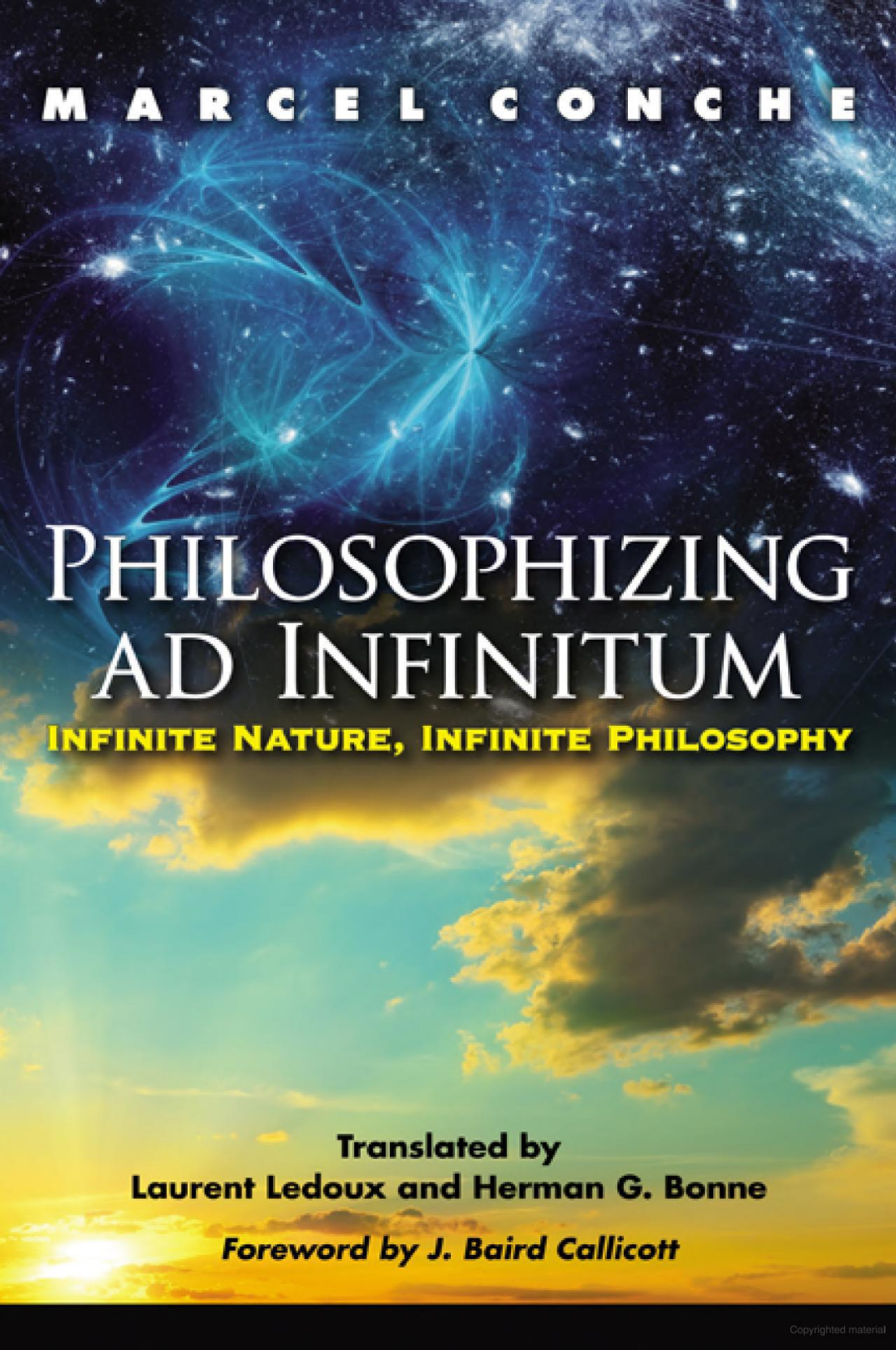

PHILOSOPHIZING AD INFINITUM

Infinite Nature, Infinite Philosophy

MARCEL CONCHE

Translated by
Laurent Ledoux and Herman G. Bonne

Foreword by
J. Baird Callicott

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FOREWORD

J. Baird Callicott

Marcel Conche is a philosopher after my own heart. He is, first and foremost, a student of the history of Western philosophy (and to some extent of Eastern philosophy as well), going back to the pre-Socratics. Especially to the pre-Socratics. Most twentieth-century Western philosophers on both sides of the Atlantic have narrowed the temporal scope of philosophy to a tiny and ultimately insignificant moment in the 2,500-year sweep of Western philosophy—to their own twentieth century.

