they succeed in writing an entire book about polydoxy without mentioning Islam, Hinduism or any other religion, and they are, in the end, not very polydoxorous at all. They give the game away when they say, ‘Engaging the endogenous plurality of traditions, texts and practices in Christianity is therefore one aspect of our intent to develop greater probity and rigor in the mode of Christian theology that we are calling polydoxy’ (Keller & Schneider, 2011a:13), which all raises the suspicion that they are just rebadging LBGT + Christianity as polydoxy. Perhaps they even believe that ‘We have seen that God is evident only in Christ’ (Hegedüs, 1991:40) In stark contrast, as we have

seen, Garaudy's approach throughout was that the choice of religion was one of 'communities'. Changing community, in his view, meant no more than a change of approach. Accusations of changing beliefs, he maintained, were misguided. Since then, much more emphasis has been placed on the idea that belief itself is rooted in community, for example Christian (e.g. Stroope, 2011) or Muslim (Stroup, 2017), although it has never been suggested that an individual could not shift community, whatever the difficulties, as Chapter Six demonstrated.

If both polydoxy and community do not exhaust the possibilities of the role of other religions within the project, what of the particular possibility that all religions are essentially one? There were many opportunities for Garaudy to have followed a similar path: in works published during his prophetic period, notably *Comment l'Homme devint humaine* (Garaudy, 1978) and *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979) it did strongly appear that this was indeed the path he intended to follow, to derive philosophical lessons from individual religions as part of a robust political project, yet without in any way insisting on a single, unified religion as a sine qua non of socialism. This is the response of the revised project to the unanimous tradition: that, to put it in sweeping terms, if the kind of Christianity Garaudy eventually embraced entails that other religions must be equally compatible with Marxism — including Islam — then the choice of religion must rest on something other than an exclusive claim to truth or an equally exclusive relationship of compatibility with Marxism.

Garaudy's argument when he converted, as we saw in Chapter Six, was that the differences between religions *matter decisively*. We live in a world in which leading religions are in practice indissolubly intertwined with capitalism, both at a theoretical and textual level and in practice. It is therefore inevitable that much of what is sincerely believed by many of those professing Islamic, Christian or many other faiths is necessarily *outside* the project. No doubt Marxists, especially those participating in a revised project, can still find plenty of common ground with many others, including those in Islam looking for social justice, even if unlike Garaudy they do not look beyond capitalism to find it. Even granted the special place accorded to Christianity in the project to replace dialectical and historical

materialism with transcendence and subjectivity respectively, the question of how a revised project could and should engage with Islam remains. But as Chapter Six has shown, the difficulty with Islam as part of the revised project lies not in its inconsistency with the conceptions of transcendence derived from Christianity — it might even find a way to accommodate the concept of subjectivity after all — but rather in its incompatibility with Marxism. If some way could be found to excise that incompatibility, then the way would be open for a Muslim to adopt Garaudy's project and declare themselves both Muslim and Marxist, albeit with that necessary partial mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity remaining within their thought. So too for any religion where it would be possible for the believer both to rely on that partial mutual dependence and establish no inconsistency between the beliefs of the religion and Marxism. Garaudy's views as a Muslim must be recognised as correct in respect of the consequences if subjectivity, and standing behind it, the conception of the individual implicit within the Marxism of the project, are removed. *The motor of revolution is denied, and the revised Marxism of the project collapses.* This is a striking continuity between the original and revised project: consistency within the revised project for other religions is only possible if at least some of Christianity is incorporated within it as well. To the extent that this subjectivity is inconsistent with other religions they too are inconsistent with the revised project. In practice, a revised project must recognise this distinction between religions, and seek to bridge it as Garaudy does in *Appel aux vivants* (Garaudy, 1979), without losing sight of the uncomfortable fact that the concept of Man advanced by Marxist humanism and carried over into the project through the concept of subjectivity is a *sine qua non* for a revised project.

