Truth and Morality:
The Role of Truth in Public Life

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Edited by
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Part III. Truth, Morality and Public Life

PREFACE

At the beginning of the 20th century, Henry Bergson affirmed that man cannot escape his crises without spiritual development. These words of the French philosopher remain valid.

Indeed, the need for improvement in the quality, being, values and models of life is felt all over the world. This seems most pronounced in Europe, especially in the countries once ruled by totalitarian communist regimes. In this geo-political area, since the fall of the Iron Curtain, there has been a great desire for improvement at the social and individual level, but the change has been long delayed. Among other things, this is due to the fact that while good is closely related to truth, the search for truth has not been rigorously undertaken. Public life is not suffused with a sense that life is grounded in truth. Rather there is passive acceptance of the rupture between personal truth and public morality, between the individual conscience and laws which are correct only in political terms. Moreover, moral conscience, long buried by cultural factors and deformed by historical and reductive conceptions, remains a matter almost too delicate for discussion.

Hence, this work looks deeply into the religious and philosophical cultural traditions in search of a more adequate grasp of truth, its role in private and public life and its relation to social minorities and majorities, the features of a healthy sense of life in this world, the relations between law and morality and between Church and the lay state, and the role of education. It analyzes the different ways of understanding truth and the forms of morality it generates: from the individual and subjective, unrelated to public life, to a more dynamic, objective, responsible, mature and personalized manner.

The work is divided into three parts. The first is focused upon truth. This recognizes the multiple horizons of truth and its search despite the temptation of the lie. It relates truth to value and rights and conceives it dynamically as a spiritual journey. In this light it reports on an intensive discussion of the relation of faith and reason.

Part II extends the horizon of truth to morality, theology and science. For the richness of the present pluralistic context and its challenge to objectivity, it explores human life as situated between good and evil, heaven and earth, betrayal and heroism, even in terms of environmental ethics.

Finally Part III opens the horizons of truth still further to public life. This studies the shape of the New Europe and the contribution of the Orthodox and Catholic in shaping the political order by a morality based on truth.

All this is the burden of the present volume.

George F. McLean

INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper draws the attention of the specialised audience, as well as of the wide audience, on a theme of great interest nowadays, namely the relation between truth and morality in public life.

The starting point is the deficiency of morality in public life, which may be easily noticed in the post-communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe. This deficiency manifests itself in various forms, both at the theoretical and practical levels. Thus, from a theoretical point of view, morality (public and individual, religious and lay) is more often invoked, rather than debated and really assumed, being dominated by the theory of forms without content (ethics without truth, metaphysics without foundations, Christianity without Christ, holiness without God, politics without the common good, etc.). From a practical point of view, morality is not related to virtues or values, but to personal and group interests, rules and consensus. These interpretations tend to become objectified and seem to characterise the societies that go through longer or shorter periods of change of the ideological paradigms. The knowledgeable scepticism, the moral relativism and religious indifference are all clinical signs of a state of crisis. In order to get out of such a deadlock, man must not give up and, furthermore, he must not keep silent, as Hans Urs von Balthasar used to say[1]. He must try to ask himself the radical questions regarding the ultimate meaning and ground of human, personal and social life[2]. He must speak and move on -- not in order to keep on going ahead, but in order not to lose his place and vocation. It does not matter at all whether he is member of a majority or a minority. From the perspective of communication, the authors of the present volume answer the call of Hans Urs von Balthasar in a particular way.

Indeed, the fundamental question that seems to be decisive for people's fate in the post-communist societies of Europe nowadays is not as much economy or politics, as ethics, especially. After the communist totalitarian governments have reduced ethics to politics, there is now an attempt to recover the ethical discourse, yet in terms of rules and contracts. As such, man would no longer be governed by an external *telos*, but only by the rules he imposes on himself. The passage from the moral order, independent of man's will, to the immanent practical rationality makes it impossible for us to distinguish between what we are *hic et nunc* and what we should be. This type of morality fuses together the act and the potency, removing the difference between them and making the emotional, cosmopolitan and uprooted self that incarnates itself in several human representative types, such as the aesthete, the therapist and the manager,

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[1] Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Spirit and Fire. An Interview with Hans Urs von Balthasar", in *Communio* 32 (2005) 573-593.

[2] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio* (1998), no. 5.

triumph. They equally identify themselves by the instrumental relations they establish with the world around them, meaning that the other people are no longer treated as goals in themselves, but as plain instruments or means. The social form that emerges from this emotional morality is a managerial society dominated by bureaucratic individualism[3]. Taking into account this challenge, the following pages will put before you a plea for theoretical, and not just practical and existential reflection, on the truth about man and society.

Part I. On Truth

Chapter I, "The Culture of Recognition and the Horizons of Truth", by Anton Carpinschi, offers an anthropological model that starts from the dynamics of the hypostases of the human. According to this model, the human nature, as natural essence of what is human, and the human condition of moral and spiritual fulfilment meet in the human essence synthesised by what Pope John Paul II called the person in act. Shaping the real, fallible and creative man through the dynamics of his hypostases configures a comprehensive truth about the human being, a truth in which a culture of recognition is grounded. The central idea of this chapter is that between recognition and comprehension there is a deep, organic connection for comprehensive truth, in which the culture of recognition is grounded.

Chapter II, by Isidor Chinez, "The Unceasing Temptation of the Lie and Man's Hunger for Truth", shows that the whole human being and existence are endowed with meaning and value from the truth that man seeks, finds, recognises and cannot ignore. Truth fashions life: it underlies it, it guides and makes it complete. Truth is the constitutive and decisive value of the human being. Being for truth and in truth: this is man. The recognition of truth and the faithfulness to truth form together a unity in man, which cannot be broken from an ethical point of view, if man wants to be man. When he knows truth, but is not faithful to it, then he lives in a lie. Lies know a collective and public dimension today. Facing such a situation, the chapter insists on returning to the Christian realism that embraces, with the same certainty, man's dignity and his limits, his ability to transcend himself and the sinner's reality.

Chapter III, by Yuriy Pidlisnyy, "Truth, Value and the Proliferation of Rights" analyses the fact that the problem of truth has become for many people nowadays a simple question of taste or of personal opinion. Among other causes, the chapter identifies the danger that is inherent to the market system of contractual laws in the contemporary developed society. The logic of the market relations can determine all the other human relations.

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[3] Cf. Aurelian Crăiuțu, "Alasdair MacIntyre sau noul catehism tomist" [Alasdair MacIntyre or the New Thomist Catechism], in A. MacIntyre, *Tratat de morală. După virtute* [After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory], trad. C. Pleșu (Bucuresti: Humanitas, 1988), 5-21.

Thus, as a continuation of the market or of its relations, we can enter an individualistic, contractual, a-personal society, a contract-society. The nature of such pathology implies the proliferation of rights. Refusing this state of things, the author forwards the decoding of the "mystery of the human person", condemns "the freedom of indifference" and supports the close relation between freedom and moral truth.

Chapter IV, "Truth: The Key to Integrity, a Spiritual Journey", by Edward McLean, searches for an answer to the greatest challenge of the present world: considering all the existing different religions, cultures, politics and languages, the history of past and recent conflicts, how will we be able to live together on this planet, in a society that should be both civil and right for all? According to Edward McLean, only truth can solve this problem, but that particular truth revealed by Jesus, the Son of God the Father, who said that all humans are the children of the unique God and, as such, we are all members of the same family. This is truth, the key of morality, integrity and good conduct within the family of nations.

Discussions I. Man between the Truth of Faith and the Truth of Reason

In the first part of the discussions, several answers have been looked for in the dialogue project launched by Lucian Farcaş: is it possible to have elites, experts and charismatic, deeply responsible persons, acting both in personal and public life?

Wilhelm Dancă noticed that the term "elite" does not refer to a group of special persons, but to one consisting of normal people, in the sense that they succeed to encounter their fellows by deepening their own tradition, culture and religion. The elite is made of free men, who live the universal truth of the material and spiritual values. Osman Bilen fused the spirit of Pierce's and Habermas' ideas with the Muslim teaching known as *Igima*, meaning consensus or community, and he did not underscore so much the term of elite, which seems problematic to him, but that of a group of researchers or people in search of truth. Lucian Farcaş answered that in his opinion, an elite person is the one that uses his own charisma not just for himself, but for the community as well, for the community's good. George McLean took up Osman Bilen's idea of community and pleaded both for supporting the institutions that educate the young generations, as well as those in charge of assisting and guiding adults. Lucian Farcaş intervened by emphasizing G. McLean's idea that the future of a community is present in the elite's responsibility or morality. Yuriy Pidlisnyy referred to the elite as the aristocracy that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Kant and Ortega y Gasset spoke about, that is, the community of people who live their lives based on virtues. In Pidlisnyy's opinion, Christianity itself proposes such an aristocracy. Inspired by Pope John Paul II's thinking, Petru Gherghel sustained the idea that a leader or a member of elite is the person who understands his dignity and lives his life wholly or integrally, that is, he embodies spiritual values and values of a different kind. Edward McLean

commented on these ideas from a spiritual point of view and stated that we are all apostles; we are all voices of God's love. If we see the world in this light, then we are all elites. Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban opined that the elite is made of those people who are seeking the truth and are receptive towards it, that is, they allow truth to manifest itself the way it is. Wilhelm Dancă drew attention on the fact that the problem of constituting elite is a difficult one, since it implies personal contacts, witness and personalised education.

In the second part of the discussions, Lucian Farcaş introduces the theme of the relation between the elite and the institutions, or between the person and the institutions. Petru Gherghel showed that when institutions laid stress on material values only, the social imbalance was almost catastrophic. That is why, it is important that the institutions promote spiritual values, as well. Edward McLean added to that, insisting on the transformation of the structures of violence in institutions of love, as the Gospel urges us. Osman Bilen commented on the fact that the tendency to consider the European Union a *Res publica christiana* is a discriminating one, at least in the case of Turkey, who wishes to be part of it. Bilen insisted on the interpretation of religious differences as differences in the perception of truth and as a source of enriching, not as a reason for divisions. Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban was of the opinion that the question of recognising Europe's Christian origins is a delicate matter, since, on the one hand, it has to be said that on the basis of the European project lie fundamental notions that were built within the Christian space, with the means offered by Christianity, and on the other hand, new forms of encounter with other religions in Europe have to be promoted.

Hu Yeping asked for clarifications over the distinction made between wisdom as fear of God and wisdom as unifying power. Wilhelm Dancă did not exclude the relation between being, life and wisdom, showing that wisdom has unifying power because it is nourished by the roots or by its foundational principles. Wise people are different on the surface, but not in depth, since principles remain the same.

Yuriy Pidlisnyy stated that the elites and the institutions support each other. George McLean said that in the relation between persons and institutions, the necessary effort today is that of the institutions promoting the individuals' freedom and initiative, and taking over the responsibility when a larger question is at stake and the individuals cannot cope with it. This has to do with what the social doctrine of the Church asserts in the principle of solidarity and subsidiarity. Petru Gherghel asked himself how Pope John Paul II succeeded to gather around him so many elites. Isidor Chinez emphasized the fact that the elites play an important part in spreading the truth, but one should not forget that they constitute themselves in truth. Abelardo Lobato drew attention to the fact that the word "truth" does not have any value nowadays and that is the reason why the fear of truth and morality overcomes the powers of contemporary man. Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban pleaded for ensuring full freedom in the way of understanding truth, in order to avoid a sort of schizophrenia between the

public and the private, and also for full freedom of expression in respect for the other. Gabriela Blebea-Nicolae noticed that morals work with open truths, with truths in which uncertainty plays a role, because they are personal truths. She also called attention to the fact that there is the risk of incongruence between the elites and values. Finally, she underlined the fact that the Church can bring the elites from different disciplines together, can encourage and offer them the chance to meet because they possess a common language.

Part II. Truth and Morality

Chapter V, "Problems of the Objectivity of Values in a Pluralist and Dialogical World", by Zbigniew Wendland, tries to find an answer to the crisis of the contemporary world and specifically to the question of the ossification of values, by offering for analysis the paradigm of the "dialogic rationalism". According to the author, the dialogic rationalism derives from a positive "destruction", in the sense that Hegel gives to the word *Aufhebung*, of two former paradigms, namely the paradigm of the "metaphysical reason" and that of the "instrumental reason". In the paradigm of the "dialogic rationalism", one of the conditions sufficient for their objectivity is their inter-subjective acceptance as the result of the desire to find a common framework of dialogue and understanding.

Chapter VI, "On the Problem of the Temporality of Moral Truth", by Burhanettin Tatar, states that moral truth is a temporal and historical event, in the sense that it cannot be identified with, or universalized within, moral expressions (or moral principles) themselves, while it makes itself understood and experienced by means of moral expressions. The point is that it is not our knowledge, but the temporality of our beings that opens up a field or path where we can find ourselves as already related to each other. Thus, responsiveness is not a matter of obligation I take freely, but an event in which I find myself already immersed with others. Nevertheless, the degree of our reception of this fundamental ontological responsiveness is a matter of interpretation or moral consciousness. The awareness of the fundamental ontological character of responsiveness in any situation is partially a revelation of moral truth.

Chapter VII, "The Human Being between the Sky and the Earth, between Good and Evil: the Human Being Next to Us", by Petru Gherghel, tries to answer several questions: how did the Bible see and present man? How does the Church see him? Which role does man have within the society and what is his vocation? What mission does man represent for the society and the world? What has to be done so that he fulfils his vocation and mission? The chapter's main theme is that man's value at all times, but especially nowadays, resides in his moral conscience. Conscience is man's most mysterious core and sanctuary, where he is alone with God, whose voice resounds in the depth of his being. Therefore, man's conscience is shaped by listening to God's voice; his dignity is asserted by living God's

word; his identity and mission rest on becoming son in God's Son. It is in this way that the foundations of a peaceful living together of the entire human family are laid.

Chapter VIII, "Between Betrayal and Heroism", by Gabriela Blebea-Nicolae, gives an answer to several questions: if telling the truth is the necessary condition of a true life, why is it then that, although we do not always tell the truth and only the truth, we still want to know the truth as freedom to choose, even if choice implies suffering and disillusion? Why is it that although we often find it morally appropriate to hide the truth, we discredit those who do it? The answer to all these questions relies on St. Augustine's teaching, rather than on the possibilities for analysis put forward by systematic thinking, such as deontologism, contractualism and consequentialism. Going through St. Augustine's teaching, we are told whether we can lie or not in order to save our own lives. What about the neighbour's life? The whole chapter is against the vice of betrayal and for the virtue of heroism.

Chapter IX, "Environmental Ethics and Its Relation to Truth", by Osman Bilen, brings into discussion the possibilities of ecological ethics, using a concept of the relativist or non-objective truth. The chapter is divided in two parts. The first part defines several specific terms of ecology, such as environment, ecology, adjusting to the environment, the human environment, and nature as a dynamic process, the inter-dependence of living creatures and man's relation with nature. The second part analyses several moral-spiritual values and some ecologic themes in the light of the teaching about the cosmos in Islam. Starting from the concept of nature, from nature's integrity and order, the author insists on the unity of man and nature, as well as on his responsibility in protecting the environment.

Chapter X, "The Morals of the Communication of Truth: The Dialogue Between Philosophy, Theology and Science", by Wilhelm Dancă, brings to the fore a recent phenomenon taking place in the "civilized" world, namely the openness manifested by the community of scientists towards questions pertaining to the religious sphere. This openness has been paradoxically prepared by the crises the civilized world has gone through: the crisis of atheist humanism, the crisis of morality and that of metaphysics. But the dialogue between scientists and religious people seems to be favoured by the process of globalisation, by the recent discoveries in the field of humanities and of social studies and, moreover, by the discussions regarding the morality or amorality of scientific research. One first step towards what is called the ethics of scientific research is bringing forth several practical ways of dialogue on the basis of scientific or religious truth, taking into consideration both the openness of the human being towards the absolute, and the limits given by the finite character of man's existence in history. Lastly, the exigency and finality of the ethics of communicating the truth has an anthropological dimension.

Part III. Truth, Morality and Public Life

Chapter XI, "Anthropology and Political Action: Ethics as the Preamble to a Fair Politics", by Abelardo Lobato, analyses the relation that has to exist between ethics and politics. They are not the same thing, as various totalitarian regimes stated all throughout history, and they should not be completely separated, as different modern personalities argue. Between these two unfortunate positions, the author puts forward a third one, inspired by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas: ethics and politics must have a certain degree of autonomy and also a certain primacy. Politics enjoys a pre-eminent position in the community's administrative and governmental organisation, whereas ethics has a wider horizon, enjoying a primordial place in the order of human action. Since contemporary culture is ready to emphasise only the primacy of politics, the chapter draws attention to the fact that political activity implies anthropology, that man is the subject and the object of politics. By analysing man's personal identity, the free man's law and the human rights, the author sustains the primacy of ethics in political activity.

Chapter XII, "The Catholic Church and the New Europe", by Ioan Robu, starts from several questions pertaining to the moral order: What is Europe actually? How does new Europe really fashion itself? Which Christian values still survive in new Europe? How does the Church contribute to this future project? Such questions are motivated by the fact that Europe is not just a historical-geographical territory, but also the community of the nations that received and enriched the heritage of the Greek-Roman, Jewish and Christian civilisations. Underlying the fact that the growth of the roots of European civilisation does not mean excluding the contribution that other nations brought to its formation, such as that of the Muslim countries, the author pleads for the need to offer united Europe a strong spirituality and a deeply ethical and cultural dimension, beyond the political one.

Chapter XIII, "The Orthodox Church and the New Europe: Ecumenical Experience and Perspectives", by Daniel Ciobotea, argues that the process of building a united Europe is a new challenge and opportunity to express, in a new way, the faithfulness of the Orthodox Church towards the Gospel of divine love for humankind, in a context in which secularised laity and religious pluralism, the permanent threat of fragmentation and the desire for unity coexist and sometimes confront one another. In the process of the European-building, the Churches must equally avoid isolation and dissolution, that is, they have to find and bring their specific contribution, deepening their liturgical and spiritual life. The main point is that every Church will find in the new Europe what she herself brought to it.

Chapter XIV, "Truth and Morality in Our Days", by Emiliya Velikova, tries to find an answer to the crisis of our contemporary times, which may be formulated, in a nutshell, as the loss of spirituality in the contemporary epoch and the establishment of the domination of material

over spiritual values. Inspired by Ricoeur and Mounier, the chapter insists on the personalisation of man and of the cosmos. The vocation of the human being is to grow as a person and to personalise his world, to transform it according to the highest spiritual values, infusing the light of the spirit into it. Despite the infinite varieties of its possible modes, vocation is always related to a creative activity through which the person transforms the living world in a direction illuminated by the highest spiritual values. In this way, it always requires an active presence of the person in the world, a sense of morality and responsibility and a readiness to follow this, regardless of the problems and discomforts which this might entail. That requires a constant presence in truth and the courage to reveal and confirm it in one's life, in spite of all possible risks and inconveniences.