Indeed, many Anglo-American philosophers actually think that all "philosophy" that preceded the professionalization of philosophy in the twentieth century was but a prelude to the real thing done by them. From lisping amateurs like Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant professional philosophers have inherited a suite of suggestive puzzles, which may now be definitively solved only by those properly "trained" in the methods of contemporary logical analysis. (Dogs, soldiers, and factory workers are "trained"; philosophers, I would prefer to think, are educated—very often, mainly self-educated over a lifetime.) The historical precursors of true philosophy are also a repository of incipient arguments that may be expressed in formal notation and examined, usually out of context, for validity. And, in extreme cases, "philosophers" who are, like Conche and me, intellectually engaged with the "philosophy" done prior to the twentieth century on its own terms have been banished from some American philosophy departments altogether and regarded as mere historians of ideas, not as philosophers proper.

While the professionalization and isolation of philosophy in its own disciplinary silo on the Continent has not been so extreme, the Continental tradition—that stemming from phenomenology, anyway—has been

equally arcane, method-constrained, and dissociated from the thought of such ancestral figures as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Rousseau, to say nothing of the Greeks.

Conche is a refreshing exception and contrast; he is not only a student of the entire, grand two-and-a-half-millennium-long sweep of Western philosophy, he positions himself as a peer among the giants of the past, upon whose shoulders he proudly stands. Hubristic? No! His is the only way to think boldly and creatively. One must imagine oneself as pressing that heritage forward in an ongoing historical dialectic of ideas in which oneself has a part. And in that project I join him. Otherwise, one simply settles for taking one's seat in the academic equivalent of a corporate cubicle, minding ones knitting, and being satisfied to toil away on some narrow bit of arcana that engages the attention of perhaps a dozen other clever fellows arguing over the same trifles. Occasionally some bit of trivia will capture the imagination of the corporate hierarchy and the lucky fellow who thought it up will have his fifteen minutes of fame and perhaps land a plum chair in a top-tier research university, there to rest on his laurels. That is not for Marcel Conche, nor is it for me.

So what is this "infinite" that Conche presumes to illuminate? It should be noted, as does Conche himself, that the infinite, or something like it, prominently appears at the dawn of Western philosophy. The archē of Anaximander—the ur-stuff, that from which all things come and that into which they all return—is the apeiron. The word is formed from *peras*, meaning boundary or limit, and the alpha privative. The apeiron is the unbounded, the unlimited. In my opinion, though not in Conche's, "infinite" is a misleading translation of Anaximander's apeiron. Why? Because the conventional sense of the word *infinite* now bears the indelible stamp of Zeno, who came along a century after Anaximander. Two of Zeno's four famous paradoxes of motion—the Stadium and the Achilles—turn on the infinite divisibility of a spatial continuum and the inexhaustibility of the infinite series of points that infinite dichotomous or geometric division discloses. His paradoxes of plurality turn on the concept of the possibility of an infinite extension. Zeno's infinite is essentially mathematical and was itself an achievement of a historical intellectual dialectic. Zeno defended the philosophy of his mentor Parmenides (who was also his lover, if Plato's gossip in the *Parmenides* is on the mark) by showing, via reductio ad absurdum, that the hypotheses of motion and plurality lead to contradiction—contradiction essentially involving infinite regresses. My mentor, José Benardete, wrote a book titled *Infinity* and it was not anything like the book by Conche that you hold in your hands; rather, Benardete's *Infinity* is in the genre of the

philosophy of mathematics. No, Anaximander's apeiron is best rendered, in my opinion, not as the "infinite," but as the "indefinite"—a qualityless, homogeneous stuff, that is internally unbounded or undifferentiated. The idea that the infinite (that is, the apeiron) is infinite (in the post-Zeno sense), if I may put it so, never occurred to Anaximander.