In a revised project, therefore, the *particular* religion does *not* matter decisively. People can choose their own faith, even none (Saint-Arnaud, 2010), but *only* if transcendence, subjectivity and ethics can be accepted from Christianity. Otherwise the claim to participate in the project is empty. Religious belief that can neither place importance on the capacity of humanity to move beyond capitalism, specifically through the actions of individuals, nor can accept the importance of both taking on responsibilities and respecting other individuals as part of the ethical impulse to do so, lie as much

outside the project as Marxism–Leninism, for notably similar reasons. If therefore an individual, for whatever reason, is *not* prepared to accept these conceptions from Christianity, they cannot adopt the revised project. If they claim to be Marxists, unless they are still supporters of some form of historical, even dialectical materialism as Žižek has claimed to be, they must find their explanation of history, personality, and ethics elsewhere.

There is a most important revision to the original project to be made here. Garaudy did not develop an understanding of where ownership for the original project really belonged, beyond his purely political musings about a broadening of the working class and his scepticism, after a political lifetime at its heart, of the future political significance of the Party. Sometimes he writes as if it is entirely his own — my project — and sometimes it is ours, without specifying who ‘we’ are. Greater clarity is required for the revised project. Most likely, as part of the continued focus of the Left on ‘culture, psychology and personal life’ (Forbes & Street, 1986:30), there must be those who to a greater or lesser extent believe in it, a wider circle of ‘progressive forces’, and finally those individuals, events and actions that are outside the project altogether. *Those at the heart of the revised project, rather than being characterised by belonging to a Party vanguard, as with Marxism–Leninism, or even association with loose social groups, as in the original project, are distinguished through their common hope for, and belief in, humanity’s capacity to overcome capitalism and establish a global society based on principles of common humanity. What replaces the Party of traditional Marxism within the revised project is a shared psychology with political implications, rather than an overt political movement.*

Conclusion

If Marxism is not to remain in the academy, the importance of a revised project can hardly be underestimated. In the 2010s, it was argued, in terms reminiscent of Garaudy himself, that it is ‘the

Left that is struggling to find an alternative vision for the future. Without that alternative vision, it is questionable — possibly for the first time in human history — whether there can be any future’ (Thompson, 2016:438). Little appears likely to change in the subsequent decade: even if the claim itself is exaggerated, a revised project is a candidate for that alternative vision, which is necessarily central to any serious opposition to capitalism.

But just as the original project sought a dramatic revision of Marxism, so it in turn now requires revision. As this Chapter has demonstrated, much has to be done with the project in order to render it acceptable both to contemporary and potential future audiences. Equally importantly, Garaudy missed out a great deal in his project. The delineation of boundaries beyond which Christians could not be considered even as consistent with Marxism, the actual contributions of different religions and the application of boundaries to them as well, the extent to which minority struggles should be considered as an integral component of the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of the world, the question of timeframes and the development of an appropriate political strategy, perhaps above all the whole terrain of ethics: none of these attracted Garaudy’s attention sufficiently for him to dwell upon them and remain committed to the project. We may wonder how much of these missing elements may have found their way into his thought, word and deed over the succeeding three decades had he remained committed to it. The effect of introducing them may not be to create an immediately successful project, which may be beyond human capacity, but at least may serve to recreate a less fragile and hopefully more enduring one.

A revised version of Garaudy’s project, along the lines suggested in this chapter, would undoubtedly face many challenges. The failure of socialism in practice, and the legacy of weakness of progressive politics worldwide as a result, is the most obvious. No less important are global challenges that, whilst not unknown to Garaudy, have become pressing political concerns, most obviously how to respond to environmental challenges and new forms of conflict. The strength of Christianity in the 21st Century, and the comparative weakness of Marxism, place the power relationship between them within any