Chapter XV, "Truth and Goodness; Culture and Morality", by George McLean, states that morality has come to be considered a limitation of human freedom. It therefore tries to change the negative perception of truth and morality nowadays and does this in three stages: first, in the context of the being and its transcendental properties, such as unity, truth and good; secondly, from the perspective of objectivity; thirdly, from the perspective of subjectivity. The sphere of activity for truth and good is a dynamic and creative one wherein man is present as well, and which involves two dimensions, a subjective and an objective one. The relation between truth and morality enriches itself considerably there where these two dimensions are kept tied together. Such a relation may ensure the possibilities for man's living in a world of values, in the spirit of virtues, keeping and renewing his own cultural and religious tradition.

Discussions II: Humanity between the Political Order and Moral Law

In the first part of the discussion, Wilhelm Dancă asked how it is possible to have a dialogue between politics and morality. The answer formulated by Anton Carpinschi was that the public-private relation must be seen as a continuum. Hu Yeping reasserted Abelardo Lobato's idea that ethics must come before politics and insisted on the fact that common good comprises both the public good and the private. Valeriu Marius Ciucă mentioned the state of confusion regarding truth and morality and the blockage of communication between people. Gabriela Blebea-Nicolae elaborated on the relation between truth and dialogue, showing that dialogue is needed when there is no certainty about one truth. It is also important that the dialogue be real, elegant and open in order to accept the truth. Emiliya Velikova noticed that dialogue must be preceded by the desire to understand the other, by respect for the other's culture and tradition. Abelardo Lobato emphasised that the dialogue between truth and morality at the level of institutions is a timely and not just a fashionable one. And to avoid carrying out a dialogue of the deaf, the conversation must lead to a unity of ideas or problems, and as such, it has to take place among competent persons. Gabriela Blebea-Nicolae spoke about the dialogue with

ourselves, which she defined with a term borrowed from Aristotle, namely deliberation. In order to have a better dialogue, it has to stay open, that is, to preserve the Platonic, maieutical style. Isidor Chinez made the distinction between the ways in which the Church and the civil society carry out a dialogue. The Church announces the religious truth, taking into account the human person, whereas the civil society exposes itself to the risk of utilitarianism or to the interests that affect the dialogue. Anton Carpinschi showed that the dialogue between truth and morality at the public or private level should not be just elegant and aesthetic, but also firm. Zbigniew Wendland opined that dialogue is not a difficult thing; on the contrary, it is a characteristic of the human being.

In the second part of the discussion the debate focused on the relation between the various hypostases of the human being in the public space, more precisely on the relation between person, individual and citizen. Lucian Farcaş made a comparison between the public space and the space of theatrical performances, showing that the true identities are in the backstage, not on the stage. Valeriu Marius Ciucă emphasised that such a dialogue is not possible because man is a slave of time nowadays; he is consumed by *Chronos*. Hu Yeping noticed that dialogue is possible if a harmonious society is promoted, just as in the Confucian tradition, and if man is ready not just to tell the truth, but also to hear it. Anton Carpinschi made a distinction between the hypostasis of the individual, which pertains to the biological sphere, that of the citizen, which implies the superior phase of the political level and the hypostasis of the person, which brings into discussion the notion of creature and freedom. Gabriela Blebea-Nicolae made similar distinctions, mentioning that we are present in statistics as individuals, have rights and obligations as citizens of a state and become persons from the moral perspective. But most important of all is to have our own individuality. Emiliya Velikova elaborated on the idea of person, underlying the open and potential character of the human being from a personal point of view.

A participant present at the discussions spoke about the mathematical dimension of truth, saying that the logical-mathematical analysis of this concept reached the discouraging conclusion that we cannot even establish the last grain of truth. Another participant pointed out three necessary conditions for dialogue: space, time and openness towards the other.

The open character of the ideas presented here, the elegance of the dialogue generated by them, as well as the somehow provisional form of the articles in this volume confirm the timeliness and difficulty of the theme of "Truth and Morality in Public Life".

Wilhelm Dancă

PART I

TRUTH

CHAPTER I

THE CULTURE OF RECOGNITION AND THE HORIZONS OF TRUTH

ANTON CARPINSCHI

Focused on the dynamic of the relations between truth and acknowledgment, this study brings forward the following series of hypotheses: 1) between "the essence of truth," as revelation and referential experience, cognitive and moral supreme resort, and the various embodiments of partial, temporary and relative truths, there is an operational space of thinking and acting, favorable to the comprehensive truths, as we call them; 2) within the unceasing aspiration of overcoming the partial truths and asymptotical closeness to "the essence of truth," the comprehensive truth is the awakening of one'sconscience haunted by worries and doubts, which, through the quests for faith and reason, becomes capable of recognition or acknowledgment; 3) from an extended existential point of view, the comprehensive truth is acknowledgment or recognition of the axiological and moral field; 4) if by means of comprehension we acknowledge something or someone, then comprehension and acknowledgment interact, and the path towards a culture of acknowledgment can be realized by living the comprehensive truth as a truth of acknowledgment oriented to understanding and communication; 5) the path towards a culture of recognition implies the establishment and implementation of a human model, a real challenge for each of us. The anthropological model that this study suggests starts from the dynamic of the hypostases of the human. According to this model, human nature, as the natural essence of what is human, and the human condition of moral and spiritual fulfillment, meet in the human essence synthesized in what Pope John Paul II called "the acting person."[1] In the development of the real human being, a fallible and creative being, through the dynamic of his hypostasis, we come to a comprehensive truth regarding the human being, a truth on which the culture of acknowledgment is founded. Moreover, the main idea of our *demarche* is that between acknowledgment and comprehension there is a deep, organic connection for the comprehensive truth that lies at the basis of the culture of acknowledgment.

The reasoning of these hypotheses is structured in the present study as follows: I) the horizons of truth and the need for comprehension, II) the comprehensive truth as truth of acknowledgment, III) the fallible being, the

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[1] Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, 1980; also the French translation: *Personne en acte*, Éditions du Centurion, Paris 1983; the title of the original work in Polish is *Osoba I czyn*.

hypostases of the human and the comprehensive truth, IV) comprehension and truth: towards a culture of acknowledgment. This means that after drifting briefly through the "ins and outs of truth" in the theory of knowledge, with the help of the interactions among anxiety, doubt, faith, and reason, we will rebuild that condition of self-conscience which, through the understanding and recognition or acknowledgment of someone or something and through the orientation towards communication and communion, acquires the name of comprehensive truth. Then, starting from the hypostases of the human, we will elaborate an anthropological model which defines the fallible human being, author of the comprehensive truth oriented towards the culture of acknowledgment. The infallible person, free from worries and doubts, which live in revelations and truth, is an ideal pattern. The fallible person is the one, who, by living the comprehensive truths, trains his ability to acknowledge, first his own fallibility, thus aspiring to a culture of acknowledgment.

THE HORIZONS OF TRUTH AND THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSION

Research in the field of logic and epistemology has contributed to the accretion of a rich description of truth which contains a series of important aspects of truth: its nature, criteria, dimensions, types, etc. The correlation to reality, the verifying of the coherence of reasoning to the accretion of a rich description of truth which contains a series of important aspects of truth: its nature, criteria, dimensions, types, etc. The correlation to reality, the verifying of the coherence of reasoning, the obtaining of success have opened horizons of expression, at the same time forming criteria for the validation of truth. In this respect, it is not by coincidence that we come to speak of truth-correlation, truth-coherence, and truth-utility. Experience, faith, and reason have become sources and ways of truth, each by itself. At the same time, truth has acquired different forms: *a priori* and *a posteriori*, analytical and synthetical, absolute and relative, abstract and concrete, theoretical and empirical, formal and experimental; and according to the existential recordings, it may have a factual, logical, scientific, artistic, philosophical or religious manifestation.

The semantic theory of truth elaborated by Alfred Tarski provides rich direction in the search for truth, more precisely his method of systematic formalization of the relations between expressions and the objects they designate. Through the understanding of the logical consequence as the transmitting of truth and the rehabilitation of the notion of truth through correlation, Tarski introduced a realistic spirit in the field of logic, often haunted by the excesses of coherentism and by a sterile formalism. On this road opened by Tarski, Hans Herzberger revealed the semantic aspect of the *alethic* dimensions by explaining away the assumptions of meaning that go along with the fact of correlation, and turning it into a possible reality. This way, semantic competence has been

introduced, truth having the meaning of correlation and semantic competence. The distinction within the field of semantics between the theory of meaning and the theory of reference allows for the study of the referential dimensions of truth. The idea of correlation itself constitutes a referential dimension of truth, with different degrees. Following in the same direction, Petre Botezatu demonstrated that the four *alethic* dimensions (correlation, representation, reference and information) require an evaluation system which leads in the end to a synthetic definition of truth as, "evaluation of the degree of correlation between the set of representations and the set of objects, a correlation endowed with representative capacity, referential force and information transport"[2]. The integration of the semantic dimensions of truth within a conceptual system permits the re-evaluation of the theory of the truth-correlation, within the epistemological context of the complementarity of the theories of correlation, coherence and utility.

The variety and incompleteness of the perspectives of the search for truth for truth brings us to questions of hermeneutics, development and interpretation, and "the circle of comprehension", very important in the methodology of reasoning in philosophy and socio-human sciences. As already said, the circularity of comprehension sends us back to the human being and to the *tout ensemble* of the forms of his coming to be. Comprehension developed the theory of knowledge not only towards the hermeneutic universe, but also in the direction of phenomenology and ontology. Inaugurated in the vocabulary of the modern post-Kantian theory of knowledge of the emancipation of the socio-human sciences, "the comprehension of comprehension" has evolved through the "universal hermeneutics," or Schleiermacher's science of comprehension, Dilthey's historical hermeneutics, M. Weber's comprehensive sociology and, afterwards, through the opening of Heidegger's, Ricoeur's and Gadamer's hermeneutics to phenomenology and ontology to a comprehension perceived as universal human element and, most basically, as the human element in "the production of works," the structure of the means of being human.

In the context of these developments in the theory of knowledge in accordance to hermeneutics, phenomenology and ontology, and starting from the set of hypotheses we have already mentioned, we wish to delineate a theory of the culture of acknowledgment founded on the comprehensive truth perceived as acknowledgment-truth as practiced by the fallible human being. It is a known fact that, within the socio-human knowledge of late modernity, the hermeneutical exegeses, the relativist-contextual intercessions, and the systemic epistemology of complexity have developed increasingly. In the context of an intellectual, anti-positivist atmosphere, the

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[2] Petre Botezatu, "Dimensiunile adevărului", in: *Adevăruri despre adevăr* (Petre Botezatu, editor), Editura Junimea, Iaşi 1981, 47.

comprehensive approaches become more popular[3]. In our opinion, the heterogeneity of the meaningful socio-human facts, the interdependency of the subject and object of knowledge and action, the knowledge acquired through the synthetic intuition and lived experience, the emphatic attitude of holding the subject responsible, the sensibility regarding the ecological, historical, and multicultural contexts, the analysis of contradictions, and the assumption of paradoxes concerning the socio-human complexity, the preeminence of qualitative analyses, all turn the comprehensive paradigm into an adequate analytical model, characterized by a graduated way of thinking, regardful of the consequences and side-slips of the hyper-rationalism, determinism, or historicism, especially in the era of the postmodern challenges.

Engendered by the search through faith and reason, constantly haunted by worries and doubt, the comprehensive truth coagulates the self-conscience, the trust in us, and our own confirmation through acknowledgment and communication with others. Developed within the horizon of personal self-conscience, the way to the self-recognizing truth and recognition of others implies the constant meeting between faith and reason, because, as we read in the first lines of the encyclical letter, *Fides et ratio*, "Faith and reason are similar to two wings by means of which the human soul soars to the contemplation of truth. God is the One who placed the desire of knowing Him so that, by knowing and loving Him he may discover the whole truth about himself"[4]. The path of the truth towards the whole truth about one's self is, after all, the road of the comprehensive truth through faith and reason lived by the self-conscience, through "the dirt of the philosophical truth" and "the memory of the theological truth"[5], constantly entwining.

In one of his aphorisms, Lucian Blaga said that philosophy was the flat symbol of life since it lowers its tone with a semitone, thus passing onto a thicker register. Going back to a paraphrase we used in a previous study[6], we could make the following affirmations: the philosophical conscience is, in its own turn, "the flat symbol of philosophy" because, in its complex psycho-spiritual condition, it is manifest in a state of maximum lucidity

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[3] John R. Searle, *Realitatea ca proiect social,* Polirom, Iaşi 2000; Gary King, Robert Keohane, Sydney Verba, *Fundamentele cercetării sociale*, Polirom, Iaşi 2000; *Dicţionar al metodelor calitative în ştiinţele umane şi sociale,* (edited by Alex Mucchielli), Polirom, Iaşi 2002; Ronald F. King, *Strategia cercetării Treisprezece cursuri despre elementele ştiinţelor sociale*, Polirom, Iaşi 2005.

[4] John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Fides et ratio*, Editura Presa Bună, Iaşi 1999, 3.

[5] Wilhelm Dancă, *Fascinaţia adevărului de la Toma de Aquino la Anton Durcovici*, Editura Sapienia, Iaşi 2005.

[6] Anton Carpinschi, "Nevoia de filosofie şi polictică în lumea de astăzi", in *Dialog teologic* 13 (2004)19-30.

regarding the value of the various processes of philosophy. The philosophic conscience is "when it comes to live and in the place it reaches fulfillment, a product of the supreme vigilance of the human being, ... it is 'something' permanently requiring to be done, very rarely something already done and taken once and for all as an alleged 'canon', which should only become aware of its own existence"[7]. As from the self-conscience, the philosophical conscience is the attempt of the human being, as a rational being, to become wiser and more comprehensive. What we want to do here is to draw a parallel between philosophical conscience and comprehension. As a personal act of rational living and understanding the other, the philosophical conscience watches over the path of reflection towards reasonable acceptance of the differences by means of facing up to the responsibilities and acknowledgments of our own limits. Counter-balancing the dangerous, amoral side-slips of the "science with no conscience," the manipulator of ideologies and propaganda, or various fundamentalisms, the philosophic conscience as the acting comprehension manifests "in the natural light of reason," involving the ability to understand and interpret, judge and discern.

Provoked by worries and anxieties, fears and doubts from within and outside it, the human being moves itself, taking on the charge of attending to the soul through faith and reason. In this work, there are various ways of knowing and adjusting to the world: the objective cognition of reality by means of scientific acquisitions, subjective cognition by means of artistic creation and aesthetic experience, cognition through faith, revelation and adjustment of the human being to Divine perfection. Through science, we come to know the causes and effects in the light of reason and, according to these we project and build the technologies guaranteeing our welfare and comfort. Through art, we live aesthetic experiences and moods that facilitate the understanding of others and of ourselves. Through cognition and experience "in the supernatural light of faith," as limited beings, we relate to the Divine Referential, for, as Thomas of Aquinas says: "It was necessary for the human being, in order to be redeemed, to discover what lies beyond human reason, with the help of divine revelation (…). Thus beyond the philosophical disciplines studied by means of reason, it is necessary for the human being to receive the Divine doctrine through revelation"[8], for "there is no impediment for any another science to study these things, according to the way they are revealed in light of the divine revelation, the same things which are developed by the philosophical disciplines to the extent to which they are knowable in the light of natural reason"[9]. The impersonal neutrality of science in search of the objective truth, the sensibility of the aesthetic experience in the artistic

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[7] Lucian Blaga, *Despre conştiinţa filosofică,* Editura Facla, Cluj-Napoca 1974, 172-173.

[8] Thomas of Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, 1, 1.

[9] *Ibidem*.

set, or the religious faith or the revelation of the Absolute Person of God, cannot exclude the philosophical conscience, the comprehensive action of the human being as person, his interrogations and questionings of the intellectual and moral condition of man, of the virtues and limits of the philosophical reflection. By ruling out scientism, the platitudes of propaganda, and the ambitions of fanaticism, the philosophic conscience is a comprehensive act of understanding and acknowledgment of our own limits and, at the same time, openness towards new horizons of knowledge and action, governed by wisdom.

The exactitude of the philosophical conscience as a comprehensive act seems important today, in a world characterized by "the crisis of meaning," by the disintegration of knowledge, by the relativization of values, and by the terrible experience of evil. Faced with the ambiguities of eclecticism, the relativism of historicism, the seeming sufficiency of scienticism, the disintegrating negativism of nihilism, philosophy should not allow itself to be attracted into abandoning the question of "the nature of things," of moral devotion and responsibility, relegating reason to the instrumental functions and depriving it of the wise dimension of metaphysics and axiology, and the openings towards transcendence, meaning and value. That is exactly why, since it is sensitive to openness, difference, dialogue and complementarity, philosophical conscience is manifested as an awakening of self-conscience through the dialogue with the other, and thus as an act of comprehension.

COMPREHENSIVE TRUTH AS TRUTH OF RECOGNITION OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

An important idea of our study is that there is a deep and original relation between comprehension and acknowledgment, which stands at the basis of the configuration of comprehensive truths. Comprehension implies acknowledgment, and in its own turn, acknowledgment implies comprehension. If by means of comprehension, we acknowledge someone or something, and by acknowledging, we realize comprehension, then comprehension and acknowledgment interact organically. Not accidentally, this interpretation is included in the Latin etymology of the word itself, which lays stress on both the literal (to take, to contain something) and the figurative meaning: to comprehend with the soul and mind, to understand and feel with somebody[10].

In our opinion, the two meanings of the word comprehension can be found in the two levels of the comprehensive truth. The first is the truth by acknowledgment: the extensional level, which is to be observed in the informational-cognitive order applying to the comprehension by means of

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[10] The Latin verb, *comprehendo, -dere, -di, -sum* (made up of *cum* and *prehendo*), means to grab, to take, to cover, to show, to count, but also to understand, that is to comprehend something with the soul and the mind.

the power of the mind, and thus to the neutral acknowledgment of elements, features, distinctive dimensions of an object, processes, entities and concepts. Secondly, there is the intensive level, which is to be observed in the axiological and moral recognition of common experience and emotional resonance.

From the informational-cognitive perspective, acknowledgment has less axiological, juridical, or moral connotation. To focus from a cognitive point of view is on the transmission, reception and increase of the number and quality of the information and amount of knowledge. Informational acknowledgment implies the intervention of memory, by means of which the conscience identifies the object of an actual representation with an object previously perceived. In face, we are talking here of a closeness between perception and memory, which helps the studying of a reality in order to determine its content, features and becoming. In this informational and neutral direction, we are speaking of the acknowledgment itself of a person or place, with no emotional connotations, of the acknowledgment of the road before an official race, of the military action of acknowledging the field, of the recognition of a book, as an object, of a title, a text or a song, etc.

The deeper level is the intensional level. Here comprehension means the acknowledgment of something or of someone by means of the power of going beyond the meaning and understanding the spiritual and inward senses of human action, co-living through empathy, self-overcoming and self-objectifying of the ego, transposition in the position of the other. Practiced on the intensive level of living similar experiences, comprehension means acknowledgment of the principles, norms and values of the other. This means that, besides informational acknowledgment and comprehension on the cognitive level, there are also other types of acknowledgment, axiological, juridical, and moral, according to the depth and register of manifestation of comprehension.