And we must remember—though, strangely, Conche himself does not—that another signal appearance of the apeiron is also found among the earliest expressions of Western philosophy: the Pythagorean Table of Opposites, in which each column of opposites is headed by the Limit (peras) and the Unlimited (apeiron), thus:

Limit	Unlimited
Odd	Even
One	Many
Square	Oblong
Right	Left
Male	Female
Light	Darkness
Good	Evil

As Conche's peer, I must honor him with my best critical engagement, not patronize him with obsequious flattery. So this is just where I think that Conche goes wrong: he conflates two distinct senses of the infinite, the Anaxamanderian-Pythagorean sense, on the one hand, and the Zenoic sense, on the other. In Conche's defense, I might say that he is in good company because Plato does as well, if we may trust Aristotle's account of Plato's philosophy in the first book of the *Metaphysics*—as does Conche and so do I. According to Aristotle, opposed to the Numbers (forms), Plato posited the Infinite Dyad (the great and the small)—the quasi-spatial ideal continuum, first explored by Zeno, that is both infinite in extent (great) and infinitely divisible (small). But let us not come to this book by Conche with misleading expectations. The sense of the infinite that Conche wrestles with here is more the Anaxamanderian-Pythagorean sense and less the Zenoic. Although he wrestles with both, the former is not only primal but primary; the latter is secondary. And so I will concentrate on helping the reader of this English translation understand what Conche is up to in regard to the first and leave it to Benardete to help anyone wishing to pursue the matter further to understand the latter.

Nature, Conche posits, is infinite. We readers would be mistaken therefore to think this: Oh, contrary to contemporary scientific cosmol-

ogy, Conche backwardly believes that nature is not a finite but expanding four-dimensional space-time continuum characterized by a Riemannian geometry; instead, he backwardly thinks that if one could drink from a fountain of youth and enjoy an infinite lifespan and inhabit a spaceship powered by an infinite fuel source, one could set out in Euclidean space and travel forever on a straight-line course and never reach the edge of the cosmos—because it is a Zenoically great infinite. No, Conche posits that one aspect of Nature is infinite (unlimited) in exactly the way in which Plato in the *Timaeus* and before him the Pythagorean cosmologists thought that it was. Yes, it may be Zenoically infinite, but more to the point, Conche's infinite is that which ever eludes and defies the power of the Limit to exhaustively render it pinned down, submitted to Reason, captured by Nous, answerable to the Logos. It is the chora, the matrix, apprehensible, Plato tells us in the *Timaeus*, only by a kind of "bastard reasoning." Why a bastard reasoning? Because the chora, the Receptacle, is the very opposite of the knowable, the definable, the namable; it is the nurse and mother of all becoming, informed—but only partially and incompletely informed—by the Limit and the Number-forms that the Limit proliferates.

In the Greek mythopoeic tradition, the kosmos is not created: it is procreated. From out of an original amorphous unity (later rationalized by Anaximander as the apeiron), the male Ouranos and the female Gaia were spontaneously and causelessly separated by Chaos and the first born was Eros—necessary, of course, to reunite Heaven and Earth sexually, so as to procreate the rest of the divine world order. So too, for the Pythagoreans and Plato, the Limit inseminates the ideal Unlimited and the Limit reproduces itself in the continuum of the Unlimited in the manner of biological cell division to become the Odd, the One, and then the definite Numbers—the forms, as Conche, wisely following Aristotle, understands Plato's forms to be. The Limit—no matter how virile and prolix and no matter how many and multifarious forms it gins up—can never ever exhaust the Unlimited, the Infinite, the apeiron—which, in its material manifestation, always remains un-formed, un-numbered, un-named, un-known, resistant, defiant, un-ruly, un-tamed, un-incarcerated, wild.

For the patriarchal and governance-obsessed Pythagoreans and Plato in the column of the Limit is the Good and the Male; in the column of the Unlimited is the Bad and Female, in need of discipline and control. But Conche is a man and a philosopher of his times—a contemporary, more or less, of Sartre and Foucault. The Pythagorean-Platonic valuation then of the Limit and the Unlimited, the Finite and the Infinite, are thus turned, by Conche, upside down and inside out. What is ever fascinating, ever

self-renewing, and ever fresh is Infinite Nature in her wild, un-incarcerated, un-tamed, defiant, resistant, un-fully-knowable, un-named, un-numbered, un-formed, un-limited female essence.