revised project in a very different place even to that which prevailed at the time of the original project. So too, as conceded above, the success of proponents of capitalism in advocating its compatibility with religions worldwide, including Christianity, is an evident obstacle to any balanced exchange with the Marxism of a revised project. Whereas the risk of failure for Garaudy's original project was stark and eventually all too evident to its creator, the principal risk to the revised project might well be that the difficulty to determining political strategy over the long term could induce political torpor and obscure any judgement of success or failure. MacIntyre was right in this: it will not do to escape any confrontation with liberal capitalism by reducing both Marxism and Christianity to such tepid, inoffensive sets of contentions that indeed, it is hard to find any difference between them, let alone any points of conflict, or perhaps any real convictions at all (MacIntyre 1953 [1968:106]). Ways to guard against a slide into perpetual accommodation with capitalism are certainly key to the political practice of the contemporary Left and likewise would be key practicalities for a revised project. From the perspective of the 21st Century, political success remains a distant prospect at best. A revised project would also stand in need of people, and perhaps also of prophets, capable of straddling Marxist and religious traditions authoritatively, equipped with serious powers of persuasion and in the struggle for the long haul. Garaudy may have underestimated himself: no doubt they would be hard to find.

All these are without doubt major challenges. But if through an engagement with Christianity, expanded from subjectivity and transcendence to include ethics and prophecy, a revised project could achieve even to provide the *philosophical* basis for confidence in the eventual downfall of capitalism and the eventual freedom of humanity, to sustain hope in the face of continued adversity, it would undoubtedly have achieved much of worth for the contemporary Left. For that reason alone, it is worth pursuing. If that philosophical basis can lean into political practice to help avoid repeating the many historical mistakes of the Left, or to make new ones, so much the better.

Conclusion

Fragile and in need of revision

I conclude that Garaudy's project to establish the mutual dependence of Marxism and Christianity during his 'prophetic period' was fragile in these ways at least.

First, in its reliance on emotional appeal, rather than logic, and politics, rather than philosophy, it was *philosophically fragile*. There can be no doubt of the many philosophical difficulties in the way of establishing any plausible consistency, let alone mutual dependence, between Marxism and Christianity, not least in terms of the boundaries of both Marxism and Christianity, as others had already recognised in trying to do so (MacIntyre, 1953 [1968:7]). The kind of redoubled criticism of Garaudy levelled by Masset (1977), Sève (1978) and others, building on their attacks on his Marxist humanism a decade earlier, was not unique. Not for nothing too was Ton van Prooijen's work on Moltmann entitled *Limping but Blessed* (van Prooijen, 2004). It was persistent criticism, and unfortunately remained largely unanswered by Garaudy himself. A significant part of that failure to answer was Garaudy's own neglect of the ethical: *a revised version of the project must develop that neglected philosophical dimension in order to place it on firmer, more stable ground for the long term.*

Second, it was *internally fragile*. As has been elucidated in preceding chapters, central concepts such as subjectivity and transcendence, which have been characterised as having 'a chequered career' (Boer, 2014:238) found themselves contested between Marxism and Christianity within the project as well as beyond it. As 'the tendency of his thought continues to be towards Christianity and away from Marxism' (Vree, 1974:51), this lack of coherence, combined with leaps of argument sometimes even within a single sentence, could hardly endear Garaudy either to potential adherents, academic critics, or even eventually to its originator. If even Bloch's work could be characterised as 'a little too much

mysticism for comfort' (Boer, 2014:335), how much more so that of Garaudy? *Apologists for a future project will need to be more careful in their phraseology, clearer as to who their allies are, and much more prepared to engage with their critics.*