Thus, in an axiological context, acknowledgment allows for the evaluation and recognition of the value of someone or something, from the professional, political, economical, religious, artistic and athletic point of view. This implies appreciating and validating the competences, abilities and performances of a person or group according to their activity field; evaluating the amount and quality of the information, demonstrations or style of a text, whether religious, scientific, literary or philosophical; the appreciation of cultural acquisitions and of the political, economic, religious, and artistic experiences of the various types of societies. Axiological acknowledgment goes beyond the informational one, but is not confounded with moral acknowledgment. We can both acknowledge or appreciate somebody from professional, political, economic, artistic, or athletic points of view, without acknowledging him also on a moral level. Life has been and continues to be the witness of the activity developed by some important persons from professional, political, economic, or artistic points of view, but far from the standards of *minima moralia*. The degrees

of axiological acknowledgment vary according to the value of the work or activity in question, of the field of activity, spatial-temporal coordinates, etc.. Thus, acknowledgment is recognized at local, national, regional and international levels. It is a known fact that the processes of establishing and evaluating hierarchies are among the most complex and controversial human activities, often giving birth to a genuine turbulence of egos, jealousies and animosities.

From a juridical perspective, acknowledgment means the institutionalization of someone or of something, accepting the legal status of a person, a political or confessional-religious group, a sexual, ethnic or generational one, etc., the official acknowledgment of a particular situation legally unacknowledged up to that moment. The juridical acknowledgment of someone or something does not automatically imply the axiological acknowledgment and, least of all, the moral acknowledgment of that person or thing. Of all the forms of acknowledgment, the juridical type seems to be the closest to toleration. A particular person might not agree with homosexual behavior or with certain exotic cultural models, but as long as these do not interfere with the freedom and security of others, do not represent a public danger, and do not threaten the democratic society, they begin to be accepted and legalized in the societies with a well-founded democracy. Somebody might particularly agree with the doctrines and practices of some fundamentalist or extremist parties and groups, beyond the debatable character, this personal option is sanctioned as such, from a juridical point of view supposing its political materialization. The criminal character of activities eliminates the extremist parties and political orientations in the legally acknowledged political framework.

The religious acknowledgment of a person or group, outside its own religion, but of a non-fundamentalist type, first requires juridical acknowledgment. Of course, we may also speak of an axiological or moral acknowledgment of various degrees, even though we do not belong or adhere to that particular religion. If somebody does not admit the doctrinal truth of a certain religion or confession, this does not mean that he cannot accept the legal acknowledgment of that religion or confession, if these do not interfere with the governing principles and democratic practices. From a legal point of view, religious acknowledgment of a group means the institutionalization of that group, the juridical acknowledgment of the organization and religious practices of the group in question.

According to the moral meaning, acknowledging someone or something implies, according to the situation, acceptance, consideration, admiration, respect for that someone or something. Moral acknowledgment is, after all, the maximum of comprehensive power and, implicitly, the realization of the human condition, the fulfillment of the human being as a person. Moral acknowledgment focuses on moral conscience, and professional, political, economic and athletic skills. Even at the expense of losses at the level of axiological or juridical acknowledgment, moral acknowledgment remains the sign of achieving the human condition. A

defeat on the battlefield or in the tumult of the professional, political or artistic skills might turn into a moral victory, if the human being rises to the level of the human condition by starting from the acknowledgment of his own limits and mistakes and then admitting the other's superiority. The lesson of moral acknowledgment is characterized by discernment and correctness, spiritual growth, and self-overcoming.

The word "acknowledgment" also has other meanings. Acknowledgment can be classified into three types: reflexive, active and passive. First, we speak of reflexive acknowledgment because, in the context of forming self-awareness and the formation of the personality, the reflexive moment of self-comprehensive truths, self-discovery and recognition are also validated through discovering and acknowledging the other. In some circumstances, before acknowledging something or someone, it is necessary to discover ourselves and to be able to acknowledge our own qualities and limits as much as possible. The ideal would be to pass on to the evaluation of others only after having passed through the reflexive moment of self-acknowledgment, as honestly and correctly as possible. The honest acknowledgment of our own limits and mistakes implies, at the same time, courage on the part of the person in question and trust in the critical judgment, the discernment and understanding of others.

Acknowledgment implies the active moment: to acknowledge someone or something, and the passive one, being acknowledged by someone. Consequently, acknowledgment can be nonreciprocal or reciprocal. It is nonreciprocal when it goes only one way, either actively or passively. You acknowledge someone, but that someone does not acknowledge you, or someone acknowledges you, but you do not acknowledge him. For example, A acknowledges B as being a good professional, but B does not acknowledge A's professional qualities. In this situation, we have a nonreciprocal acknowledgment, going one way. We speak of reciprocal acknowledgment, bringing together the active and passive moments, when the acknowledgment goes both ways: one acknowledges and is being acknowledged.

Another distinction with important social and political consequences can be seen from the perspective of the number of actors involved: interpersonal and inter-group acknowledgment, with important social and political consequences, on several levels: informational, axiological, juridical, moral or religious. The big political issues (of acceptance, projection and construction of a new culture of acknowledgment) are raised by minority groups, when it comes to the relations among them or with the majority, when problems and distinctive interests arise among different groups. The passage from the interpersonal to the inter-group level leads to more and more complex problems.

The extensional and intensive levels of comprehension and comprehensive truth show us the richness of meanings and nuances of acknowledgment as a psycho-social fact and process. However, the

experience of acknowledgment implies, as I was saying, a particular human type. The real person, aware of his own fallibility, is able to acknowledge the other, thus becoming a carrier of the comprehensive truth. How would such a human type appear to us? How could we form the profile of this actor of the comprehensive truth and of the culture of acknowledgment?

FALLIBLE MAN, THE HUMAN PERSON, HYPOSTASES AND COMPREHENSIVE TRUTH

The model of the hypostases of the human person is the expression of a comprehensive truth born through the understanding of the fact that the human being lives in an anthropological field functioning as a matrix of his distinctive nature. Conceived as a totality due to the dynamic of its complementary and concurrent elements, according to interdisciplinary research in the last decades, anthropology brings together: the genetic system (genetic code, genotype), the brain (the phenotypic epicenter), the social-cultural system (phenomenal-generative system), the ecosystem (ecological niche, environment)[11]. The ecosystem controls the genetic code, the brain and society; the genetic system produces the brain, which enables the development of cultural complexity and society. In its own turn, the social-cultural system brings up to date the capacities and abilities of the brain, modifies the ecosystem, and acts upon the selection and genetic evolution. This means that, from a scientific point of view, any sequence of human behavior manifests itself in anthropology, presenting a genetic, cerebral, social, cultural, and eco-systematic dimension. From a philosophical point of view, this means that the human being is a multidimensional being and that human nature is not exclusively genetic or cultural. Multidimensional, circumstantial, plastic and creative, the human being can be considered to be also a genetico-cerebro-socio-cultural system whose organic epicenter is the brain, the real "bio-cultural revolving base plate" by means of which the individual organism, the genetic system, the eco-systemic environment or the social-cultural system communicate. As integrating center of the anthropological field, the brain of *Homo sapiens* permits the communication between the biological and the cultural, conferring particularly to the human nature and, thus, openness to its other hypostases.

As an ever-changing interaction of abilities, conditions and necessities, human nature is dynamic and contradictory. One" key to human nature lies in its variety," John W. Chapman wrote. "Our nature is plastic and impressionable. We symbolize self modeled cultural artifacts. Or, better said, our nature is a mixture of tendencies and features, constantly

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[11] Edgar Morin, *Paradigma pierdută: natura umană*, Editura Universității "Al.I.Cuza", Iași 1999.

confronted by a variety of circumstances and meanings"[12]. Instinctual and intellective, optimistic and pessimistic, constructive and destructive, ordered and orderless, heroic and coward, tragic and comical, human beings display an amazing variety that cannot be understood on the basis of a simple and rigid principle of unity, but only from an ensemble of generating principles in the various historical contexts. Human beings are always paradoxical and unpredictable because of the cleavages formed between the biological-genetic substratum, the richness of the brainwork and of physical experiences, social plurality, and the diversity of groups of interest. Human nature is a dynamic reality that expresses the natural essence of what is human. It has been shaped during the process of humanization through the exigencies of survival and selection.

Human nature, plastic and innovative, intelligent and amoral, leads the human being to different forms of manifestation and adaptation. The consequences and social risks associated with this fact, unimportant when compared to the moral and right values, disclose the limits of human nature. Moreover, by observing the implacable rules of nature, the human person remains a limited and dependent being, precisely because of his nature. The agonizing consciousness of his finitude and the emotion when facing death gives birth to the "thirst for immortality" of the human being, the subjective conscience founded on faith in the spiritual values of transcendence and trans-mortality. "Facing death," the documents of the Second Vatican Council admonishes, "the enigma of the human condition reaches its climax (…). The seed of eternity it bears in itself rebels against death, incapable of being reduced to materiality"[13] and, through divine revelation, the human being discovers that, being created by God for a blessed purpose, he was endowed with the dignity of moral conscience whose foundation consists in man's call to communion with the everlasting God.

From what has been said until now, we may infer that the transcendental meaning of human existence cannot be understood from the perspective of human nature exclusively. In his aspirations to spirituality, the human being assumes and overcomes his nature. In fact, since the appearance of the "anthropological breach," the human being has made the first step towards the dissociation of his spiritual destiny from his natural one. Understood simply cooperatively as implacable and objective, human nature could not gain an insight into the world of ethical values, of spiritual freedom and personal decisions. The human being can only deal with transcendence by aspiring to the state of the maximum axiological and spiritual altitude of the human condition. Exploring the depth of conscience,

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[12] John W. Chapman, *Towards a General Theory of Nature and Dynamics,* in: *Human Nature in Politics*, "Nomos" XVII (edited by J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman), New York University Press, New York 1977, 293

[13] *Gaudium et spes*, in *Conciliul Vatican II*, Editura Arhiepiscopia Romano-Catolică, Bucureşti 1990, 336.

man discovers "a law he doesn't put up himself, but which he must observe and whose voice reverberates at the right time in the ear of the heart, ceaselessly calling him to love, to perform good actions and avoid bad ones: Do this, avoid doing that!"[14]. Only through an "inner meeting within the spiritual experience" can man become better, more human and reach human fulfillment.

Immanent in his protean nature, transcendental through his spiritual condition, the human being fully comes to fruition as "person in act" within social life. The human essence is realized in praxis. The problems every society faces unleash the potential of human nature, at the same time calling for the principles and values of the human condition. The meeting between nature and the human condition takes place within action, within the great systems of socio-human activity. Each of these systems of activity fulfilling the human essence constitutes, at the same time, conditions for the existence of any human community. This way, every community exists and multiplies (the biosocial system); lives and organizes its space, coexisting with other species (the eco-social system); commercializes the goods it produces (the economic system); creates and assimilates cultural values (the cultural system); shares information, images, symbols interposing between the parts and at the same time mediating (the communications system); controlling groups of interest, social rapports and orienting the collective actions according to who is in power (the political system). We see that each of the existing conditions of a human society is the context of the appearance of the corresponding social system. Each of these systems performs specific functions through specific means, but also through the interaction with other systems. Though autonomous, social systems are not "independent entities," "essences" or "metaphysical substances," but ensembles of activities interacting in the actual totality of a global society, both autonomous and interdependent, stable social systems together constitute the global society manifesting a complex "integron" (François Jacob), with the multi-finality propriety.[15] In this social context (social-global, societal), the human essence appears in part as the effective result of nature and the human condition.

Nature, condition, and essence shape the profile of the fallible man as "person in act." However, only as an actor of comprehensive truth as truth of acknowledgment is the fallible man able to admit his own limits and the value of the other, at the same time, aspiring to a culture of acknowledgment. The long and difficult journey from admission to the

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[14] *Ibid.*, 335.

[15] Anton Carpinschi, "Inovaţia socială şi puterea politică – fundamente pentru o paradigmă anti-utopică", in Jean-William Lapiere, *Viaţă fără stat?,* Institutul European, Iaşi, 1977; from the same author, the study: "Paradigma complexităţii şi sistemul acţiunii concrete", in *Mentalităţi şi instituţii. Carenţe de mentalitate şi înapoiere instituţională în România* (edited by Adrian-Paul Iliescu), Editura Ars Docenti, Universitatea Burcureşti, 2002, 319-338.

culture of acknowledgment implies comprehension and truth involving fallible man.

COMPREHENSION AND TRUTH: TOWARDS A CULTURE OF RECOGNITION OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By means of the corroboration of the meanings of the term acknowledgment, we can identify two important forms of the process of acknowledgment: one limited or partial; and the other global or multidimensional. When we speak about limited or partial acknowledgment, we refer to nonreciprocal, interpersonal, informational, axiological and/or juridical acknowledgment. Limited to certain meanings and levels, incomplete and fragile, partial acknowledgment still is far from a true culture of acknowledgment. In our opinion, the journey towards the culture of acknowledgment marks the process of passage to the reciprocal acknowledgment. That is on the informational, axiological, juridical, moral, and religious level. The acknowledgment that at the level of community reaches the stature of culture of acknowledgment implies a systematic process, which takes a long time, has difficulties, and in which comprehension does not have only a cognitive-informational role anymore, but also a moral and practical one.

As culture of a matured humanity, the culture of recognition acknowledgment judges the diversity of the levels and meanings of culture (philosophical, sociological and anthropological), melting them into a concept of synthesis. Thus, it manages to comprise almost all the products of the human collectivities by means of which the conscious transformation of the natural and social environment takes place. Culture turns into a culture of acknowledgment the moment it can communicate on the interpersonal and inter-group level in social, ethnic, religious, professional and generational different environments. The culture of recognition or acknowledgment is a system arranging the different life expressions, the necessary correlation of existential, dynamic and often contradictory contents. In this context, we should mention the constructive role of critics in the projection and forming of a culture of acknowledgment. Authentic acknowledgment, interpersonal or inter-group, axiological, juridical or moral implies the judgment and critical evaluation from the perspective of the permanent activation of discernment. We could say that, if somebody does not pass through the process of critical judgment on the professional or artistic level, he is not acknowledged.

The culture of acknowledgment is a real multidimensional and synthesizing concept of culture. As an inner reality marking "the journey of the soul towards itself,"[16] implicitly "the process of progressive self-

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[16] Georg Simmel, "Despre filosofia culturii", in *Cultura filosofică. Sexe şi criza modernului*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti 1998, 209.

deliverance of man"[17] and construction through language, art, religion and science, the culture of acknowledgment necessarily relates to nature, society and human becoming. In addition, this provides the philosophical concept of culture of acknowledgment with emancipation. From a behavioral perspective, the culture of acknowledgment may be seen as a "configuration of learned behaviors and of their results," [18] shared and transmitted to the members of a society. In a sociological sense, culture designates the "values, norms and material goods specific for a certain group."[19] In other words, through the totality of its products, the society is the favorable environment for a culture of acknowledgment. Having as the actor the fallible creative man, the culture of acknowledgment is a whole, which comprises the language, art, customs, and traditions, knowledge, different mentalities, religious beliefs and principles achieved by man in a social context. As far as the origin of the cultural products is concerned, we consider the *culturelogical* point of view initiated by Kroeber and Kluckholm[20], according to which culture, and so the culture of acknowledgment, does not only refer to behavior, but it also to an unsubstantial, super-organic, symbolical reality, creating new structures, meanings and models for action and thought.

The concomitant use in various contexts (literal-figurative, subjective-objective) or from complementary scientific perspectives (sociological, psychological, ethnological, anthropological, historical, political, etc) turns the multidimensional concept of the culture of acknowledgment into one of synthesis. In fact, in an attempt to systematize it, Raymond Williams distinguished three important directions: 1) the general process of intellectual, spiritual and esthetical development; 2) the particular way of living of a nation, era, group or humanity, in general; 3) the works and practices of intellectual and, most of all, artistic activities filtered through time[21]. We can observe the interpenetration of contexts and meanings, which we will call psycho-educational, ethno-sociological, and historic-axiological. The psycho-educational process shows the degree of instruction and socialization of the individual; the ethno-sociological context focuses on the indestructible connections between culture and the social group; and the historic-axiological one shows culture as a synthesis of values and historical fact. We can discern here the logical-historical articulations of the culture of acknowledgment constituted in the space-time of the becoming of the social pluralism and of the maturation of

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[17] Ernst Cassirer, *Eseu despre om. O introducere in filsosfia culturii umane*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti 1994, 314.

[18] Ralph Linton, *Fundamentul cultural al personalităţii,* Editura Ştiinţifîcă, Bucureşti 1968, 72

[19] Anthony Giddens, *Sociologie*, Editura All, Bucureşti 2001, 624.

[20] Anthony Giddens, *Sociologie*, Editura All, Bucureşti 2001, 624.

[21] Alfred L. Kroeber, C. Kluckholm, *Culture, A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, New York, Vintage Books, Random House, 1963.

multicultural collectivities. This way, the culture of acknowledgment appears as a cultural synthesis of a matured humanity[22]. When we speak of cultural synthesis, we think of the force and synthesizing vocation and culture and, particularly, of the peace-making reconciling, and synthesizing ability of the culture of acknowledgment in an experimental and wiser community of fallible men.

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[22] Anton Carpinschi, "Cultură" in *Dicţionar de genetică literară* (Bogdan S. Pîrvu, coord.), Institutul European, Iaşi 2005.

CHAPTER II

THE UNCEASING TEMPTATION OF THE LIE AND MAN'S HUNGER FOR TRUTH

ISIDOR CHINEZ

"In the beginning, there was …" the truth

"You shall not lie!" This moral absolute of the natural law is expressed in the divine positive law, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." In fact, this is the eighth of the Ten Commandments. Through its negative enunciation it points out man's duty (the Christian included) to always live in the truth, to search for the truth, to realize authentic and coherent rapport with God, with fellow human beings, and with himself. Man's moral attitude is always oriented towards goodness, towards the whole good, towards the absolute equity of a rapport with reality in terms of truth. Any moral value is founded on truth, since goodness does not exist but as the manifestation and splendor of truth. Outside truth, man is in darkness, deprived of one of his fundamental requisites, and ends up by searching for the error and the lie, preferring the evil. That is why the question of truth and falsehood has always been considered of great importance in man's life. "In our minds," Cicero wrote, "there is an insatiable longing for the truth"[1]. Seneca states it very clearly: "What deceives has no durability. The lie is transparent: if you look very carefully, you shall see through it"[2]. And St. Augustine said: "*Quid fortius desiderat anima quam veritatem?*"[3]

Man aspires with all his strength to the truth, which he cannot ignore, since it is searched for and possessed by the intellect for his vital nourishment; this is the cause of his ceaseless hunger for truth. Once he finds the truth, once he acknowledges it, truth does not leave him indifferent, that is free to adhere to it or not, but it provokes him to take a stand, at the same time putting an attractive force on him. Man is measured with and according to truth. All his existence and being receives meaning and value from the truth. Truth gives birth to life: it underlies, conducts and finalizes it. Truth is goodness, a constitutional and final value of the human being. A being for and within truth: this is the human being. Man's acknowledgement of truth and his fidelity to the truth forms a unity inside him, which cannot be broken, if man wishes to be what he is. When the human being comes to know the truth and does not remain faithful to it

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[1] Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes, 1,1.*
[2] Seneca, *Epistulae ad Lucilium*, 79, 16.
[3] Augustin, *Tractatus in Iohann*. XXVI, 5, PL 35, 1609.

during his life, he lives in the lie. This lie intervenes in the very unity of truth and the state of being faithful to it. Thus, the lie is the denial of the known truth, a denial not only at the level of the intellect, but of the whole existence.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION OF THE LIE: THE DENIAL OF THE ONTOLOGICAL TRUTH

From the beginning of his existence man, who developed in truth, is tempted by the lie and denies his ontological original and fundamental truth which defines his being. What exists manifests itself and is perceivable. Man manifests his being and is the manifestation of his essence.