So you see, I join Conche as a Neo-pre-Socratic philosopher, and he joins me as an environmental philosopher. Before I read his book, I did not know that; and unless and until he reads my foreword here, neither will he. We two lived and worked mostly in the twentieth century, utterly independently, but we are not of it. Both of us have survived and continue to work into the twenty-first century and Conche's philosophy is a harbinger of things to come—a new, scientifically informed metaphysics and ontology. I reach for that goal as well and only hope that I succeed as well as Marcel Conche. History will be our judge. And, hopefully, future philosophers will engage his work and mine over the distance of decades, perhaps even centuries.

TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION

Herman Bonne and Laurent Ledoux

> He wandered through the fields, a young boy of 16; he looked up and saw a trail of white herons flying through the sky, at a great altitude: and nothing else, nothing more than the whiteness of these white creatures rowing on a blue sky, nothing more than these two colors superposing each other, this ineffable feeling of eternity penetrated his soul at that very moment and untied what was tied, tied what was untied, so much so that he fell on the ground, as if overtaken by sudden death.
>
> —Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Why We Translated Marcel Conche's "Philosopher à l'infini"

"Enough talk *about* Marcel Conche. Why don't you pay him a visit to talk *with* him?" said Bob Starc to Laurent in June 2006 during one of their walks in the forest. For several years, Laurent had shared with Bob his pleasure and interest in reading Conche's books. Without a degree in philosophy but an interest in it since childhood, Laurent had previously followed the good advice of another friend, Jean Jadin, to study philosophy by choosing one single given philosopher. His friend suggested Conche. After reading his works, Laurent had some apprehensions about contacting Conche. What would a nonspecialist have to say to the great wise man, who had become a well-known writer in France? Nevertheless, Laurent decided to contact him and request to meet whenever possible. To his great surprise, he received a prompt but positive reply: "Come whenever you want!" This proved to be typical of Conche's openness and eagerness to spark earnest dialogues.

Marcel and Laurent spent a wonderful weekend together, discussing philosophy and the Infiniteness of Nature, while walking, eating, or sitting on a bench in front of a magnificent landscape. During that weekend, Laurent decided to translate one of Conche's books into English, in order to make his ideas known to a wider audience. When he asked Marcel which book he should translate, the answer was quick and without hesitation: "*Philosopher à l'infini*."

Laurent began translating the book during the summer of 2006 and despite his demanding position as manager of a commercial department at a large international bank, Laurent worked diligently each evening as well as weekends. In 2009, Herman Bonne, another enthusiastic reader of Marcel Conche's work and the owner and manager of a medium-sized company, was prompted by Conche to contact Laurent to help him finalize the translation. It took them another three years to do so, with the assistance of three native English speakers: Dan Tudor, manager of a company in the United States, Ian Swan, an Irish communications consultant living in Paris, and James Donahue, an American College teacher. Finally, J. Baird Callicott, a well-known environmental ethicist from the United States and a friend of Laurent's, introduced them to Andrew Kenyon of the State University of New York Press.

Why did two business managers, untrained in philosophy, decide to embark on such a long journey to translate a philosophical book by a French academic? The answer is simple: we both firmly believe that the notion of infinity is at the core of the crisis humanity is facing today. Every day, scientific advances offer us more insights about the infinitely small or the infinitely great. For the last two hundred years our economies have been running full speed, fueled by the implicit belief that natural resources are infinite. Today however, we finally understand that they are not and that we need to radically rethink the foundations of our economic system. Paradoxically, we believe that a solid philosophical reflection on the Whole of reality, on Nature as "the infinite" can help us properly address this unprecedented environmental crisis; Nature is indeed a perpetual challenge for the mind. Reflecting upon its infinity also helps to put man in his place, to evaluate our surroundings and ourselves according to their true proportion.

We hereby do not claim that metaphysics should be instrumentalized to help society resolve its problems. We want to acknowledge how reading Marcel Conche's works on infinite Nature has not only helped us grow and mature as human beings but also has helped us to take initiatives in our respective organizations and to change our managerial practices, leading to more harmonious, respectful, and sustainable long-term development where

the progress and personal development of all team members is considered critical for the ultimate sustainable success and growth of the enterprise. It is in this spirit that Laurent leads the association Philosophy & Management (www.philoma.org) which organizes philosophy seminars for managers.