Third, *it was logically fragile*, drawing — perhaps glimpsing might be a better verb — insights from many different, potentially inconsistent, even contradictory, sources into its ambit, as can be seen from successive books (Garaudy, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1976, 1979). It stood in need of a clearly enunciated, relatively stable and robust 'meta-framework', both politically and theologically, which would serve to explain the basis on which a selection of Marxist, Christian and other religions' ontology, ethics, epistemology and teleology, and any exchange of ideas would be made. The use of historical bias in selecting ideas from religions also needed both honest explanation and justification. Although his multicultural perspective should have protected the project against charges of racism, Garaudy evidently failed to see that his intense criticism of the West, and of Constantinian Christianity, blurred distinctions between Left and Right and potentially played into the hands of the 'New Right' (Laloup, 1980:149), even if their leading protagonist insisted at the time that Garaudy was not one of them (e.g. Benoist, 1977:473). Garaudy — consumed with active projects and, ironically in retrospect, perceiving himself running out of time (Garaudy, 1973:60) — resolutely refused to take sides between East and West, with fatal consequences for the eventual survival of the project. Judging too from the company Garaudy eventually kept after his conversion, it was a slippery slope (Prazan & Minard, 2007). *A revised project, whilst treading the delicate path of avoiding any charge of total knowledge, of 'intégrisme' (Garaudy, 1990:9), would need to identify what part of itself is specifically Christian, and distinguish itself from any self-appointed meta-right to pick and choose from religions at will, as Garaudy's work increasingly appeared to do (Garaudy, 1978, 1979). Its goal will continue to be to overcome capitalism, and not merely to fall tamely in line with the kind of Church teaching represented by the 'Option for the Poor' (Dorr, 2000) whilst at the same time retaining many of the ideas of individuality that Garaudy himself eventually rejected.*

Fourth, it was *politically fragile*. The work of the ‘prophetic period’ was aimed at a wide public audience, not a narrow academic one. In contrast to his well-regarded earlier academic work (e.g. Garaudy, 1959 [1969], 1962), the flamboyant, polemical, semi-autobiographical writing style that he now adopted (e.g. Garaudy, 1972, 1975, 1979), opened him up all too easily to the kind of academic criticism detailed in the preceding Chapter (e.g. Mayrl, 1978). Christians interpreted his work as an attempt to submerge their faith in Marxism (Vree, 1976); Marxists thought the opposite (Sève, 1969 [1978]). This misunderstanding and rejection he shared with many prophets — most obviously, Jesus himself was frequently criticised for paying insufficient attention to Scripture (Luke 11:37–54). Moreover, and more importantly for Garaudy himself, nothing he could do or write could prevent what seemed to be an inexorable drift to the political Right, in France as much as worldwide. The election of a Socialist government in 1981 did nothing to alter this trajectory, and many including Garaudy himself indeed saw it as confirmation of it. As a result, Garaudy was increasingly seen as yesterday’s man, not the prophet of tomorrow. As his prophetic decade wore on, many of the ideas he espoused found themselves under brutal, sustained attack from a range of quarters, as was demonstrated in Chapter Two. As Gauvin tellingly concludes:

‘Although he was able to represent a kind of ‘emancipated organic intellectual’ within the Communist Party, Roger Garaudy could not subsequently convert his different kinds of capital (political, intellectual) effectively into corresponding areas of action, where he remained in a confined and dominated position, to the point where, in a logic of headlong flight, it ended up burying an author who was at one time a prominent figure of French Third World progressivism and one of the precursors of ecological modern politics’ (Gauvin, 2018:432)²⁴⁰.

With the collapse of the project, despite the dazzling display of showmanship that his critics saw, it became progressively more a burden for an increasingly isolated Garaudy to bear.

²⁴⁰ S’il a pu représenter une forme d’ « intellectuel organique émancipé » au sein du parti communiste, Roger Garaudy n’a pu, par la suite, reconvertir efficacement ses différentes espèces de capital (politique, intellectuel) dans les champs correspondants où il est resté confiné dans une position dominée, au point de devoir s’inscrire dans une logique de fuite en avant qui a enterré un auteur qui fut un temps une figure marquante du progressisme tiers-mondiste français et l’un des précurseurs de l’écologie politique moderne

As was noted in Chapter Seven, it was not even clear whose project it really was. Was it just Garaudy's own, or 'our project'²⁴¹ (Garaudy, 1976:178) — that of a select few adherents, owned by the progressive Left, or even automatically that of the entire planet? If there were a fight between Marxism and Christianity, after all, it is now surely almost over, and Boer's metaphor of a love affair may now come into its own. But even if a thoroughly revised and contemporary Marxism (Goldstein, 2005; Harrison, 2016) can now be released from the academy — or so adapted that, for example, 'Marxism departs from its past life as a guide to the implementation of socialism, and takes on meaning as a touchstone and inspiration for China's future' (DuBois & Zhen, 2014:19) — *a revised project must have a more enduring, patient political basis based on hope, even under adverse circumstances where the eventual destruction of capitalism seems an increasingly distant prospect.*