Faithful to the truth within "the word according to the truth," man first tells it to himself and then to others; first to himself, because the first relation, the interior one, is with himself. Therefore, the first lie is the simulation of truth to him after a process of "accommodation" of truth, more or less reflexively. Thus, every lie is self-deceiving, causing a breach inside man. He is no longer in accord with the truth; he is alienated from the image he strives to present of himself and of reality, betraying the truth of his being.

This truth of the being is not a fragmentary one, exposed to some mutable determinations, but it is in relation to the mind that conceived it and whose idea it reflects, in the manner in which every thing reflects the creator's original idea, the author's project. In the last analysis, this mind is God, the subsistent mind and "the perfect truth," the base and source of every particular truth. Thus, the human being is true *in se*, since his intimate essence coincides with God's idea about it[4].

What Is the Truth of the Human Being?

The author of the primary project himself points it out to us. The Scripture teaches us insistently that "God created man to His image: to the image of God, He created the human being" (Gen 1, 27). This theology of the image is the base of what we call the theological analogy, more precisely a cognitive top-down process, from God to the human being, from the Image to the one created to the Image. Thus, the referential point of man – if he wants to be according to God's project – is the Image (the Icon, the Face).

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[4] Cf. Mauro Cozzoli, "Verità e veracità" in F. Compagnoni and G. Piana, eds. *Nuovo Dizionario di Teologia Morale,* Edizioni Paoline, Cinisello Balsamo 1990, 1438. The non-recognition of this immanent and constitutive relation of the ontological truth with the absolute truth means opening the doors of "relativism," where truth loses its objective value, being reduced to opinion.

The sacred text tells us first that God is the Creator, and then that man is creature: his life and existence are in relation with the one who created him; man owes his existence to someone else, and his continuing to exist is related to God. Man is not the Image; he is "to the Image." Therefore, there is a great affinity between him and the Image, but at the same time, also a difference of levels. This means he is not an infinite, but a finite creature; his truth lies in the Image he was created to; he enjoys freedom, but not the absolute freedom of the Image; he enjoys the creature's freedom, a limited and finite one. Thus, man is not free in order to be a different man from the one he is. His ontological truth is to be a finite, limited creature. Since truth is always good, the limit is also good, because it is only through the limitation that the creature fully achieves his relative autonomy.

Knowing and evaluating the finite as finite, man shows that he is not restrained in the finite, but opened to an infinite horizon. "At this point man rises above the animal, whose head does not stand out of the mirror of time. Man swims against the current with the head uncovered, consequently together with the unlimited horizon of the being, of his truth and of the kindness preceding it"[5]. This opening towards the whole and the universal turns man into a free subject. He is not determined by some other as an object, but entrusted to himself in his freedom. He is autonomous. He is "*autokrates*", Gregory of Nyssa would say. Therefore, freedom does not mean being capable of doing this or that action, but the faculty of being entrusted to himself and of being able to decide in a responsible manner for him: his freedom means self-government, autonomy. Man is endowed with this faculty from the very beginning. Freedom is not something that comes to light in a certain moment of our lives, as a consequence of evolution or of some events, but from the very beginning, ontologically qualifying every human life. Every man is already opened to the whole and absolute in virtue of his own human being, and this, in spite of its being finite and of all the determinations. That is why, even from the beginning, man is not a blind object, but a free subject, thus called to bring his own life up-to-date through his responsible "self-government"[6].

However, saying that human freedom turns man into a subject, who autonomously belongs to himself, does not mean that this freedom subsists and is up-dated in itself, in a monadic manner, by refusing to submit to any connection. The absence of any connections could be defined as empty freedom, which would necessarily end up by annulling itself, since it could not be oriented towards and decide upon anything.

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[5] Hans von Balthasar, *Teodramatica. IV. L'Azione,* Jaca Book, Milano 1982, 78.

[6] Cf. Bruno Hidber, *Il peccato, un tradimento della libertà. Prolegomeni di una teologia del peccato,* (pro manuscripto), Accademia Alfonsiana, Roma 1993, 138.

Instead, it is a part of the very essence of freedom that it may orient its opening towards a content which would make it complete and which would correspond to it. This content must be something ample and complete. The target of its orientation cannot be a material object; it can only be someone who is in its own turn a subject. Thus, freedom is oriented towards another freedom. It achieves content since it affirms another freedom, wants to be related to it and in this way connected to it. This requires a double moment within the dynamism of freedom. Freedom means self-determination as opposed to hetero-determination, and self-determination as opposed to indetermination (the agent). Freedom conceived without the goal of determination would be an inadmissible abstraction[7]. Only the will of determination makes self-determination and freedom concrete. Thus, freedom is something completely different from a flight in the air without knowing any bond. That is why "the Lord God commanded man, saying, «Of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it: for in the day that thou eat thereof thou shall surely die»" (Gen 2: 16-17). The commandment is not imposed upon man in order to mortify and alienate him. "God's law does not confine human freedom and so much the less does it eliminate it; on the contrary, it protects and promotes it."[8] It rather tells man that together with his freedom he is placed, not in a place of indifference where everything would be arbitrary, but placed from the very beginning within that tension, in which he is oriented beyond himself towards something that only God can give him. He is asked to decide, to take a stand.

The Content of Man's "Other Freedom"

Human freedom among people is undoubtedly an appropriate content for freedom. Nevertheless, it can never be a fully satisfying content, because the freedom of our fellow beings is also a limited and finite one. Now, the essence of freedom tends to overcome any limitation in its unconditioned opening to the whole. Because of its unconditioned opening, finite freedom is thus connected to a freedom which is, in its own turn, unlimited and unconditioned in its essence. It is only in this unlimited freedom that our limited freedom can find a true completion. In this perspective, human freedom cannot be conceived rationally, but as a freedom correlated with God. In fact, God is the only being we can call infinite, unlimited in his freedom and the One who is still that personal so that we can truly communicate with Him. God's infinite freedom is not a rival, a threat, or an impediment to human freedom, but the one who performs one final possible analysis of human freedom and brings it to

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[7] Cf. Bruno Hidber, *Il peccato, un tradimento della libertà,* 139.
[8] John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Veritatis splendor*, (06. 08. 1993), 35.

perfection[9]. "God's freedom is not revealed as a limit of the human freedom, but as its final base."[10] God himself establishes a relation between His own infinite freedom and man's finite freedom. He, the undetermined, determines Himself not to be God without man. Even here, we can observe the truth of the creation of man "to His image".

The Human – a Paradoxical Being

The reflection on the essence of human freedom reveals the human being as a completely paradoxical figure. He is finite freedom. But the very concept of finite freedom itself seems contradictory: how could someone who stands against his own essential limits not be a prisoner, but free? Since he is endowed with freedom, the man is self-possession (*causa sui*, as St. Thomas would say), entrusted to himself and disposing of himself; since he is finite, he did not give this self-possession to himself, he owes it to someone else, and thus he does not dispose of the base and essence of his own freedom; he can come to be complete in his own freedom only beyond himself.

B. Hidber[11] – (whom I closely follow in the presentation of this argument) – turns to Soren Kierkegaard in order to understand this antinomy of the human being. In *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1849), Kierkegaard sees man as a synthesis of body and soul, time and eternity, limitation and infinity, necessity and possibility. The human being is tension between these two poles, and his destiny resides in his realization of this tension, "in behaving himself with himself within this tension." In the free self-knowledge, man acknowledges now that this situation, this tension between time and eternity, between possibility and necessity (…) has not been created and given by himself, but by someone else, by an "infinite I", by God. This requires man to freely accept himself as an unfulfilled synthesis, as a paradox, in order for him to exist only in God, because He is the power that placed the man in this situation of tension. Therefore, considering his freedom, man acts in a right manner towards himself by "relating himself to God." The opposed attitude is when man want to ignore his own paradoxical synthesis and see himself as the source of his own freedom; Kierkegaard calls it despair. Instead of following the truth of his being, his identity, man loses it. "That I who desperately wants to be, is I which does not exist […] that is, wants to break the own I away from the power which placed it"[12]. This despair is a "deadly disease."

The problem remains open at a theological level, too. B. Hidber turns in this case to the detailed analysis of Henri de Lubac concerning this

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[9] Cf. Bruno Hidber, *Il peccato, un tradimento della libertà,* 140.

[10] Walter Kasper, *Gesù il Cristo,* Queriniana, Brescia 1989[5], 71.

[11] Cf. Bruno Hidber, *Il peccato, un tradimento della libertà,* 142.

[12] Soren Kierkegaard, *Il concetto di angoscia. La malattia mortale,* Sansoni, Firenze 1953, 25.

paradoxical structure of man.[13] The paradox for de Lubac is that the human being, endowed with spirit, is on the one hand oriented towards God as to the only goal that satisfies him, in his most intimate existence. This orientation is natural to the human being. Man achieves his own freedom if he is oriented towards and tends to this unique goal.[14] On the other hand, man cannot achieve this goal with any of his natural energies. He can turn to him all the dynamic of his own freedom, even though he remains outside his capacity in an absolute manner. We are creatures and we have been made the promise to see God. This desire to see Him is within us, identifies with us, and is not satisfied but with a favor. "Taking all in all," W. Kasper notices, "man feels he is an opened problem, to which he has no solution. He transcends everything towards a mystery that cannot be understood; moreover, he discovers himself to be a mystery. Man experiences his own transcendence as a constitutive impossibility to integrate his own existence in history"[15]. Thus, under an ontological profile, the human being hobbles. He is a paradox, because the goal that determines him works within his privacy as an "*obiectum inclinationis*" and orients towards itself all his faculties, especially his freedom. But as an "*obiectum attingentiae*" it is hampered with harshness and this is why not even the firmest commitment of his freedom wills that he ever be able to follow, on his own. This means that man is oriented by the most intimate essence and disposition of his own freedom towards another freedom, which he can never achieve on his own and which he must fully accept as a gift.[16]

Denial of the Ontological Truth of the Human Being

Because of the paradoxical situation involving human freedom, man is faced with a fundamental decision. In fact, the possibility to make a decision is a constitutive part of his freedom. By being entrusted to himself in his freedom, nothing is decided regarding man; he is the only one who can take a stand. He is invited to make a decision in this case. He cannot withdraw himself from this, because with his freedom he is placed "de facto" in space. The choice confronted in freedom corresponds perfectly to the initial paradoxical situation, a situation which imperatively requires the decision. The Scripture is very clear: Adam is asked to make a decision: to eat or not to eat from the forbidden tree (cf. Gen 2: 16-17). So, man faces these alternatives:

- Either he chooses for his finite freedom, with the opening to the whole, to be oriented towards God's infinite freedom, thus acknowledging and being aware that it can never be exact, accurate. In this case, man up-

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[13] Cf. Bruno Hidber, *Il peccato, un tradimento della libertà,* 143.

[14] Cf. Henri de Lubac, *Il mistero del soprannaturale,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 1967, 251 and next.

[15] Walter Kasper, *Gesù il Cristo,* 70.

[16] Cf. Henri de Lubac, *Il mistero del soprannaturale,* 261-273.

dates his freedom in a fundamental attitude formed of his availability to allow himself to be gratified, by living within his ontological truth;

- Or he chooses for his finite freedom, with the richness of its opening to the whole, to become a means of his absolute affirmation or to become something which is available to it. In this case, man lives in an attitude of promethean self-sufficiency and denial of the infinite freedom, which is God, by denying his ontological truth.

The sacred text tells us that the first man has let himself be cheated by the lie of the snake, which led to his mistrust of God (for "God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God" as in Gen 3: 5), making him believe that through his decision he could be "as God." He chose "to be" but not within the truth in which he has been created, but within the lie through which he wanted to overcome the level of his state, of his condition as a creature. "Your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as God" (Gen 3: 5) was the temptation of the lie, the denial of the ontological truth. "Now the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen 3: 7). Through his sinful forwardness of wanting to be as God, man denied the truth of his being. Now he is painfully reduced to his own limits. Through his attitude, man wanted to eliminate the difference of levels between the Creator and the creature. By his decision to refuse, man stepped out of his relation of love and protection with God, now living the experience of the finite creature with all its limits.

THE UNCEASING TEMPTATION OF THE LIE

But the tragedy of the human being does not end here. The temptation of the lie continues: it is never ceasing, from the beginning of the world until the present time. "Obeying the truth is not always easy," John Paul II explains. "As a consequence of the mysterious original sin, committed because of Satan's incitation, 'liar and father of the lie,' man is permanently tempted to turn his face away from the true and living God in order to look towards the idols, changing 'God's truth into a lie,'"; at that moment, even the capacity to know the truth is darkened, and the will to obey it is weakened. Thus, by falling into relativism and skepticism, man searches an illusory freedom outside freedom itself"[17].

The Denial of the Historical-Saving Truth

Linguists say that the term '*emeth*' from the Hebrew, used in the Old Testament for truth, has its roots in the verb '*aman*' and means being consistent, stable, based. For this reason '*emeth*' is the quality of what is stable, permanent, sure, something one can rely on, which one can trust. Truth is trust and fidelity, unlike the lie, which is insignificancy and

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[17] John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, 1.

nothingness. More than an ontological concept, '*emeth*' is a concept of being related: it is "the trust" which someone or something determines and makes strong.

In this sense, Yahweh is the first fundamental and determinate '*emeth*': God – His word, His law – is the truth. It is from this trust, which God's truth determines, that the Alliance (*berît*) comes; this true relation is an indestructible and eternal reality. If man trusts the Alliance, he becomes sure of himself, stable in the divine creating and saving truth.

This character of relation of the truth concerns human events; it has thus a "historical" connotation, which emphasizes man's responsibility facing the alternative of receiving or refusing it. Since it is a truth in the court of history, it is at the same time in the court of "the future," which it opens as horizon and goal: a truth that opens towards the future of its fulfillment[18].

What do the people of the Old Testament do when they face this truth? They accept it. But the divine books speak a lot about the unceasing temptation of this nation to deny the historical-saving truth, to refuse the stability God gives them and to turn – not just once- to the fake gods, which lie. The most important theme of the divine annunciation is that of God's fidelity and of the fidelity of the people: the calling back to the truth, to God's saving faithful and merciful love.

Aletheia, the truth of the New Testament, in its new meaning, is God's truth-fidelity, Who presented Himself in the highest and definitive moment in Jesus "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1: 14): the witness of the truth (cf. Jn 18: 37; Rev 3: 14), who has the truth (cf. Eph 4: 21), because He himself is the truth (cf. Jn 14: 5). The new, supreme and final possibility God offers man, to become true, is in Jesus Christ; He offers the human being the possibility to give meaning (stability and consistency) to his life. Jesus Christ is the truth who gives Himself to the others: not the truth-idea, not the truth-object, but the truth as a saving event: the truth which sets free (cf. Jn 8: 32) and sanctifies (cf. Jn 17: 17). The Gospels present Him to us as the Truth which is necessary for our salvation. Many people followed Jesus Christ, because they saw in Him the firm base on which human life develops and is fulfilled. He gives stability here, now and in the future.

The temptation of the lie reaches us, too; we can see how the denial of the historical-saving truth offered to man in Jesus Christ can be immediately felt, even in the Church at the beginning. St. John and St. Paul explain it clearly in their writings. It is the temptation of finding the stability and justification in the facts of the law and not in God. Jesus Christ is superfluous. There are innumerable temptations to deny God and Jesus

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[18] Unlike the Greek image, for the Hebrew one truth is not something placed somehow under or behind the things and which can be reached when one goes into his depths, into the intimate; truth is what comes out in the future. The Biblical man has a dynamic conception of truth.

Christ, the Savior of humankind. I will speak about the modern man who does not want to know that he owes his life, fulfillment and his redemption to Someone else: he looks for a surrogate and finds it in something created (*aversio a Deo* asks for the surrogate instantly: *conversio ad creaturam*, and it is possible to find it, since – St. Augustine says – there is a reflection of the divine Creator in every creature).

A terrible conspiracy against the truth disquiets humankind today at all levels of social life. Avoiding or denying the absolute truth, we pass from a heteronomous system to an autonomous one, which functions outside any reference to God. As R. Guardini writes, "Modern man is convinced that he finally sees reality. The fonts of existence will now open to him. The energies of nature determined to open will combine with those of his being, and the great life will be realized. The various spheres of knowledge, action and creation will develop according to their own laws; a sphere will be attached to another one; this will lead to a whole overwhelmed with beauty and unity, (…) and the human being will be fulfilled in it"[19].

Man no longer understands himself, starting from the global context of a reality, which surrounds him, which is imposed on him as measure and order. His person has become the point of reference of the real now. He is *homo faber*, who does not recognize himself anymore as a pilgrim between sky and earth, but a master of this world, which he does not have only as an object of his knowledge, but which is turned into an object of his will, which is the will of power over things and which develops into a desire with no limits.[20] If the human being has made himself the master of reality, reality has become a pure object, which can be further studied with the help of science and mastered with the help of engineering. Man believes now that he is capable of knowing always more details about the real causes of things and of disposing of them with a greater autonomy and ampleness. He is the Demiurge. The need of a Creator and Savior God is no longer present. This is "the effective failure in thinking almost God", as J. Ratzinger expresses it[21].

The Denial of the Ethical Truth

The ethical truth, as studied by moral theology, is the truth related to life and man's conduct in various circumstances. Through faith, the Christian receives "the word of truth" (cf. Eph 1:13; Col 1:15; 2 Cor 6:7.) in order to "reach the knowledge of truth." (2 Tm 3:8.) This listening is

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[19] Romano Guardini, *Sfârşitul modernităţii*, Humanitas, Bucuresti 2004, 86.

[20] Cf. Hans Jonas, *Dalla fede antica all'uomo tecnologico,* Il Mulino, Bologna 1991, 263.

[21] Josepf Ratzinger, *Introducere în creştinism: prelegeri despre Crezul apostolic*, Sapientia, Iaşi 2004, 12.

performed under the guiding of the "Spirit of truth" Who "leads to the whole truth" (Jn 16:13.), the truth that lightens and sanctifies because word and action are incorporated in it. Thus, the Christian is made of truth (cf. Jn 18:37; 1 Jn 3:19.) and the truth lives in him (2 Jn 3-4.). Listening, the Christian allows the truth "to work in him." The constitutive truth of the new life, Christ, is the dynamism of the whole action of the Christian: He is the interior principle of moral life. That is why, coherent with his being, the Christian must "walk in the truth" (2 Jn 4; 3 Jn 3 and next.), "act according to the truth" (Jn 3:21; 1 Jn 1:6; Eph 4:15.), "love in the truth." (2 Jn 1; 3 Jn 1.) These are expressions of the moral imperative of truth. The Christian's moral life is "fidelity to the truth", following Christ "the way, the truth and the life".