Since we have both significantly benefited from his insights, our goal is to render Marcel Conche's writings widely accessible. We have tried therefore to make this English version of "*Philosopher à l'infini*" as readable as possible:

- Each chapter is preceded by a short summary entitled "Milestones" (as a reference to the milestones along the path Marcel invites us to take with the philosophers who influenced him). We have also added key word titles between some paragraphs of the various chapters in order to highlight the main ideas covered. Although the prose of Marcel Conche is straightforward, he sometimes jumps from one idea to another, making it less easy for nonacademics to follow. Hopefully, these summaries and additional titles will make it easier for the reader to follow his logic;
- Book references of quotes and Greek or Latin versions of specific words have been converted into endnotes in order to lighten the text;
- A glossary briefly introducing all thinkers, philosophers or "–isms" mentioned in the text has been added.

A Brief Introduction to Marcel Conche's Life and Work

Marcel Conche occupies an important place in today's French philosophical landscape. He is recognized by academics for his groundbreaking and authoritative works on Greek thinkers such as Pyrrho, Epicurus, Parmenides, and Heraclitus, as well as on Montaigne. He is also appreciated by the wider public for his more personal works.

Born in 1922 and emeritus professor at the Sorbonne, Marcel Conche has been made laureate of the French Academy and a corresponding member of the Academy of Athens for his life work. André Comte-Sponville, a best-selling French philosopher, considers Conche's philosophy as "one of the rare philosophies of our time" and has dedicated a book from an

interview with him. To date Marcel Conche has written more than thirty-five books, most of them published by the *Presses Universitaires de France (PUF)*. Many of his books have been reedited several times. While he has long been known in academic circles, over the last decade his books have drawn a growing interest from the wider public. For instance, "Confessions of a Philosopher" has met with great success in French bookshops. A specialist in Greek philosophy and probably one of the world's best academics on Montaigne, his work combines erudite references to the history of philosophy with a highly personal and substantial search for "truth," all expressed in crystal-clear prose. This is illustrated by one of Conche's early works, "*Pyrrhon ou l'apparence*" (Pyrrho or Appearance), an audacious and successful essay that clearly distinguishes Pyrrho's philosophy from Sextus Empiricus's traditional skepticism.

Today, at ninety-two years of age and living in a small village in southern France, Conche remains as active and original as ever. Among his latest projects, he has recently translated as well as provided personal commentary on the *Tao Te Ching* despite his not speaking a word of Mandarin. He translated word by word, using dictionaries. In this book he draws an interesting parallel between the near contemporaries Lao Tzu and Heraclitus: the river of the Greeks is compared to the Dao of the Chinese.

With and Without Marcel Conche—
A Short Introduction to the Book

For Marcel Conche, Nature is infinite, both in time and space, and constitutes the Whole of reality. In this book, he introduces us to his view of infinite Nature, confronting it with that of other thinkers. Conche notes that, while the idea of infinity is present in many philosophical systems, time is often disregarded. Platonic thinking is focalized on an ideal and unchanging totality which does not allow for a temporal essence. Equally, for Aristotle, time is ruled from within by fixed forms which in a way annihilate its importance. Conche, therefore, finds his inspiration rather in Montaigne for whom "everything changes"; in Nietzsche, obsessed by time even when he writes about the "eternal return"; and in Bergson, who considers duration as the "background of reality."

For Conche, idealism—which has dominated philosophy since Plato—has corrupted our thinking on infinity. Infinity has been thought essentially to have a spiritual nature, perfect and achieved. It has been conceived as a well-ordered totality, meaningful and closed upon itself. Christianity has transformed reality into a "world" already completed and finite since God,

who created it, can encompass it. Conche takes a radically opposite view: what comes first is nature as the Greeks have conceived it through the notion of "Physis" (or Phusis). Phusis is an infinite reality, that is, a reality that has always been there and always will be, unending, constantly creating and exploring new paths "like a poet," that is to say, without following a well-designed plan. Mankind is part of the Phusis and cannot extract itself from it. Mankind is, therefore, destined to death but also contributes to the creative process, to Phusis through its actions. Nature or Phusis, as "All of reality," must be distinguished from the worlds or universes that it encompasses. Science helps mankind to better understand these worlds but will never be able to do more than to scratch the surface of Phusis. For Conche, infinity is not only outside mankind. It is also inside mankind. Conche finds his inspiration here in Pascal. Mankind can indefinitely make an inventory of reality though science, though this action is a futile endeavor to understand or experience infinite nature. Mankind can, however, experience infinity through love. To love is by definition to love infinitely and to reveal the other's infinity. Here, Conche's naturalism (only Nature "is" and all transcendence is imaginary) does not lead to radical nihilism: the infinite character of Nature does not serve to undermine mankind, accentuating its irreducible finite character. Rather, mankind actively participates in the creation of this infinity through its own experiences, through its own life. This may help give some meaning to the human adventure. It may also let us think that mankind is free after all for it cannot be made prisoner of a religious, metaphysical or cultural definition of itself. Mankind's relation with Nature is precisely what makes mankind its own creator.