Fifth, then, and as a result of all the above, the project had a *fragile trajectory*. It certainly did not emerge fully-fledged immediately. Garaudy was released from the constraints of his PCF membership. On the contrary, it began with such a loss of direction and confidence that Garaudy himself said that he contemplated suicide; it evolved relatively slowly and painfully, under the glare of the public spotlight; and it ended with its repudiation by its author. Changing intellectual views is not widely respected, and there is plenty of evidence that Garaudy was changing his views, or at least shifting his priorities, throughout his 'prophetic period' (Da Costa Pinto, 2017:451). In particular, as noted above, Christianity appeared to become just one religion amongst others, despite its position at the core of the project, whilst Marxism was revised beyond recognition for a Marxist–Leninist. The detail of the eventual unravelling of the fragile project and its replacement was laid out in Chapter Six, where it was argued that Garaudy himself could eventually not live with what he had himself had created. The weight of what he perceived as its insupportably fragile intellectual base, its internal inconsistencies, its failure to achieve politically, his increasing political focus on anti-Zionism (Garaudy, 1977c), his marriage to a Palestinian, and the isolation into which the fragile project had placed such a profoundly

²⁴¹ notre projet

social individual, all eventually took their toll. His subsequent forays into theology, and Marxism, would be from a new bastion, to which under the pressure of events he would eventually retreat completely. *A revised project must reverse course, and as I have begun to do, pick up the pieces where Garaudy dropped them, learning from everything that has happened since.*

A great tragedy?

In putting down his cross, Garaudy left much undone. As Chapter Seven has shown, there was much still missing that his conversion to Islam prevented him from examining and incorporating within the original project. It has been suggested that the West, in the early 21st Century has been characterised by ‘a sense of quiet suspicion of outsiders, desperate defence of what is passing, and an inebriated escape from a world gone to pot’ (Boer, 2014:37fn). Yes, that seems to me a good characterisation of the *Zeitgeist*. But it surely has a lot to do with the lack of a confidently articulated, integrated ideology that is both of its time and in tune with an emergent future yet consistent with a significant number of ‘Western’ values, especially in relation to the individual, as well as the relationship between religion and politics. In terms of its capacity to be integrated with a resistance to capitalism, Christianity retains many advantages, notably its ethics, but Garaudy ignored them, as he lost hope in Western civilisation as a whole — just around the time that the majority of the Islamic world made a significant turn towards the very capitalism the project sought to overthrow.

As a result, instead of ending up in a position where he moderated and further deepened both his Christian faith and his Marxism, perhaps strengthening his own case for their mutual dependence, and developing a coherent revised project for the 21st Century, he ended up giving up both — sometimes with regret, it might seem — but permanently nonetheless. Garaudy’s conversion to Islam then caused irreparable harm, not only to himself, but to the causes he himself most believed in. It was a true

tragedy, in the Ancient Greek sense of the word, as even Didier Gauvin, one of the strongest advocates of Garaudy's intellectual consistency, conceded: 'the tragedy is there... I agree his reputation would have been great and unsullied if he had stayed on his 1976 position' (Didier Gauvin, personal communication, 29 November 2018).