Today the temptation of the lie to deny the ethical truth is always present. Guardini performs this radiography of the society and modern man: "The truth of the Christian Revelation is more and more brought up; its importance in the creation and development of life is more and more questioned. Moreover, the cultural attitude enters into an ever-bigger state of conflict with the Church. The new demand that the various fields of life and creation: politics, economy, social order, science, arts, philosophy, education, etc. should develop only on the basis of their immanent criteria appears more and more as an inherent demand. This way a new form of unchristian, often antichristian, form of life comes to exist. It imposes itself so sequentially that it simply appears to be normal, and the requirement according to which life must be determined by the Revelation acquires the character of an abuse on the part of the Church. Even the Christian largely accepts this situation, thinking that religious things are a separate issue and the worldly ones also: each field should be developed starting from its own essence and the extent to which man wants to live in these two should be left up to the individual"[22]. What is the consequence? An autonomous existence of people separated from the absolute truth develops. "The society developing little by little under our eyes," as G. Bernanos observed, "will realize as perfect as possible, with a certain mathematical hardness, the ideal of a society without God"[23].

In fact, the way in which the European nations relate to God is perceived in a different manner, since this also includes political, social and nationalist considerations, leading even to the denial of "the Christian roots of Europe." In this context, philosophical ethics takes us in the following direction: since we do not have a unique vision on the supreme problems of existence, it is clear that these very problems cannot be the basis of a common moral life which would readjust, in a peaceful way, social cohabitation, since they would turn into causes of division, hate and

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[22] Romano Guardini, *Sfârşitul modernităţii*, 108.
[23] Georges Bernanos, *"La grande peur des bien-pensants"*, in G. BERNANOS, *Essais et écrits de combat,* I, Gallimard, Paris 1971, 350.

reciprocal misunderstandings. That is why the final questions (the ones referring to the realization and fulfillment of the human being) are eliminated from public debates, staying closed in the private Christian conscience. Consequently, a new way to develop universal, necessary rules for the assurance of social cohabitation is searched. Modern ethics does not deal with the final questions anymore; its goals are new ones: safety, freedom and justice. These would be the only goals that can be realistically followed by everyone, since no one can give them up, and these are the only ones that could be based on reason perceived as a neutral organ[24]. Therefore, an ethics with no moral absolutes is suggested, without God, without Christ. This means denying the ethical truth of man and of the Christian.

CONCLUSION

There is a story about someone who had to wear a mask in order to look better than he really did. He had to wear that mask for several years. When he took it off he saw that his face took the shape of the mask and now he really was more beautiful. What had started as a disguise had turned into reality.

The lie has a collective and public dimension today, which continues to amplify because of social communications. There is the risk that many people will accept this mask. There is the risk that many people will be shaped to the form of the mask, denying the ontological, saving, ethical truth. Because of this we become frightened.

What can we do to remediate this? Pius XII tells us "There is no other remedy in order to overcome the restlessness the contemporary writers speak about in their works but to go back to a realism of truth, to the Christian realism which embraces with the same certitude man's dignity, but also his limits, his capacity to overcome himself but also the reality of the sin."[25]

What does this mean? In the beginning of his Gospel, St. John writes, "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it." (Jn 1:5) Jesus Christ lightens the meaning of our existence with His life and word. He gives us the truth, what is good for us. "The light shines in the darkness." The image of obscurity pictures a reality, which is opposed to the truth that lightens man's life, a "world" opposing God and His truth. The Gospel describes this opposition, using the present tense, by saying "shines." It means there is a fight between the darkness and the light, a fight that still goes on today, a fight in which the disciples of the Lord Jesus are involved, because His light continues to shine through the faith of his disciples. The force of the light continues to work through them, even if the

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[24] Cf. Luno A.R., *Coscienza, verità e libertà nella civiltà tecnologica,* in http://www.clerus.org/clerus/dati/2000-01/24-2/Coscienza.rtf.html.
[25] Pius XII, *Inesauribile mistero,* AAS (1957)11-12.

power of the darkness and of the lie is and will be against them. There is a world and certain powers, which do not receive the light: they refuse it and fight against it (Jn 15:18-19). But we must not delude ourselves. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it. Only by being courageous in order to proclaim the message of truth with our words and actions, will we realize the order of freedom: "the truth shall set you free." (Jn 8:32) John XXIII has synthesized the exigencies of the human and Christian life facing the truth; to think, to glorify, to tell and to act according to the truth.[26] Thus, civilization does not have to be invented, and the new kingdom does not have to be built on the clouds. They already exist: the civilization of truth, the shining kingdom. All we have to do is to install or restore them on their natural and divine basis ceaselessly.

Man on the verge of the third millennium, after the failure in his attempt to become a "demiurge," has no other legitimate option but to give up the lie and go back to the truth: to the truth of his nature, to the revealed truth, to accept it and let himself be enlightened by it, "to act according to the truth." The society must engage in the promotion of the truth in all fields and endeavors: in the professional, social and political fields. In these fields, where the lie is more present than elsewhere; therefore, the presence of men "permanently tempted by the truth," who are "witnesses of the truth" is more necessary than ever. It is here that all people meet: Christians and non-Christians, because "out of fidelity to the conscience, Christians become united with the other people in order to look for the truth and for the solution according to the truth of so many moral problems in the lives of the individuals, as well as in the social relations."[27] Thus, on entering the third millennium "the splendor of truth" will shine.

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[26] John XXIII, *Radiomessaggio 22-12-1960* in *Scritti e Discorsi,* Siena 1961, VI, 144.

[27] Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 16.

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CHAPTER III

TRUTH, VALUE AND THE
PROLIFERATION OF RIGHTS

YURIY PIDLISNYY

THE PROLIFERATION OF RIGHTS

It is hard to imagine contemporary Western society with its market system without solid and developed contract law. But there is a great danger that the logic of market relations may determine all other human relations. One risks the danger of entering the individualistic-contract-impersonal-society, a "contract society" as a continuation of market or its nexus. The nature of such pathology implies proliferation of new rights.

> Almost all liberal democracies have seen a massive proliferation of new "rights" over the past generation. Not content merely to protect life, liberty, and property, many democracies have also defined rights to privacy, travel, employment, recreation, sexual preferences, abortion, childhood, and so on. Needless to say, many of these rights are ambiguous in their social content and mutually contradictory (…). The incoherence in our current discourse on the nature of rights springs from a deeper philosophical crisis concerning the possibility of a rational understanding of man. Rights spring directly from an understanding of what man is[1].

Legislative support of false ideas can easily create situations where laws introducing and supporting those ideas will rule the society, pervading all spheres including private life[2]. We may think about recent legislative initiatives regarding equalization in rights of *de facto* unions and same sex marriages with natural heterosexual families, legalization of euthanasia.

The inner logic of this "right" makes it equal with other fundamental human rights, therefore producing, *ipso facto*, a devaluation of fundamental human rights. Legislative adoption of rights similar by their inner logic to the "right for assisted death" makes mutually contradictory

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[1] Fukuyama, Francis, *The Last Man and the End of the History*. Avon Books: New York 1992, 296

[2] "… ideas are not intellectuals' toys: ideas have consequences, for good and for ill…" See: Weigel, George, "A Better Concept of Freedom", in *First Things* 121 (March 2002) 14.

rights equal. For then, birth assistance and death assistance assume equal value in medical and in judicial practices.

Creation of such a juridical atmosphere is accompanied by juridical nonsense. When a patient claims he wants to die and the medical doctor refuses to "assist" him to die, the latter becomes guilty of denying and violating one of the human rights. On the other hand, when he "assists" a patient to die he is murderer, regardless of whether he accepts this or not. And regardless whether positive law permits it.

The birth of proliferation of rights has transformed the political process and the very notion of political life itself. Classical political process, since antiquity, consisted in the promotion of the rules of life for the sake of the common good and the good life of the polis. The good life was treated as a vocation every man had to embrace as a specimen of behavior.

Recent politics, at least in its liberal version, removes from its vocabulary the very notion of the good life. If the idea of the good life, the transcendent criterion for the verification of the political process, is excluded from politics,

> (…) the idea of the sovereignty of the individual along with the principles of liberty and equality were, and are remained, completely radicalized. In *Le Cid* of Corneille, Rodrigue says to Chimene: "*j'ai fait ce que j'ai du, je fais ce que je dois*" ("I did what I should, I do what I must"). Contemporary man says: "Each of us is sovereign, each is equal to everyone else; I live as I want and my way of life is equal to everyone else's"[3].

The exclusion of the transcendent criterion of the good life and the proliferation of individual rights in order to establish the equality of all individuals or of individual groups has its natural consequence. It is not only the good life that is discarded, but life itself is changed, that is, a move takes place from "life" to "lifestyle," and an equalization of all lifestyles.

LIFESTYLES

The danger, which stands behind this fact, is the creation of a virtual world in which no place is reserved for common sense and naturalness. Moreover, it seems there is no more place reserved for the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong.

Traditional ethics, while declaring something to be good or evil, offered arguments based on the nature of man, natural law, and on complex

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[3] Beneton, Philippe. "The Languages of the Rights of Man" in *First Things* 37 (November 1993) 12

and complicated theories about good and evil with the aim to make ethical assertions evident. Now, it seems that some interpretations describe democracy as a societal system that guarantees recognition of the different rights of individuals and groups as equal, be it the right for unnatural sexual preferences or the right for assisted death or adoption of a child into homosexual, quasi marriages.

De facto unions, partnership and common living of man and woman (or of homosexual partners) including sexual relations without concluding marriage, become now a great problem from different points of view. Legislative recognition of *de facto* unions equalizes them in rights and dignity with marriage and family. The argument, which is called to advocate this initiative, is very simple in the liberal democratic state. *De facto* unions are presented as a human right to choose whether to conclude marriage or not to conclude, and to live with any person if this person freely agrees. It is just here that problems arise. If it is the same from the juridical point of view to exclude marriage and to enter into *de facto* unions, then the very institution of marriage is annihilated. For these relations between persons of opposite sex are presented by the logic of the legalization of *de facto* unions as freely contracted formation, which one is free to enter and exit, like a club. Moreover the inner logic of the legalization makes any struggle for family stability irrational, and ruins the family, as such. Any commitment and any obligation within the family become irrational, for the state treats equally family with mutual commitments and obligations and *de facto* unions with no obligations.

Responsibility for begetting offspring and their upraising is not taken into account by the legislation. Children in such unions very often sense a lack of identity. This lack of identity is much more serious if a child is adopted by homosexual partners. The child finds himself in a situation when he cannot answer to whom he was born, who is his father and who is his mother. He finds himself to be alien to those who adopted him. It is not simply a feeling of alienation; it is truly a condition of alienation.

ALIENATION OF THE "NATURAL"

Recent experiments in cloning human beings may lead to a more serious alienation. Born to a laboratory, due to technological manipulations, this child adopted into unnatural quasi-family union is totally deprived of natural human history.

Nature and life became something to be manipulated. Thus, whoever approaches nature in this way erases the difference between the natural world and an artificial one; he eradicates the difference between the biological and the constructed, and leaves no room for the recognition of the ontological and axiological (from the point of view of dignity) hierarchy in the world. The *Ordo Amoris* is shaken. If Nature is seen as a raw material to be manipulated or shaped at the wish of man, and if man is a part of the nature (a raw material), then the logic of reasoning suggests that man

himself is a raw material to be manipulated. Hence cloning, abortion, eugenics receive within this perspective an explanation and justification. Man loses his natural place in Nature; he becomes an object.

Affirmation that a human being is a mere right-for-choice-byproduct affects human relations. For, there is no reason to respect the byproduct of a mere choice that could be different. Martin Buber expresses it as an inability to establish I-Thou relations with another man. Alienation of this kind fits the relationship I-It, where the other is an object to be treated exactly as an object.

Making good and evil, right and wrong equal in rights makes those who practice good and evil equally correct. Hence, if one accepts this as being true, then there is no rational incentive to practice the good. For whatever one practices, it is good by definition.

According to John Rawls … in a liberal state,

> "Systems of ends are not ranked in value"; individual "life plans" can be distinguished by their greater or lesser rationality, but not by the nature of the goals or ends they set. (…) Post-Rawlsian legal theorists like Ronald Dworkin and Bruce Ackerman try to define the rules of a liberal society while eschewing any reference to priorities among human ends or, in more contemporary language, between possible lifestyles[4].

Relativism of this kind nevertheless discriminates against those who are looking for the real and the absolute good, and for the privileged way of life in the moral sense.

EQUALITY AND IDENTITY

The above reasoning opens the theme of relation between equality and identity. This is not identity, however, in the sense of everything being one and the same, but in the sense of individual identity as being distinct from others. Empirical man, as he actually is, not an imaginary man of social contract, deprived of his history, does not show any feature that would tell us that he does not ask questions about his identity. Each man is born into a family, which belongs to a concrete culture, language, religion etc. He apprehends his environment, analyses it (naively or scientifically) and internalizes it more or less selectively or completely.

Such an internalization of the environment is accompanied by questioning about the quality of the environment in which man lives. To

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[4] Fukuyama, Francis. *Our Posthuman Future. Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York 2002, 119-120.

imagine that man will escape from such questioning is not grounded. The very banal fact that man asks in a shop about the quality of the goods he buys proves that such questioning is important. If it is important in the case of goods man buys, it is much more important that man asks about the environment he gradually internalizes. The internalization of cultural environment creates man's identity, which can be good or bad. Thus man faces an option between good and bad, righteous or sinful.

Ancient Greeks asked this question about their culture and that of barbarians. For it was question about the good life. The very nature of man provides us with numerous examples that man worries about his identity. Each man wants to qualify for what is good, and does not want to fail.

What accounts for man's identity is not only his history, internalization of the environment he lives in, but also the search for the true, authentic, and good. Education is a maiden, which helps to find the true, authentic and good. Education helps to understand this world and to master it. But, in order to master it, man has to reach the truth about this world. To know truth and to fail to know truth are not equal. The same holds for the truth about human relationships.

EQUALITY OF LIFESTYLES AND ITS ALIENATING IMPACT ON EDUCATION

The equality in rights based on different opinions and theories, and the annihilation of good and evil makes education in classical understanding pure nonsense. For, if education means, among other goals, helping to tell right from wrong, to discern good from evil, helping to find a true meaning and sense of life, then in the new atmosphere we just described education seems to be reduced to a unique task, namely to teach that whatever is chosen is good, and whoever intervenes in someone's choice is intolerant.

The new situation deprives me of participating in my fellowman's destiny for it would be intolerant on my part. Thus, we become alien to one another, because we have nothing to share except superimposed or contracted ideas. "Men are all similar but they no longer have anything in common, except … the right to have nothing in common"[5]. The exclusion of participation in the other's destiny for the sake of his good, makes relations among men, (*intentio benevolentiae* and *intentio unionis*)[6] impossible:

> The kind of formal equality that prevails today transforms
> the nature of the relationships among men. [This] equality

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[5] Beneton, Philippe, "The Languages of the Rights of Man", in *First Things* 37 (November 1993) 9-12.

[6] See Hildebrand, Dietrich von, *Metaphysik der Gemeinshaft* and *Das Wesen der Liebe*.

> separates men from one another: because each man is his own master, any inequalities become purely contractual and functional and do not extend to anyone's way of living. No one is responsible for anyone else; the true idea of education is undermined; and relationships become functional, abstract, and cold. The contemporary idea of equality is (…) mutual indifference. (…) The consequence is that modern man is an isolated being[7].

Francis Fukuyama is perfectly right when he says that "families don't really work if they are based on liberal principles, that is if their members regard themselves as they would a joint stock company, formed for their utility, rather than being based on ties of duty and love"[8]. Indeed, in order to love someone or something and to make a commitment, the person or thing should be lovable, i.e., should be good and exclusive, and possess a dignity of its own. For if everything and everybody are equal, there is no sense to love and to be committed to a concrete person or thing. Nietzsche was correct when he wrote that no one can live without a horizon, without a set of values declared to be exclusive and privileged; no artist would ever paint his picture, no general win his victory, no nation gain its freedom without valuing and loving what they have chosen to do exclusively more then any other things[9]. If there is no aim to strive for, if there is no transcendent good to love, and no values to share with others, if there is no value as transcendent criterion, if the only common standard is the individual wish and desire, then the society turns into a collective of desiring human beings, self-absorbed and atomized so that no community is possible.

While such projects as Plato's are supposed to tell to citizens what is good, what lifestyle truly corresponds to the authentic human aspirations and what will make their lives better, the contemporary liberal democracies do not tell their citizens what is good and what will make them great, for it is thought that this will make some better and label others as worse.

While speaking of equal possibilities, we must say that absolute absence of priority is impossible, because the very idea to treat equally all possibilities on the basis of their being chosen by man, implies the concept and the reality of the better, hence of the good. For if it were not so, it would not be understandable to treat them as equal; moreover, to treat them as equal would be the same as to treat them as unequal.

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[7] Beneton, Philippe, "The Languages of the Rights of Man", in *First Things* 37 (November 1993) 9-12.

[8] Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*, Avon Books: New York 1993, 324

[9] Cf. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Use and Abuse of History*, translated by A.Collins. Bobbs-Merrill: Indianapolis 1957, 9

NON-JUDGMENTAL APPROACH

Creating a juridical, political and cultural framework, stressing a non-judgmental attitude toward any lifestyles or worldviews, someone offers to everyone a kind of certainty that no one will judge as wrong or bad individual's choices or behavior flowing from his worldview. This will provide this individual with a kind of psychological peace and a kind of "truthfulness". On the other hand, absence of such a judgment does not guarantee that the choice was authentic and true. Thus, we see that there is a gap between contracted absence of negative judgment and negative judgment of the very state of affairs. That is the real state of affairs in virtue of its inner logic or own inner word to the choice of an individual. That is to say that transgression of the inner logic of states of affairs by the individual's choice is by itself a negative judgment on the matter of choice.

Psychological certainty and safety seem to contribute to social peace and tolerance in the society. But can we imagine that humans will not ask questions about the authenticity of their choices, about criteria of authenticity, about right and wrong choice, success and failure, good and evil? The very idea of non-judgmental approach is itself an object of such questioning. This idea, though favoring (ordering) absence of judgment, bears in itself a judgmental evaluating approach, because it implies evaluation of itself as better than other approaches. Thus, the idea of non-judgmental approach is itself judgmental by its nature.

From the point of view of education, it has a specific impact. To forbid evaluating judgments (hence the search of truth about one's own choices and preferences), may lay barriers on the way to cognizance and appropriation of the environment, that is, of the natural, artificial, created, and human world, as well as on the way to appropriation of the cultural heritage and of civilization. This is especially true with respect to the spiritual heritage, which involves the distinctions between good and evil, beautiful and ugly, sublime and mean, etc.