At the end of the book, an interesting insight into Marcel Conche's view on infinite Nature is gleaned through the correspondence between him and Gilbert Kirscher, an emeritus professor of philosophy. After having detailed why Marcel Conche journeys with and without various philosophers, the book culminates with a fruitful exchange that could have been subtitled: "With and without Marcel Conche." This earnest dialogue highlights the reasons why one might part with Conche regarding his views on Nature. The openness with which Conche shares this with us is, as previously mentioned, typical of him. He relishes engaging dialogues and is always ready to have his ideas challenged and to reconsider his positions. In one of his books on Montaigne (*"Montaigne ou la conscience heureuse"*—Montaigne or the Happy Consciousness), he openly yearns for a "good verbal duel" with him. For Conche, dialogue is the foundation of morality, as he argued in an eponymous book (*"La fondement de la morale"*). This also explains why, like Montaigne, Conche has never attempted to turn his ideas into a "system." He is well aware that his ideas cannot be

put to the test and, as such, cannot be set against those who believe in a personal God, for example. The rather abrupt sentence in the appendix ("Between philosophers and believers—as such—dialogue has no meaning") should not be interpreted, therefore, as a refusal to dialogue with people who believe in God. His dialogues with Christians such as Montaigne, Pascal, or Bergson show otherwise (one with Meister Eckhart would have also been interesting, as he also seems to have made references to Nature as being infinite). Rather, Conche's sentence in the appendix highlights the need for both parties to always be ready to reconsider their beliefs in the face of new information or solid arguments, in order to philosophize and have a fruitful dialogue. Such a frame of mind seems, more than ever, critical in our global society. This is why we hope this book may spark a renewed dialogue on Nature and the infinite between men and women of different philosophies and beliefs.

Finally, let us remark that throughout his work and in this book, Conche develops inspiring ideas on the timeless and stimulating, but, in his opinion, inevitably limited dialogue between philosophy and science. Nevertheless, one may regret that in this book Conche does not present any scientific discoveries that could lend support to his thoughts, such as a mathematical treatment of infinity or contemporary cosmology. This should not be surprising, however, as for Conche no thought of Nature as the Whole of reality could be substantiated through scientific evidence. Philosophy is therefore condemned to remain an interpretation of Nature, which science can neither confirm nor invalidate. Here again we find infinity, in the unlimited number of metaphysical speculations and of philosophies about Nature. In Conche's own words: "Nature is infinite. This infinity reduces me to a point in space, a moment in time. But, I equal myself to it through thinking, not because I could have an "idea" of infinity, as Descartes said we could have an idea of God, but because my thought is like a door to infinity, which is nothing else than Nature offering herself to the consciousness and the reason of mankind."

To Julian, Miguel, and Alban, in the hope that Marcel Conche's book, whether in French or in English, will help them experience the infinity of Nature and dare to become the poets of their lives.

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Marcel Conche

The main objective of this book is to define my philosophical position by differentiating it from the positions of the philosophers who have been most important to my own development. I have not defined my position from the perspective of the categories of Eric Weil. This was done by Gilbert Kirscher in a letter that is included in the Appendix. This letter does not just serve to understand my philosophical position; it provides a material example of the type of analysis that can be made according to the *Logic of Philosophy* by Weil while helping to elucidate Weil's own philosophy.

Why did I suggest to Laurent Ledoux that he translate this book rather than another one at the time of his request?