We may wonder how much influence he could have had, had he stayed the course, but counterfactuals are notoriously slippery. We may surmise that on his own, however much he had written more deeply on these and other issues, Roger Garaudy could surely never have changed the broad sweep of history. But he had an opportunity to exert influence, and possibly a unique one, at least in France. The need to reconcile different theological and political positions did not abate, despite the decline of Marxist politics, and no more so than in France. Given his eminence as a Marxist philosopher in previous decades — he had the ear of politicians, notably François Mitterrand, who in 1970 cited him as one of the three authors on whom he had built his political thought²⁴² — and his success in reaching a mass audience with his later books, it is far from impossible to conceive of him as being one of the leaders of radical, socialist politics — a strong Christian voice raised for equality, fraternity and liberty in France, a country renowned for the elevated status of its public intellectuals. Garaudy could have taken up a position where he continually revised and broadened both his Christianity *and* his Marxism, putting much more effort into developing a coherent socialist, religious perspective that was consistent with much of Christianity as well as other religions, feminism and ecology, *a true Cardinal for the 21st Century*. Garaudy's linguistic and persuasive skills, his global view of the need for the dialogue of civilisations, and his long history of militancy, would have served the Left well during a long period of conflict and globalisation. For a parallel in the real world we could perhaps look to Slavoj Žižek, who although — as elucidated in Chapter Seven — very different in his view of Marxism, Christianity and the relationship between them, has achieved something similar to that hypothetical trajectory, first in Eastern Europe, and eventually worldwide. Advice something

²⁴² The two others were Maurice Clavel and Raymond Aron (Mitterrand, 1970)

along these lines was even suggested at the time: Dupleix (1971) suggested that Garaudy's ideas did indeed have apparent echoes in the ideas of the *Parti Socialiste*, which had grown from the ashes of the former SFIO and which was to grow its own left-wing. In Chapter Seven, possibilities for developing a more robust mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity were outlined, many of which were open to Garaudy at the time to research, develop and publish. We can perhaps glimpse how such a role in France might have played out, as we have a close parallel life of a French public intellectual on which to draw. Lucien Sève, for instance, for whose Marxism the continued existence of the secular French State did not pose anything like the same kind of problem, and for whom the end of Communism posed a dilemma for Marxism that he wished to investigate, not walk away from, did exactly thus. He took what was in effect a reformist standpoint, recognising the importance of contributions in new areas, such as bioethics — he served on the *Comité consultif national d'éthique* (CCNE)] for several years, as he stressed, as the only atheist on the committee (Sève, 2006 : 14–15). It is not too far-fetched to imagine Garaudy in a similar, perhaps even more influential, role in French public life. But counterfactuals are dangerous things, and my conjecture stops here.

But as it was, in converting to Islam he sacrificed not only his Christianity, but his original sense that justice demanded an end to capitalism and the consequent political commitment on the Left that Marxism had provided. Some of his later work, Garaudy (1992) in particular, suggests that he wrestled subsequently with both what he perceived as the irreversibility and also the difficulty of his conversion, although it appears that over time eventually theological conservatism and political Islam won the day. Few outside a minority within the Islamic world surely doubt that he would have been better able to make a contribution by retaining his cultural identity and historical personality rather than being drawn into and eventually being stigmatised and identified with a futile debate over the Holocaust.

Garaudy himself said during his prophetic period that 'It is time to say clearly that what makes us Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian or Muslim, it is not what one believes but what one does'²⁴³ (Garaudy, 1979:205). In that case, it is fully justified to judge Garaudy's abandonment of Marxism and choice of faith by its outcome. His principal eventual legacy, outside certain circles in the Middle East, was a tarnished reputation as a Holocaust denier, rather than a bridge builder between the two Western systems of Marxism and Christianity and much more besides. This was a huge loss to both: not only he himself, but France, and the world as a whole, was the poorer for it. Humanity lost a staunch defender of liberty, equality and fraternity, and gained instead an awkward, and eventually notorious, apologist for Islamic extremism.

Garaudy studies, if we may assemble his critics under one roof, has become polarised as a result. On the one hand there are those like Prazan & Minard (2007), for whom the whole of Garaudy's life and work is tainted with his Islamic period, in the distasteful ignominy of Holocaust denial and support for Islamic regimes such as Iran and Libya, work which earned the plaudits of Islamic commentators such as Robinson (2003). For both sides of this argument, 'the extremes touch'²⁴⁴ (Aulnas, 2019, n.p.). On the other, there are those such as Reynaud (2019) and Gauvin (2018) who insist on the essential continuity of his thought, seeking to paint his life and work after the conversion in as favourable a light as possible. I sit in between, keen to establish the principle that his earlier life and work, especially his 'prophetic period' should not always be judged exclusively in the light of what happened afterwards; but equally, I hope, not blind to the reality of Garaudy's descent into anti-Semitism and cohabitation with the politics of the nationalist right after his conversion to Islam.