Besides rendering man unable to tell right from wrong, good from evil, and truth from falsity, these ideas may make man unable to integrate into society. Therefore he will be alien to society, tradition, culture, civilization, which he cannot understand, evaluate, and appropriate. In this situation man becomes alien to his fellow, too, for he is no longer able to care about his fellow.

Let us look at this problem from the other side. If all choices and practices of different worldviews are equal, there is no abnormality or no deviance. It means that each behavior is normal and human by definition. There is no criterion to treat one behavior as being normal and human, and to discriminate another one as being abnormal or inhuman. If this is so, then, according to the logic of reasoning whatever man does is human and normal.

The term "norm" can mean some statistical fact. Let us say after soccer play, fans usually go to the pub. It would be normal if one goes to

the pub after soccer play. It may be a norm that younger voters vote for radical parties and mature persons vote for moderate parties. Abnormal in these cases would be to go to the Opera after the soccer game or to vote in mature age for radicals. Such a norm is simply descriptive. It says what is. It is arbitrary, for there is nothing in the description which would tell us that the facts cannot be otherwise.

Another meaning of norm may be stricter. We may hear that it is normal that people are 170 cm. tall and that 140 cm. would be a deviation from the norm. But there is also nothing necessary in this fact. For if the majority of people were 140 cm. tall, then those who were 170 cm. would deviate from the norm. This norm is stronger, since it presupposes bodily nature, which is a reference point independent from the human will.

Still another kind of norm presupposes a reference point which would tell us that even if all men practice promiscuity, it is not normal. Such a norm is rooted in human nature, human dignity, and moral values. This norm is not descriptive, but prescriptive and tells us what ought to be. Thou shall not kill is a prescriptive norm. The deviation from this norm would mean transgression of what cannot in principle be otherwise. In contrast, transgression of a statistical norm is a transgression of what in principle is changeable.

To declare all practices equal means to operate in the field of the first kind of norm and to confuse it with other kinds of normativity[10]. Exclusion of the prescriptive meaning of normativity leads to the exclusion of the distinction between normal-abnormal and good-evil in the third sense, hence making any factual behavior normal.

The situation is similar with the term "human". Human can mean anything done by man, but it can mean everything that is proper to man, everything that corresponds to the essence of human being and makes man distinctive from any other being. In this later sense, asking questions about the authenticity of one's own choice, about one's own behavior is human. To act morally is human *par excellence*, for it is an essential distinction of man. This is a fundamental feature of the human being as person; Max Scheler especially stresses that is a capacity for transcendence.

In the context of equalization one says that anything man does is human. We may ask, if everything is equal, then why accent the idea of equality? For the idea of equality is equal to the idea of inequality, tolerance of equality is equal to intolerance of equality or tolerance of inequality. Similarly a descriptive norm is equal to a prescriptive norm, and descriptively human is equal to essentially human.

Though the very postulation that all lifestyles are equal in worth, since they are human, is by its nature descriptive. It implies or better

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[10] A discussion about norms see Kolakowsky Leszek, "Normy-nakazy i normy-twierdzenia". Translated by Ewa Burska, w *Moje sBuszne poglody na wszystko*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Krakow 2000, 116-136.

pretends to introduce prescription. This postulation recognizes all lifestyles as equal. But this contradicts the very idea of non-judgmental approach. The contradiction consists in the fact that the idea of equality and of non-judgmental approach acquires a privileged condition and is favored; whereas at the same time other approaches and other ideas, and lifestyles as well, are denied privileged conditions. This is very akin to the Nietzschean description of *Ressentiment*[11]. By denying privileged lifestyles and preferences, the one who denies them or denies that something can be privileged at all, implicitly introduces his own preferences and lifestyle as privileged.

Prescribing certain practices or lifestyles as being normal without founding this prescription on the firm ground of transcendent norms, transforms them into descriptive or historical transitory quasi-norms, which makes them alien to the natural order of things. The only reason to obey this norm is the will of those who bound themselves to this norm. This will could be external (other), and hence a reason to obey what could and can be otherwise at any time. This has special importance for moral matters[12].

If society legalizes all lifestyles, behaviors and practices, that is, if society abolishes the distinction between good and evil, it automatically introduces the only possible good, that is, its own will. The evil, therefore, is deviation from this will. This may be the first step toward the dictatorship of those who are on the top of the social pyramid. Thus, society runs the risk of creating a situation where too many are at the mercy of too few.

EQUALITY

But is this topic about equality senseless? Liberalism and Christianity say that humans in different respects are unequal, and that this inequality is natural. They are, for example, unequal regarding their health, knowledge, skills, origins (born to poor or rich parents), and so on.

To speak ontologically, all humans are equal, for they share one and the same human nature and dignity. This equality is not prescribed by a certain body that agrees to (contracts) such equality. It is transcendent. If we accept an existentialist position that there is no pre-given human nature in the sense of a transcendent normative idea, and then the only source of human dignity is human activity, that is, what is in the system of the ontological-existential dimension of human being corresponds to the existential dimension. In such a case man identifies himself with what he does. This being so, any evaluative judgment of human behavior colors the bearer of this behavior. Thus, to judge one lifestyle or behavior as better, and another as worse, means to judge one man as better and other man as worse. This existentialist confusion makes such evaluative judgments

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[11] See Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Genealogy of Morals*.

[12] Cf. Novak, Michael, *The Catholic Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism,* The Free Press, New York 1993, 96.

difficult, for any judgment on the matter of activities shifts in this system to its bearer. Though this is true, it nevertheless does not affect the ontological dignity of man as human person.

It is true that on the existential level there are better personalities and worse personalities. It would make no sense to treat Beethoven's talent as equal with any other capacities to combine sounds. Talented people are of course better than non-talented, the hard working is better than the lazy. But this is not on the ontological level. The same holds true or perhaps holds true *par excellence*, in the sphere of morality.

The abolition of what we have called prescriptive transcendent norms appears for some liberals as providing man with something that corresponds to one of his aspirations, from which he seems to be alienated when those criteria are present, namely his security. It is said that man is in a condition to worry whether he will qualify or fail. This condition makes man dependent on something he does not control or possesses. In order to provide man with security and certainty, abolition of transcendent criteria is proposed. It is said that if criteria will belong to the power of man, then man will gain his security. On the other hand, nevertheless, if criteria of good and evil are in the power of man, then the question about security arises again but from a different perspective[13]. Is it security to expect changes at any time by contracted parties? Is it a true security when man changes criteria freely?

According to this position, discriminative criteria, which favor certain lifestyles, may provide certain groups with an argument to alienate from the society those groups which practice a different lifestyle. Though it may seem rational to proliferate the right for equal recognition even of mutually contradictory lifestyles, it nevertheless carries with itself certain dangers.

First, it legitimizes the intervention of the state into the sphere of morality by means of decreeing what should be treated as morally unobjectionable. Such rights confuse legal and moral spheres.

Second, it enforces certain opinions of some groups, and this becomes a dictatorship of some groups. It becomes a belief that some groups can force people by decree to recognize each man as being equal. This institutional elimination of discrimination bears in itself a contradiction. If all groups and all people have equal rights to practice their lifestyles, then no one has the right to force people to accept the opinion that all lifestyles are equal, for this opinion is a part of someone's lifestyle. Thus, it seems that the proliferation of the above rights turns out to be a totalitarian mechanism within liberal democracy.

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[13] Cf. Kołakowski Leszek, "Rozpad Komunizmu jako wydarzenie filosoficzne" w *Moje sBuszne poglody na wszystko*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Krakow 2000, 383-386.

Third, if all lifestyles are equal, then I have no ground to determine that another is wrong or correct in his choice. His choice is simply different, neither better nor worse than my choice. This being so, there is no ground to teach people about a privileged way of life; there is no ground to impart to people a cultural heritage.

Fourth, it becomes problematic, especially if the third point is true to appropriate this world. If the world is neither understandable nor appropriated, then all processes are alien to man, and man himself is not secure in this world. The whole world seems to smash him. This recalls Marx's alienation, Durkheim's anomie and Buber's homelessness.

Fifth, aspirations for security are stolen. Thus, the only possibility to fulfill aspirations for security is to find unchangeable, transcendent criteria of truth, and what is proper to human beings, as beings categorically distinct from any other beings.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE AS SOURCE OF ALIENATION

Sometimes philosophical theories or scientific discoveries and hypotheses influence a number of men and become a sort of Zeitgeist. Creation of substitute ideas about man, society, interpersonal relations and relations between man and society, and substitute theories about progress in history and about morals may lead to alienation on different levels.

> Classical political philosophy maintained that man had a dignity somewhere between the beasts and the gods; man's nature was part animal, but he had reason and therefore a specifically human virtue not shared by other species. (…) the human beings had a dignity superior to anything in nature because they alone were free: that is, they were uncaused causes, undetermined by natural instincts and capable of autonomous moral choice[14].

But modern theories about man, especially the contemporary theories, seem to tell us that man is but a product of evolution, which he evolved from the subhuman and differs from the other animals quantitatively but not qualitatively; thus, his dignity or value is only quantitatively different from the value of a dog or slime. We also learned from modern theories that man is a product of economic forces and that everything we declare as purely human actions finds their explanation within deterministic laws.

But John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus* "quickly decoded the new threats to the "mystery of the human person" in the post-

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[14] Fukuyama, Francis. *The Last Man and the End of the History*. Avon Books: New York 1992, 296.

Cold War world, and he spent much of the decade of the 1990s trying to explain that freedom detached from moral truth – the 'freedom of indifference' that dominated the high culture of the triumphant West – was, inevitably, self-cannibalizing"[15].

Rejecting the search for the truth about man, socialism doomed itself to self-destruction. The same thing could happen to market democracies. Rejection of this search is an internal rot, which leads to internal disintegration, which is a latent but real possibility of liberal democracies.

In *Centesimus Annus*, the Pope writes: "From the open search for truth the culture of a nation derives its character (…); when a culture becomes inward-looking, and tries to perpetuate obsolete ways of living by rejecting any exchange or debate with regard to the truth about man, then it becomes sterile and is heading for decadence"[16].

Unfortunately, today for many the question of truth is but a question of taste. For them what is at stake is personal opinion. Such confusion is widespread, especially among the highly educated. This together with the above-mentioned problems of education leads to alienation from me, my fellow and human nature, in short from truth, itself.

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[15] Weigel, George, "John Paul II and the Crisis of Humanism", in First Things 98 (December 1999) 31-36.

[16] Pope John Paul II, Letter Encyclical *Centesimus Annus,* 50

CHAPTER IV

TRUTH AS THE KEY TO INTEGRITY:
A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

EDWARD McLEAN

I come to you as a seeker, a learner, a listener, an observer. I have been asked to share a bit of my personal lived experiences as a seeker of the truth and its pathways to goodness, to peace, and to the unity of the entire human family. We are all, in our own way, seekers of truth. And we are all aware that there are many pathways to truth. Science, philosophy, theology take us only so far on our search for that "Truth" which touches hearts and changes lives.

In a book with the same title, Anthony de Mello tells an ancient Hindu story called the "Song of the Bird". "The disciples were full of questions about God. Said the master; God is the unknown and the unknowable. Every statement made about him, every answer to your questions is a distortion of the truth".

The disciples were bewildered. "Then why do you speak about Him at all?" they asked. And the Master answered: 'Why does the bird sing?' Anthony De Mello, in his reflections on this story, writes:

> The bird does not sing because he has a statement, he sings because he has a song… The words of the scholars are to be understood. The words of the Master are not to be understood. The words of the Master are to be listened to as one listens to the wind in the trees, and the sound of the river and the song of the bird. They will awaken something within the heart that is beyond all knowledge.

Awakening the heart is a Spiritual Pathway, which leads us to "that truth which is beyond all understanding." It leads us from the intellect, where we process truth, to that sacred place, deep within the soul where we encounter the divine personification of truth itself Who leads us on pathways to goodness, to peace, to reconciliation and to the unity of our personal, professional and political worlds.

How do we awaken the heart? How do we make this inner journey? How do we find this God of Truth & Morality? We do not; rather it is that the God of truth & morality finds us. For it is said that only when the student is ready does the teacher arrive.

Jesus instructed his followers: "Wait… you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses…" (Acts 1, 4.8).

Preparing for this encounter requires two things: space & silence.

Each morning the first thing – without newspaper or radio to distract – I sit in a quiet place – creating a space, inviting the Spirit to enter. I wait and listen quietly; then, after a time, depending upon the quality of my listening and my openness to the Spirit, my arms seem to open and I want to embrace the whole world. For during this sacred encounter, all my angers, hurts, resentments, etc., seem to melt away. Peace is restored and love flows forth… I am at peace with the world; I have no enemies and my joy is full. My heart has been disarmed; my barriers have been removed. I am at one with all creation; in harmony with the Universe; reconnected with my Source. I am at home once again in the family of God. "Where" as Paul says, "there does not exist among us, Jew or Greek, slave or freeman, male or female": We are family!

This truth has moved, slowly, silently, almost imperceptibly from the head to the heart, "the longest 18 inches in the world". It becomes transformative, and leads us out of our prison of selfishness, and self interest – into a world in need.

I think we might agree that the most important challenge facing our world today is this: How are we – with our different religions, cultures, politics, languages and yes, our histories of conflicts, both ancient and recent – how are we going to be able to live together on this planet in a society that is both civil and just for everyone?

How? I believe that the "Truth" will set us free, free from fear and hatred, free from violence, greed, and suspicion, free from our desire for revenge. As a Christian, I believe, that the truth which shall set us free is a Person, Jesus, the Son of the Father, who said to his followers "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6) and to Pilate: "This is the reason I was born, the reason I have come into this world to bear witness to the truth." (Jn 18:27).

The basic truth for our world today is this: We are all children of the One God! We all belong to the same family. We are all brothers and sisters, one to another. This is the truth, the key to morality, to integrity and to right conduct within the human family of God – the family of nations. This is the "Truth" that I seek to encounter at the beginning of each day.

This God, Creator and Father of all nations, has made us a promise: I quote, "I am going to take you from among the nations and gather you together from all the foreign countries, and bring you home to your own land." (That place from which we have all come, where we were first loved: the Father's heart) "I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you… And you will live." Then, "You shall be my people and I will be your God" (Ezek 36:24-29).

In my attempt to create that space into which I invite the Spirit of God, I follow my breathing, which becomes a prayer of petition. Breathing

in the life giving Spirit I whisper, "Fill me" and breathing out I whisper, "Empty me". Sometimes we need to empty some things out of this space, negative things which clutter the soul, like past hurts, grudges, narrowness, pride and arrogance, fears and suspicions, in order to make room for the life-giving gifts that the Spirit brings.

Into this Sacred Space, as the silence deepens, the Spirit enters, bearing gifts which render gentle the heart and transform the soul. Gradually we become aware of our interconnectedness; that we are all members of the one family of God. We are able to love the unlovable, to forgive the unforgivable, to believe the unbelievable, and to do the undoable. We are able to reach out, to gather in, to heal, to forgive, to reconcile, to share our resources, to care for our needy and to become one people again. "And you will be my people," said Yahweh, "and I will be your God" (Ezek 36:29).

The gifts of the Spirit which open our hearts to our Creator God and open our arms to embrace our world are: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, and Gentleness (Gal 5:22). The great gift which holds them all together is Reverence – Reverence for God; Reverence for life; Reverence for self; and Reverence for one another. "Reverence" is that premier and essential gift of God which weds truth to morality in holy nuptials.

In closing, one final thought: Like Emily Dickinson's description of Hope,

> "Is a thing with feathers,
> That nestles in the soul.
> It sings its song
> Without the words,
> And never stops at all."
> On your journey, my friends,
> Enter often the
> Sacred chamber
> Of your heart
> And listen for the music…
> You will hear it when you are quiet enough.
> It is the Song of the Bird …
> That eternal, pulsating, life giving, Spirit of God".

West Hartford, Connecticut
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DISCUSSION I

MAN BETWEEN THE TRUTH OF FAITH AND
THE TRUTH OF REASON

Lucian Farcaş: let us move on from the theoretical part, presented, as truth and morality, to some more practical aspects: how can these words be put into practice? In order to find an answer to this question, I suggest we start from a particular project: is it possible to have elites, experts, charismatic persons with a profound responsibility, regarding both private and public life?

An idea, in almost all the presentations today, is that we are on a journey, as *homo viator*, each with one's own project in private and community life, which we have started, but not finished. Whether it is about individuals, our community, or the future house of Europe, all have the same problem, and the same responsibility.

How then can we draw the portrait of an elite, of a being with such strong morals as to have truth as the base of his life, his way of thinking, of his actions in his private and public life, and morals as a lighthouse for his journey?

The second question is: if we can draw such a portrait, what would be the strategies or the means? What initiatives should be encouraged in order to make this a real portrait?

Wilhelm Dancă: I think the possibility of such elite within the field of moral life is a challenge to which we must find an answer. For the human being with his roots deep in the earth of tradition, or culture in which he was raised with its faith and ideals should come from above, from Heaven. The human being finds himself at the crossroads of sky and earth, is able to build a bridge, connecting Heaven and earth. That person is moral elite. Every Christian is, in a certain way, a "Pontifex", building bridges to connect Heaven and earth. In the depths of his traditions, culture and beliefs, man finds certain stability and in that moment gains his freedom, namely the option for values, an oriented life full of meaning.

Osman Bilen: The question concerning whether we should have a moral elite reminds me of the ideals those philosophers, like Habermas, put forward. He goes back to the American philosopher, Pierce, who had the idea that since we cannot find scientific truths simply through the research of a single person, it is better to have a community of free researchers. By the agreement of their common findings we establish permanent truths. This idea has been taken up by Habermas; who made the distinction between ideals that should be realized by such a free community of interpreters, either in history, or it should be sought as a rational ideal. This

ideal of agreeing on truth is also supported by a Muslim teaching called *Igima*, which means simply consensus or community. However, the word elite may be problematic here, and I would call it rather a group of researchers or people in search of the truth, instead of making a distinction between the usual, ordinary man and the elite, as having a special mission. I would avoid describing the role of leading or pretending to be elite.

Lucian Farcaş: I have chosen the term elite because it provokes and asks for further explaining. From a Biblical, Christian point of view, my opinion is that we speak of elites when referring to persons who do not only use the gifts from God for their personal fulfillment and well-being, but become charismatic persons; they receive the charismas for others, for the community, for the common good and for superior causes. When Habermas received the German Book Award, in Saint Paul Church in Frankfurt, he gave a speech that made everyone think he had become a Christian convert because he spoke very strongly against human embryo cloning, even for therapeutic purposes, and because he insisted on Christian values. He did not share these, but believed in their existence, saying that without God we have no ground to defend the human being.