My works on the history of philosophy (Montaigne, Lucretius, Pyrrho, Epicurus, the Ante-Socratics) put aside, the works wherein I expose my own position were delineated, ensuing a process of elimination:

In *Orientation philosophique* (Philosophical Orientation), an ongoing work of investigation, I undertake a "deconstruction" of classical metaphysics, but I hesitate to commit myself to a new metaphysics;

Temps et destin (Time and Fate) takes the question of time as an isolated object and is not connected to the philosophy of nature;

Le fondement de la morale (The Foundation of Morality) confronts the notion of the "foundation" of morality, but does so without being subject to metaphysics (however, above all, I'm a metaphysician);

Présence de la nature (Nature's Presence) presents nature as I see it today: unending, everlasting, untotalizable, all-embracing, all-engendering. However, part of the book concerning Greek thought with the Greek language makes it rather difficult to read.

Finally, my choice centered on *Philosopher à l'infini*. It seemed to be a good idea to confront my own thoughts with those of the great philosophers known by everyone so that my thinking could be approached and understood in relation to them.

However, a synthesis of my agreements and divergences from those thinkers still has to be made, which is why after *Philosopher à l'infini*, one would benefit from reading *Métaphysique* (Metaphysics).

I

FLASHBACK

When I was a young man I used to work in the fields, vineyards, and meadows of my father's farm. This intense agricultural labor would consume practically all my energy, leaving little or no time for reflection. Indeed, my mind was so task-oriented that there was room for nothing else. Had I been able to "let go" I would have been naturally receptive to the concept of the infinity that surrounded me; my mind would have yielded to its natural propensity to wander and wonder, as it should do when one is so young and in the midst of this pure and transforming nature. But back then I had no notion of what infinity meant, virtually no knowledge of its existence at all.

Only today do I realize how alienated my mind had been; rather than surrendering to its natural disposition and absorbing itself in meditation on the infinite, it was stubbornly and exclusively preoccupied with what is contingent and finite.

As a schoolboy and, later, a college student, my mind would have been naturally receptive to conceive of infinity, but instead it was continuously limited by objectives of little scope, obliged to restrict itself to these narrowminded pursuits. I had to write essays and reviews, prepare this or that homework, and eventually, as an older student, submit my thesis. These scholastic efforts were presented for my headmaster's or professor's consideration, who in due time would then pronounce their final judgment. All this belonged to the contingent order of things. All that belongs to a human being that necessarily defines him or her as a philosopher was forgotten, brushed aside, or simply never stimulated or encouraged.

Human beings spend their lives accomplishing tasks, carrying out functions, performing roles that they have chosen or responsibilities that others have chosen for them. These tasks, functions, and roles might have been entirely different as a consequence of some other particular need, tradition, influence, or coincidence. How difficult it is to truly and deeply ascertain the universal human being beyond peoples' individual characteristics!

Having been spiritually educated in the Catholic faith, my teachers taught me that "God" had created the sky and the earth out of nothing; then he created light, the firmament, the planets, and the animated beings of the sea and air. I was told that he had created man in his own image; that a man called Adam had disobeyed him nevertheless; that Adam and his earliest of all sins had wrought evil, suffering, and death upon the world. But I was also told that, in his demise, man would take with him the promise of a savior who would return as Jesus Christ during the reign of Emperor Augustus.

From all this I could have concluded that God, World, and Man are all there is. Hence, I might have come up with the concept of the Whole: the Whole of reality, and therefore of the infinite, since there can be nothing else beyond the Whole of reality.

But that is not what I came up with.

God, World and Man tallied up without forming a whole; it did not cross my mind to consider them as going *together* at that time. Above all "God" meant a serious threat for "sinners" as well as a promise of eternal life in paradise for the "souls of the deceased," at least for the "just and good" souls amongst us.

Throughout my childhood and part of my youth, I attended an annual seven o'clock morning Mass, which was offered to God in order for my mother's soul to "rest in peace." I cannot at all remember having felt something resembling a love for God. Actually, I often felt a superstitious fear of this Supreme Being known to many as the "Almighty." Even back then, my mind never truly accepted what I had been told about Christ, the "God made man, second person of the Trinity, mediator, savior, dead and resurrected."

The Foundation and Spontaneity of My Rejection of the Monotheist Creed

The Judeo-Christian myth did not prepare me to reflect upon the ideas of the Whole and Infinity. God was of course "infinitely perfect," but this prerequisite did not really inspire one to think about the infinite. The Christian dogma never quite held a firm grip on my mind. So when I came to explicitly reject it, all I had done was to throw away a burden of imposed beliefs that did nothing but uselessly weigh me down. The so-called kindness of God did not appear to correlate with the utter magnitude of suffering here on Earth.