²⁴³ Il est temps de dire clairement qu'on est hindou, bouddhiste, juif, chrétien ou musulman, non par ce que l'on croit, mais par ce que l'on fait

²⁴⁴ Les extrêmes se touchent

A fragile but significant achievement

In an intellectual life spanning over eight decades, Garaudy gave a decade at most to publicly developing, and promoting, consistency between Marxism and Christianity. In the fragile project of these few years, Marxism is allotted the role of understanding the development of the world in the most general terms, whilst subjectivity and transcendence provide the necessary motor for action and explanation of the individual. It was a mutual dependence that, as Garaudy himself readily recognised, inevitably owed much to the work of others.

Garaudy made no claim to be an original philosopher, nor a theologian at all (Garaudy, 1973b:72–73). His unique talent lay in assembling philosophical material and popularising it. His concern to reach popular audiences led to — I argue mistaken — academic dismissal of his work, but his achievement in exposing what was possible in respect of establishing consistency and then mutual dependence between Marxism and Christianity deserves respect, not least because of its prescience, but perhaps still more because of the possibility that it may have enduring worth for the politics of the Left. At the time Garaudy advanced his project, however, quite apart from the Soviet Union and other Communist states, Leninist concepts of the Party still prevailed in Communist parties elsewhere in the world, albeit that the concept was not unopposed, even in developing countries (Golan, 1987:600). Even to move beyond this within the project was an achievement, which as we have seen in Chapter Seven it took other PCF members decades to reach.

The Garaudy of the fragile project may have begun by having lost battles inside the PCF, and ended by repudiating his project altogether, but as one of Garaudy's own intellectual contemporaries said, the greatest triumph of an eminent scholar is when his achievements melt into normality (Kolakowski, 1969:204). Whilst Marxist–Leninism in its Soviet form and traditional Communist parties usually had little attraction for those of the Left born in a subsequent generation, they were nonetheless equally tempted by a range of alternatives — some first adhering to schismatic Trotskyism, such as the

Militant Tendency and other 'entryist' groups inside the UK Labour Party (Crick, 1984 [2016]), and then relatively rapidly afterwards, abandoning Marxism altogether in favour of social democratic politics and the 'Third Way', or subscribing to purely feminist, ecological or cultural politics of one type or another (Müller-Rommel, 1989). All these political options were presaged within the project. Garaudy's project was also well ahead of its time in relation to religion: in the 21st Century, 'the question of the return, or perhaps better, the new visibility of religion in politics' (Sigurdson, 2012:1) is scarcely in doubt. Recognition of its omissions, and Garaudy's own subsequent trajectory, should surely not blind us to what the project did achieve: whatever relationship Marxism and Christianity will have in the future, it seems at least highly likely that the trajectory that relationship will follow, and the relationship in turn with political theology and the politics of the Left more widely, faces a decisive choice. On the one hand, the kind of continued abstract violence recommended by Žižek (2000, 2003). On the other, the hope represented by a revised version of Garaudy's project of mutual dependence, suffused with the Christian ethics of respect, tolerance, and love recommended by Eagleton (2009a).

That today Garaudy's project has not been widely acknowledged as presaging much of the faith of radical Christians in the 21st Century, in politics, philosophy and in theology can be explained not only by the fact that Garaudy himself failed to stay the course, but also because his project has been tainted by the events that followed his subsequent conversion to Islam. This thesis has sought to demonstrate that the Garaudy of the project deserves better treatment than this. The rehabilitation of the Garaudy of the project that this would entail is as justified and desirable as is the condemnation of the descent into Holocaust denial that followed.

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