George McLean: Following the lines suggested by Bilen, we need to think of ourselves as always moving into the future. We have been able to learn things in the past, we are able to live in the present, but the future is always something new. Therefore, what we have known in the past must be always renewed, advanced, projected forward. Rather than repeating Greek metaphysics, working deeply into reality, one must be engaged in bringing this philosophy forward. Who can do this? Bilen mentioned the word community. The Church is a community; the great people of God. It is so organized that we have here a Theological Institute, there a Research Centre, there a University. The Church has in its structures the possibility of bringing together teams that will be capable of investigating and bringing the best of human knowledge to the exploration of the future. These need to be multi-disciplinary; we need the social sciences, but we also need theological and philosophical reflection. As a body which is moving into the future, the Church needs to bring together the competencies that are necessary for this effort. This is the providence of God in His people. Our deep faith, if the Church can believe in the work of the Spirit in the people of God, then we can listen to the new sensibilities that are arising, we can reflect on that with scientific competencies, we can go deeply into that with the analysis of the Scripture and the traditions of the Fathers. This is something that the Church can do. My sense is that we have concentrated our resources so much on training the younger generations that we have not appreciated these institutions as the bodies of competencies needed for the reflection by and for the people. It was a mission of the greatest importance not only to teach the young, but to find the way ahead for the people.

Lucian Farcaş: This capacity of thinking towards the future is one wealth of our tradition, first of Biblical times and second, of the history of Christianity. Faith is always a force from above so that we may step into the future without being paralyzed by fear, because God is there, beside us. Here in speaking of this leading role of elite we mean responsible persons who are willing to serve.

Yuriy Pidlisnyy: To speak about the elite, is to ask not about inherited aristocracy which we know from history, but something other. Aristotle spoke about it Cicero spoke about it, as did Kant, and Plato and Ortega y Gasset. We translate aristocrat as one who can rule himself according to virtues? Now, in this definition, there is a ground and an appeal to build in terms of virtue and to be responsible for what we are doing in terms of values. We are what we are doing, what we are deciding. On what ground do we decide and act? When Socrates was imprisoned, his disciples came and told him about escape but he started to talk with them about aristocracy. Jesus Christ also told us about aristocracy. When Peter asks him: "What do we have to do?" He tells him, "When you will convert, support the other apostles". This was about aristocracy. In this, I see future elite. We have a chance to build ourselves and to support others; this is the meaning of aristocracy.

Petru Gherghel: We have suffered much lately and perhaps we go on suffering when we think of the human being from a single perspective. The human being is constituted of body and soul. If we focus too much on the human soul and not on the human life, we may come to a false idea of human beings. If we give too much attention to the human being, from a material point of view, and do not take into consideration his spiritual side, we need but look around us to see the results in dictatorships. Pope John Paul II, an expert in anthropology, insisted that we should consider the human being in his integrity. When a human being truly understands his dignity, when he comes to know his being he can truly become a leader. We have many leaders in the history of our nations. It is they who should tell us about forming a conscience here on Earth. The Church is called upon to insist on and present the human being in his true condition, value and dignity. Knowing spiritual values and other human qualities, we can come to have such leaders who really make a difference in the world. I think they are the ones we should follow, especially those who have understood the message of the Gospel presented by Jesus Christ. All those with these gifts must contribute to the forming of the elite, but not without taking into consideration the spiritual and all other values of the human being.

Lucian Farcaş: Since human beings must keep this equilibrium, I think the elite must always be ready to bear witness. Each person has a single passport with two citizenships on it: he is a citizen of Heaven and, just as much, a responsible citizen of Earth. With this passport a human

being can also broaden his horizons by visiting other countries; indeed Europe is already too small. We speak of the entire Earth as if it were a small village. To what extent should a human being, a personality open itself; is that too much to ask of one; will one be overwhelmed thereby?

Edward McLean: Talking about how we are going to spread the message and ultimately build a kingdom, God has given us many resources. The Second Vatican Council brought out that the Church is not just a hierarchy of the institutions, but is a family: we are all members of the Church. We are all apostles, all voices of the love of God. We can look at ourselves in that sense, as elite, if we want to talk about those elite from God. But in order to be able to fulfill our mission, pastoral mission, we must be connected upwards; "I am the vine, you are the branches; without me you can do nothing". Not only do we come from God, but we must continue to be connected as the voice of God in our presence. We cannot be reluctant and say "My leaders – whether bishops, theologians or scholars – do the job for me".

The First Chapter of Jeremiah: shows him to be a very reluctant prophet: he did not want to be a prophet and he did everything he could to avoid it. But he tells us that God came to him and said to him: "Jeremiah, before you were in the womb I loved you. Before you were born, I chose you. And I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations". Jeremiah says; "No, no, not I, Lord. I'm too young, I can't even speak". And the Lord said: "Do not say you're too young. To whomever I send you, you will go; whatever I ask you to say, you will say. You will be a prophet to the nations". Then he said, Yahweh reached out his hand, touched my mouth and said, "See: I've put my words into your mouth." The words of the Spirit of God are in the mouths of all of us, in our hearts. Every place we go, we go as a missionary, whether it is among our own or among the people to whom we are sent.

I think of Saint Francis of Assisi. He was going out to preach of the love of God, and one of his brothers said to him; "Brother Francis, some day when you go out to preach, could I go with you?" And Francis says "Well, of course." And the next day when Francis went out to preach, he took the disciple with him, and they went from village to village, from a little hut to a little hut, and Francis would spend a little time talking about their problems, bless them, encourage them, go on to the next one. At the end of the day, when they started back, the young disciple said: "Well, Brother Francis, when we are going to preach?" and he said: "That is what we've been doing all day".

The medium is the message: who we are and have been called to be. The gifts that God gives us individually are those that build the Kingdom. Yes, we need our scholars and our institutions, we need our hierarchies; they are all special gifts that God gave to us. But in that ministry, God needs all of us, indeed all members of the family of God are wonderful apostles. There is a rabbinical saying: when each individual

walks down the street, he or she is preceded by a whole host of angels crying out: "Bow down, bow down, bow down to the presence of God!"

Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban: I have to confess I thought long and hesitated a lot in answering to some invitations you have addressed me until now because I was not sure whether to tell you some things about the elites, the ones with a public voice here and in Europe, or let you know my personal opinion. Therefore, I will answer briefly to the first question and then give a more detailed answer to the second. First, I think the churches have felt as a huge failure the fact that those persons with public responsibilities and right to vote, those who have long talked about and could vote in favor of the Christian roots of Europe, did not do so. Of course, it remains to be established to what extent these persons still are faithful to the churches they belong to. The most important party there is the popular one, which brings together democratic Christians; so, in a certain way their adherence to a church did not make any difference in their final vote. And this could bring on serious problems for the Church, meaning that the way in which the message is transmitted and the way we manifest our fidelity, not to the Church as an institution, but to the truth we have to confess, all this isn't clear anymore.

Now I will tell you how I see this connection between truth and morality. I truly think it can only be regarded like this: when, by emphasizing the search for truth, one is still ready to receive it as it is and let it develop the way it wants to. There are professional seekers of the truth, and I think this is the main reserve, there are different communities searching for the truth with various methodologies, norms and protocols, rituals to look for and approve the result of the search, and these are true elites, but who can always deviate, in the sense that they can adapt the truth to what they expect to find. I believe that in this search for the truth, the main criteria, the main norm is this openness towards it; even though we have the initiative in searching it, it always has an initiative that precedes ours. And to some extent morality manifests itself in this fidelity we have towards our original desire to look for the truth and let it develop. In other words, in order to be more clear and understood by everyone, or better to meet the expectations of everyone here, I believe that truth and morality, this connection fits perfectly in the horizon of the words used in the New Testament that the main goal of our lives is to get to know God. And this knowledge will set us free. They say that the measure granted to us and on the basis of which our eschatological condition will be decided is this very degree of fidelity we have towards the truth.

Wilhelm Dancă: I would like to add something. Saint Basil the Great, commenting upon the Chapters of the Book of Genesis, which speaks about the creation of man, said that man, was created according to the image of God. The face cannot be touched by anyone; it remains no matter what happens. But the resemblance must be conquered, must be

obtained and developed. And this is where man's choice intervenes, his freedom and the world he establishes. The resemblance, as we know and Saint Paul says, is a conquest, and is not given; we must reach the status of the man completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We have this in our nature, but we have to let it blossom and develop. And there are several things to be taken into consideration here. First of all, the educational phenomenon or the educational phase at a low level, I think this is very difficult to do, this education at a calm and quiet fire. We don't have time for this anymore, parents don't have time to spend with their children anymore, the relation teacher-student is more and more official and this goes from one field to another, higher and higher. We lack a direct connection with each other. How is it possible to get to this point in a world like ours? We have been given several warnings. Pope Paul VI said that we do not need masters as much as we need witnesses to bear witness, people whose actions speak louder than their words. Saint Augustine said, "God is in all of us. I was looking for you outside and you were in me", but we forgot about Him. How can we bring Him back, how can we bring back this memory? It is a memory because it means participation in the presence of God in us. I think there are two ways to do this: first, the rediscovering of these personal contacts, direct connections with each other, starting from the bottom, from the family. Then, the rediscovering of the Christian initiation within the Church, because, in recent times, it is so easily overlooked. Finally, at the level of institutions and schools, we must find the ways to make this a living memory again. I will try to make it clear with an example. I was so tired once that my eyes were closing. So, someone told me that there were several possibilities to fix this: either you do a little massage of the muscles of the eye or, there is this special liquid that clears the eyes; because this is why the eyes close: they are dusty. My opinion is that we have a lot of dust on our spiritual eyes and we need this special liquid. And this Congress is a drop of that liquid. Let us multiply these drops of liquid so that our eyes will open towards that education at a low level, because the strange thing is that the elites are hard to be noticed. They usually protect themselves. Value, still fragile most of the times, can be overridden or neglected, and it will not rebel. The danger for us is not to live in a world of values anymore, but in one of machineries of civilization, and to step over these fragile things, to overlook and ignore them. That is why we should look for other ways to clear our eyes to be able to see.

Lucian Farcaş: Thank you for your intervention and for the fact that you have already made the passage to the second question: the relation between human beings, elites and institutions. Without institutions, structures, without such elements of modern life, the elites, the personalities may disappear. For example, I think the institutions in our country, in the economical, political, scientific field had to leave the country because they were not protected, supported.

This is exactly why I wanted you to express your thoughts. You may intervene and maybe find an answer to the question: to what extent should the institutions, organizations, both those belonging to the Church and the public ones, with the responsibilities implied towards the truth, should they help, do they help and to what extent do they stop this search? We are talking of structures of sin, of so many other aspects opposing truth.

Petru Gherghel: I want to go back to two moments: to Cazaban, who said something about the situation in Europe and about the European constitution. Our big surprise has been the rejection of any suggestion regarding the Christian roots of Europe. We recently had the pleasure to welcome here, in Romania, the President of the Conference of Bishop Conferences in Europe, and he told us some things related to the European Constitution and to this sadness that came upon all of us. Of all the countries which are members of the European Union, if one of them votes NO to an intervention, then that action will not be approved. And we've been told that two countries voted NO, so that's why that intervention was denied. And as a continuation to what Farcaş has said, I wanted to add that the institutions today don't look for the spiritual values of the human being that much, they only look for the material ones. Of course, spiritual values continue to manifest themselves, but most of the time the material values are more appreciated. And this is why the institutions are not able to convince their members to truly contribute to this morality, to this truth and common good; because selfishness and materialism intervene and the spiritual dimension of brotherhood, of our belonging to the common body of the human family is overlooked. So, I go back to what I was saying earlier, that this is one of the most difficult problems we face today. And if you go back in time you'll see that where the material values have been emphasized the results are almost catastrophically, a fact we've also experienced. Therefore, I hope that little by little, with the help of those institutions that still appreciate spiritual values, we will help the others to focus and look for both kinds of values, too. Then Europe will be different and our country, too.

Edward McLean: There is just one thing I would like to add, and this is a truth that I consider very important for all of us. We are talking about the structures of violence and nothing could be more violent than warfare. In the middle of the 19th century in my country, the USA, we had a terrible, terrible war: the Civil War, North and South were fighting and hundreds of thousands of lives were lost. When the war was over and it was won by the North, the President, whose name was Abraham Lincoln, was there in the White House and his lieutenants came to him and said: Mr. President, we have won the war, now is the time to destroy your enemies. And Lincoln said: "Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?" We go back to the Gospel, "Love your enemies, do well to those

who hurt you, pray for those who persecute you, then you will be children of your Father in Heaven".

Osman Bilen: This question is difficult for me because in the opening session, there was an evaluation of the European Union and of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, in the sense of the hope for the future. So, I'm the only Muslim here, but I don't reflect any official body. Personally, for me as a citizen of Turkey, it is a delicate issue. For instance, if Christianity is mentioned in the European Constitution, then our situation will be difficult. So, it's a Muslim country about 99 percent of the population, in that sense a Muslim country. Bogdan said something about the European Union representing the *Respublica Christiana*, if it is not a wrong translation. If he meant this, then it is difficult for us to be part of it. So, instead why shouldn't we just be more coherent in our ideals? If the action speaks louder than the words, by being in it, we do not need another name. You will be Christian in it, I will be a Muslim; but if you name it, then we duplicate the process, because you are there as a Christian person and you do not need another name. But when you write it down, Christian becomes a discriminatory action and this is a very delicate issue. Therefore, I should like to reflect on this question with the help of a great Sufi, Rumi. He said that since God creates men knowing that they will become Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and still He has hope in men by continuing to create them, with what right do we think that we should be disappointed about men's future? We do not have the right to be pessimistic about the future by knowing that maybe our differences are sources of enrichment, rather than reason to divide each other by labeling us again. They represent our own ways of reflection of truth; then we might sometimes avoid naming it a second time. Probably that is my best way to put the perspective.

Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban: I would like to make this clear; my phrase was exactly like this: according to the intention and desire of its parents-founders, the European Union has not been a *Respublica Christiana* and it cannot be that, it is not what it intends to become. This is why the third provocation of the Christianity in Europe I was talking about, is this understanding, from the inside, of the search for the truth present in the other traditions, which it has already met. As a specialist in medieval history, I can tell you that within the intellectual area, the meeting between Christianity and Islamism has been extremely prolific at the very point where the Christian truth of faith was being officially formulated. I am referring here to the famous scholastic sentences, which, without the Muslim contribution, cannot be explained and understood. Therefore, the problem is not this. I believe the mentioning of the Christian roots of Europe would have been a statement delicate enough to acknowledge that at the base of the European project there are fundamental notions elaborated within the Christian space, the circumstances provided by Christianity on

one hand and, on the other hand, to leave an opened space for the new types of encounters with the new religions in Europe. So, this is my position, which is not a message or an official position, it is simply the manner in which I try to explain the way I see things and explain what I think. And I'm very glad you used quotations from Rumi's works, which I like so much. .

Hu Yeping: A question for Dancă. This morning, when you presented your paper, at the end you said that life is to the union, to the truth and being, to be united, but not through wisdom because wisdom makes us fear God; rather through the unifying wisdom. I am interested to know, what do you mean by wisdom? Why is wisdom a unifying wisdom?

Wilhelm Dancă: Probably the translation has not been so accurate. I did not exclude the connection between the being, life and wisdom. On the contrary, I said that the wisdom which lightens this process that takes us to the roots, the principles, which makes us be united. The Christian revelation also helps us, by developing in us this profound respect for God and thus keeping us always in the shadow of the roots that give us meaning and unity. Reine Maria-Rilke, a poet born in Prague, in the Czech Republic, wrote in one of his poems that the trees are not united above the earth, but underneath it, their roots are united. And this is what I meant, starting from the being and passing onto life, wisdom, principles, to roots that unite the human beings to God.

Participant: If I may, I would like to express the opinion of a person working within the field of environmental ecology, rather than ask a question. I will speak about the conduct that the institutions should have in the perspective of our admission into the European Union. More precisely to the fact that they should take into account the fact that the present crisis, this profound spiritual crisis, is the consequence of a three-fold estrangement: first of all, the alienation of the human being from himself, from his fellow beings and from nature. So, the educational strategy to be adopted here should stimulate a holistic cultural conscience, which would awake in its turn a universal ethics capable of assuring the interior equilibrium, both at an individual level and at a collective one. So many nations with their different cultures and traditions will form this united Europe and if there will not be order at this level it will be a very sad situation, a failure. Thank you.

Egidiu Condac: A general question is not addressed to any particular person. My question is related to the second provocation presented by Lucian, regarding the elites and their promotion by the institutions. There are several traditions in which masters train and form their disciples, and then there are other traditions in which the institutions promote their elites. My question is: do we notice a change in this direction

in the recent times and if we do, how obvious is this change in the promotion of the elites by the institutions? Are the institutions always capable of promoting their elites and do these elites prefer to stay in the shadow of an institution? Thank you.

Lucian Farcaş: I would like to add something in order to complete the question. We have a very troubled history, characterized by a restless past of the institutions in our country; when everything seemed to calm down and develop, some other historic event would appear and ruin this stability. And this seems to be a characteristic of our nation.

Wilhelm Dancă: There is a joke about one of our ex-presidents, Nicolae Ceauşescu; they say that he died and went to the Inferno. Once there, Saint Peter told him that as a punishment he had to hit a barrel with two big wooden spoons. But when he got to the barrel, he saw there were two barrels instead of one. After some time, Saint Peter comes and asks him, "Well, how is it going?", and he said: "Well, I hit one barrel, I hit the other, but in the end I only had to hit one of them". "Why is that?" Saint Peter asked. "Because one was full of Jews; they pushed each other up, so I had to keep the lid down because they lifted it up. The other barrel was full of Romanians; they pulled each other down so the lid didn't move". It is the same way with the elites. We have had some very rough times in our past and this made us very skeptical, very reluctant when it comes to trusting the others, finding out what is good, valuable; and this type of behavior still continues to exist in the shadow of some institutions, when some situations are overlooked. When someone succeeds in his endeavors, when he lifts himself above the others, instead of receiving support, he is pulled down by the others. This is where the Church should probably intervene more, in some other way the family; we should start and encourage this type of behavior at home, we should encourage our children and everyone to promote the other and be happy for him; this is the essential feature of happiness: it must be shared with the others. Our past is characterized by selfish happiness. It is high time we shared our happiness with others. This is the provocation of our times, of the times we live and I think it is up to each of us if we can answer this provocation or not. A universal answer is very difficult, if possible.

Yuriy Pidlisnyy: A few words about institutions and elites, about the promotion of elites by institutions or promotion of institutions by elites. I would like to accent only one particular aspect of this problem: if we hear names of personalities decorated with the Nobel Prize, we want to know which institution do they represent? We say, "Oh, Yale University has such persons. It is a great institution". Next we hear of some professor from Yale University, we do not know him, but we know he comes from Yale University. On the one hand, a Nobel Prize winner makes the name of his

university. Then this university makes the name for other professors. So, one pushes another. It is only one aspect.

George McLean: We have experienced fantastic transformations, if we think back to the 1930s. In the 1930s, the sense of importance, dignity, worth, etc., had to be a part of a movement: Mussolini's, Hitler's or Stalin's movement. But the important thing was to be part of this great movement. Now it seems utterly strange that one would think of their worth simply in terms of these institutions. The world, the outlook really has changed, and now we are thinking rather of the development of civil society, the engagement of the people. Was that not the message of the Second Vatican Council: participation, solidarity and communion? It was to invert the top-down perspective to a bottom-up perspective. This can be done especially if we have a sense of relatedness, if we are all Adams and we need great institutions to bind us together. But if we are not Adams, but rather related beings, one to another, than solidarity and union become strengthened. Therefore, in the question of the relationship between person and institution, the special effort today needs to be that the institution promotes the freedom and the initiative of the individual, that the institution takes the responsibility where the individuals cannot manage, an issue that is broader. This is an essential element in the message of the Church, since the 1930s: solidarity and particularly subsidiarity. That has a new meaning for today: a union brings individuals alive, not suppresses them. So I would think this as an important opening that we have at the present time and the way in which that relationship of person and institution can be helpfully understood and promoted.

Petru Gherghel: A question related to Egidiu's question, regarding the present times. Were the Church, the Second Vatican Council, the ones who promoted Pope John Paul II as one of the greatest personalities of the world, or was he the elite who promoted the Church lately? And by asking this question, I wanted to remind you again that he was capable of bringing together so many personalities around him, so many elites, like no one else did.

Isidor Chinez: A general question. There is a Latin saying which says that since *verum* as *bonum est diffusivum sui*; the good capable of spreading, spreads to those capable of receiving it. From what I have seen, the elites have the main role in spreading the truth. But I think we should develop this towards the last part, towards this *sui*, the human being capable for the truth, thirsty of the truth, raised in this truth. Dancă was speaking of that dust which stops us from seeing the truth. My problem here is different; I see it from the perspective of the priest with a pastoral mission, as a man of the Church, dedicated, and sometimes very enthusiastic in proposing the truth to the students and believers. But at a certain point you realize that this truth doesn't get to them and still I don't want to be pessimistic. I remember

that once a professor from the Seminary, while talking to a friend told him about the latest changes in the Holy Trinity. And his friend, a priest from a parish, answered him: "Do you know that I have no wood for this winter?" I think it is like this. There are elites, and I think God makes it that there are masters, professors, but also witnesses and the necessary strategies to allow the truth to reach even the human beings in the most remote villages. And another example, related to Europe: the truth in Europe, the European man with his discipline, his fair political laws from the West which don't reach us, I am talking about us, about our situation. We are talking about strategies, about an idea.

Abelardo Lobato: My question is, at the end of such an intense day, is the aim of this Congress to describe the situation of truth, morality or to find a solution to bring back the truth and morality in the present times? I remember that during the Middle Ages, the authors used to make reference to the Psalm 11, which says, "The truths today, in the present times are very few, they are almost taken for granted". So I ask myself, how is it possible for the truth to lose its place, to lose its importance if it is connected to the being?

But the answer is that human beings don't know the truth and ignore it. In our times, the two themes of our Congress, both truth and morality, are out of our reach and beyond our powers. The truth has almost disappeared. In the novel *The Name of the Rose*, Umberto Eco says to a person who wants to be part of the present times: "I'm telling you, most of all forget the word truth, it values nothing".

Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban: The manifestation of the various institutions does not mean that the public expression of faith should be shy or fearsome. All the Churches and the other cults should feel free to proclaim their manner of understanding the truth. But all this is not from a relativistic point of view; this is the essential condition for dialogue and for understanding, for understanding each other. Therefore, what I can say from the very beginning that could be done is assuring this absolute liberty of expression. And I would add something more, something from my personal preferences and my academic experience, so it is not related to what we have talked about today, but I think it is something that should be avoided in a way. We must avoid the type of schizophrenia between the public and the private. Fortunately, in our country the pressure exerted by the fact that the space of discussion is a laic one is not so strong as to force the persons with public functions, like me, to make a very clear distinction between what they express as a personal opinion and an official statement. This happens, for example, in France, where from what I have seen some of the professors do not have public dignities; they are just professors in public universities, and we know very well that in their private life they are believers involved in the study of themes within the proximity of the religious phenomenon, and when they hold a conference they say, "I am

speaking now as a researcher, as an academic, as a scientist, nothing more of what I believe should be seen". Once more, it is perfectly clear to me that when someone is involved in a research it is obvious that he should take all the necessary precautions, scientifically speaking, to respect all the norms and to really look for answers. But this doesn't mean that there should be this coyness in saying that you really care about what you study and that you love what you do. So, this is my position. I've been regarded as a curiosity the moment I got to an École des Études, where I had to hold some seminaries; in one of these seminaries with the researchers I spoke about what I was studying, it was perfectly accepted, the results of my work were accepted; my type of adherence wasn't considered strange and dubious, but it was regarded as a curiosity. Therefore, I would say that what needs to be protected, in a way, or what should be saved at this moment in our country is the freedom that public persons enjoy, that of being at the same time honest and polite and willing to meet the other. This is something that truly exists, fortunately, and that needs to be advocated to continue to exist; the absolute freedom of expression, of course at the same time respecting the others. And I think we have real chances to realize our goals in this direction. Thank you.

Gabriela Belebea-Nicolae: For lack of time to ask questions, I will state them as observations related to what has been discussed here today. I will start from Aristotle's statement according to which we can speak of open truths and closed truths. Morals work with open truths, in which uncertainty is important, in which things can change, and this is precisely why these are personal truths. This is why personal experience and testifying our experience are so important in the pedagogy of morals. So, the danger of turning these open truths, the personal truths into closed truths, into scientific truths which would repeat each time the situation repeats itself, turns morals into ideology. This was one of the observations, which we can discuss tomorrow, and which is related both to the institutions and to the pedagogy, things we have talked about today. The second observation I wanted to make is about an institution, which has not always been a fortunate one when it comes to the history of humankind and here I am thinking of the democratic elections in the 20th century. We have chosen, in a democratic way, some extremely malefic and cruel elites; and there is danger not to find any equivalency between these elites and value; there is the danger to promote some political elites, these are the ones I'm speaking about, through a democratic vote, through the vote of the majority, and after to find out that they aren't representative at all of what elites should be. A third observation is about something Bishop Gherghel said and which I like very much. It regarded the coagulation of the elites, something Pope John Paul II was very good at. A coagulation not only of elites from various religions, but I think the Church should make a merit of the mediation of the dialogue between elites from different fields. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to have a common language. The

persons involved in the scientific field with those dedicated to the religious world, it would be difficult. Other observations have been made to speak about a transcendental truth and not of a scientific one or of an ethical truth, like I am suggesting, an open truth in which uncertainty and insecurity have their own value, and I don't think we can talk about these two as presenting any importance in any other types of truths. Moreover, I think the necessary efforts are not only those to encourage the elites to do pedagogy like the one Aristotle said "from man to man", because otherwise morals cannot be taught. Therefore, I think it is important to have a common language even if our technical terms are so different.

PART II

TRUTH AND MORALITY

CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS OF THE OBJECTIVITY OF VALUES IN A PLURALISTIC AND DIALOGICAL WORLD

ZBIGNIEW WENDLAND

This paper concerns my research in contemporary philosophy on many matters pertaining to the philosophy of society and the philosophy of culture, that is, the crisis of the contemporary society, the rationality of human and social affairs, metaphysics, values and their grounding etc.

I shall draw some conclusions coming from views belonging to many philosophical schools, currents, etc. At times, I will formulate my own opinion on the basis of rich argumentations created by many contemporary philosophers. This refers to and continues the paper which I delivered in the seminar organized in the fall of the year 2004 by the Council of Research in Values and Philosophy in Washington. What I wish to say in my report here is a continuation of the content of that paper. In particular, my report concerns the objective basis for values in conditions which could be created by the paradigm of *dialogical rationality*.

The main proposition of my view on *dialogical rationality*[1] as the cultural foundation for contemporary civil society and the crisis of the present-day-world are in their very essence a crisis of reason. It is symptomatic for the critical-negative thinking about the present society and it future state that the crisis of civilization can be brought to the crisis of reason and, in turn, the fall of reason is the cause of the downfall of the whole Western civilization. As a consequence of this, critics perceive a declining significance of the present model of Western rationalism, which earlier had been acknowledged as the main determinant of the progress of our civilization, the synonym of Enlightenment and modernity. In the past enlightenment and rationality had been connected with progress and modernity, whereas, at present, rationality realized by science, technology, economics, and systems of power has proved itself a very ambiguous tool, frequently leading to unwanted results, being deceptive, absurd, even criminal. Its symbols became the smoky stacks in Auschwitz, gulags behind the Ural Mountains, some cases of genocide in Africa and in the Balkans, as well as devastation of the World Trade Center in New York, and the deaths

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[1] On the topic of dialogical rationality see also my (Z. Wendland) *Dialogical Rationality as cultural Foundations for Civil Universal Society*, in *Dialogue and Universalism*, 5-6 (2005) 111-131.

of hundreds of children in Beslan (Russia).[2] It is amazing that man, who so elaborately mediates his actions, being from the daybreak of Western civilization considered a rational creature, and therefore creator of goodness and other positive values, can cause so much evil, rationally scheduled disasters; this shakes our faith in the reliability of reason.

There are two paradigms of acting reason: (1) *instrumental rationality*. My thesis is that the two mentioned paradigms of rationality have exhausted their creative possibilities. The time has come when we must look for another kind of rationality which could correspond better to existing challenges. This new kind of rationality would better fit a state of contemporary philosophical awareness.

The instrumental rationality seems to be ambiguous in consequences and, additionally, it has an inclination to turn into irrationality. From the other side, metaphysical rationality has lost its effectiveness because of the historical evolution of philosophy itself. The twentieth century has been called post-metaphysical or even anti-metaphysical. However, metaphysics may be worth defending, and there are many who successfully do it. I am personally of the opinion that, taking into account many essential threats of further existence of humankind as well as physical world, the problem of metaphysics, and at least the so-called metaphysics of foundations, has lost its importance.

All the efforts of philosophers, and of all reasoning and acting people, should be directed to shaping a new kind of rationality as a new paradigm which could function within existing civilizations. My proposal is to label this new kind of rationality *dialogical rationality*. This rationality could be something which would unite people, nations, regions, civilizations, cultures, religions, philosophical directions, etc., beyond all hitherto existing differences and controversies. The conception of dialogical rationality belongs to the greatest achievements of contemporary philosophy like philosophy of dialogue, views of Jaspers, Popper, Habermas, representatives of postmodernism, and others.

Referring to postmodernist philosophy, which decidedly rejects the idea of metaphysical objectivity in application to truth, goodness and all other values, we should put this problem on a more general level and in connection with other points of view instead of solely that of postmodernism.

What happens to the idea of objectivity in application to values if one acknowledges plurality itself as a value, maybe one of the most important values in the contemporary world of many cultures, religions, civilizations, geographical regions, philosophical standpoints, variety of peoples, etc.? In the face of the fact of pluralism, as Rangs calls it, we speak about dialogical rationality, which as a paradigm gives all participants of

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[2] I mean the terrorist action which took place at the beginning of September, 2004, in one town of North Kaukaz, in result of which many hundreds of children and adult persons were murdered.

dialogue equal rights in expressing their opinions and proposals towards how to understand values, principles, laws, moral notions, etc. This leads to a situation in which one can suspect that everything can be a value, regardless of what is proposed as a value. Or, maybe, the answer could be that there are not any values which would have universally obliging character?

Both of these stances, first, relativism, connected with skepticism, subjectivism, sociologism; and, secondly nihilism, connected with extreme subjectivism and anarchism, are not to be held as the last word, because both stances are leaving people in great confusion and they have provoked strong opposition. Sometimes, as in the cases of relativism and skepticism, we have attitudes which are logically self-overturning because of an inherent self-contradiction.

Among others, as was shown in my paper in Washington, the most important reason for the strong opposition against postmodernism has been an objection on the part of many philosophers to the postmodern assassination of metaphysical objectivism towards values, especially the three most fundamental within our civilization: truth, good and beauty. But, in my opinion, the postmodern thinkers, at least many of them, only reject the metaphysical objectivism, but their stance does not mean any nihilism, anarchism or extreme subjectivism towards values. That means that the serious postmodernists do not desire that the world exist without any values. They only accentuate the fact that all values have exclusively human character. Moreover, I appreciate aspects of the postmodernist philosophy of culture. It is worthwhile to emphasize that postmodernism supports two very important principles which determine substantial foundations of Western civilization: *freedom of creation* and *plurality of opinions*. Also, postmodernism shows interest and respect for what small, individual, peripherally, unrepeatable, and thus what is threatened in its existence and defenseless. I perceive this aspect of the postmodern thinking in accord with the *Negative Dialectics* of Theodor W. Adorno,[3] one of the two founders of the Frankfurt School, where it was called *micrological sinking* (*mikrologische Versenkung*) into that which is non-identical, escaping general schemata, universally acknowledged rules, obligatory standards and so on. Examples include threatened small nations, vanishing cultures, forgotten languages, repelled human individuals, deprived human dignity, underestimated meanings, unperceived possibilities, etc. Postmodern currents inscribe themselves well in the landscape of the philosophical thought of the twentieth century, created by many philosophical directions.

Concerning the problem of objectivity of values, difference between the anti-objectivism of postmodern thinkers and many who are advocates of the objectivity of truth and other values for example, Buber, Popper, Habermas and others, is rather specious. The postmodernists

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[3] Cf. Adorno Theodor W., *Negative Dialektik*, Frankfurt a. Main 1966.

propose openly and frankly the elimination of the notion of objectivity from the language of science and philosophy, replacing this notion with other notions like tolerance, solidarity and inter-subjectivity, which the others keep the notion of objectivity, denying *expressis verbis* all suspicions about relativism, but while at the same time they, in fact, identify objectivity with inter-subjectivity attained by virtue of dialogue and agreement.

So, in fact, the difference between postmodernists and their opponents is not great and rather only apparent. Thus Habermas, the greatest opponent of post-modernism, who simultaneously accepts the argument about the end of metaphysics, regarding the present epoch as post-metaphysical and insisting that objectivity is nothing more than inter-subjectivity, fixed as a result of communication processes among men who in this way are reaching agreements towards the substances and ranges of acknowledged values.

A position to Habermas in the matter of metaphysics is that of Popper, the only difference being that his position is still apparently more inconsistent because Popper on one hand, rejected metaphysics (for example, in his attitude toward historicism); but, on the other hand, the author of the *Poverty of Historicism* was speaking about the existence of the objective truth as about something that exists, through being achieved in the endless process of coming near to the supposed ideal. The same concerns Poppers' famous concept of the "third world" existing in the form of a collection of all scientific hypotheses. Laws and theories as well as products of other kinds of human activity (works of arts, creatures of techniques, etc.) are compared by the author of *Objective Knowledge*[4] with the Platonic World of Ideas.

Likewise, representatives of the philosophy of dialogue, whose opinions were proclaimed in the 1920s on one hand, threw away traditional metaphysics and, on the other hand, willingly used expressions like metaphysics of orientation, metaphysics of dialogue, metaphysics of meeting and others. There are still others as Heidegger and Levinas, who sometimes express critical attitudes to metaphysics which, however, only mean one kind of metaphysics, and then they come back to the metaphysics of another sort.

All these examples, showing efforts of parting with metaphysics and coming back to it, rejecting metaphysics but however being in no case consistent and denial, only by speaking that metaphysics, which consists in seeking for certainly and a final objective base of all things, constitutes a need of the human mind. Although there exists some distinct tendency in modernity and post-modernity to deny the validity of metaphysical investigations and to confining truth to empirical truth and human conventions or acts of agreement, we will never get rid of this need in human nature to perceive the world in ultimate categories.

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[4] Popper Karl R., *Objective Knowledge*, London, 1972.

Many contemporary philosophers and philosophical currents actually have denied the metaphysical concept of objectivity. One of the reasons for this is the presupposition that, by doing, philosophy is rid of difficult, irresolute questions regarding how it is possible to get in touch with the reality being independently of mind, culture and language.

Present-day philosophers tend more and more to arrive at the common conclusion that one will not succeed in knowing an Absolute Reality. Additionally, there are many other (cultural, sociological, even political) arguments which allow us to draw the conclusion that in contemporary conditions there is no basis for persisting to search for a metaphysical concept of objectivity. For example, some make the assumption that the question of the objective truth removes one of the causes of clashes, conflicts, even wars and terrorist activities.

But all this does not mean that people will live, and should live, without any concept of objectivity, that is, without objectivity-grounded values. First, there is the second type of objectivity, which is equal to inter-subjectivity, achieved by interpersonal, international, intercultural dialogue, and acts of agreement. Secondly, it is hard to imagine that all people will want to live without metaphysically-grounded objective values.

As was said earlier, metaphysics fulfils a constant need of the human mind, and it is rather impossible to assume that people will forsake objective values having metaphysical grounding and will confine themselves to values possessing only human agreement. Kant is known for a famous formula: "I had to suspend knowledge, to make room for faith." It seems that this formula has lost nothing in importance and it can find application to the present situation. This new application can be seen as follows: if the philosophy whose tool is reason, fails to satisfy the human need for founding human life on metaphysically-grounded values, this blank space will become filled by faith. Many Christian, Hindu and Islamic thinkers consider philosophy to be necessary, but not indispensable. Following Kant, one can say: "I have to suspend philosophy, to make room for values given by faith".

Summing up, the present-day world needs values which are universally acknowledged and respectable. The matter of values should be the most important concern of all people, especially intellectuals, priests, philosophers, etc. Acknowledged and respectable values should be absorbed from many civilizations, cultures, religions, philosophical views, as well as from the diversity and richness of thinking of individual people who are linked by a common care of the further fate of the physical world and the future of the human species.

The way in which the recognition of necessary values, as well as the fixing of their logical extents and contents, will be realized is by finding agreement through dialogue. In the paradigm of the *dialogical rationality,* the most important thing is the dialogue itself as the manner of weighing common values. In this paradigm it is not important from which sources and on which basis or reasons nations participate; each participant in the

dialogue derives his values or the arguments for determining its rightness. In this regard we ought to admit the full variety of sources and arguments, such as the reason of philosophers, the faith of confessors of different religions, various practical regards, the awareness of existing threats, the acceptance of common aims, etc.

The paradigm of dialogical rationality is derived from a step beyond (i.e. which in no way omits Hegel's sense of the word "*Aufhebung*") the two earlier paradigms: that of *metaphysical rationality* and that of *instrumental rationality*. In the paradigm of the *dialogical rationality* the acceptance of values is inter-subjective, resulting from the will of finding agreements and through sincere dialogue which seeks to weave together metaphysical and instrumental rationality, deepened by faith and enlivened by the present challenges of the global encounter of civilization.

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CHAPTER VI

ON THE PROBLEM OF THE TEMPORALITY
OF MORAL TRUTH

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The fact that different languages have different words for moral issues seems to relate to Frege's celebrated distinction between *Sinn* (sense) and *Bedeutung* (reference). According to Frege's distinction, even though words have different meanings (such as "morning star" and "evening star"), they can still refer to the same reality. In view of this, it seems reasonable to ask if the words "ethics" (English), "morale" (Italian), "sittlich" (German), "akhlaq" (Arabic), etc., are different ways of foregrounding the same reality in different cultures. Said differently, can we take different words, pertinent to moral issues, as the historical-cultural interpretations of the same reality? This very question paves the way for pursuing the problem of moral truth albeit, on the surface, it sounds the Nietzschean phrase that "There are no moral phenomena at all, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena"[1]. Behind Nietzsche's radical critique of morality, we can find some glimmer of Montaigne's concept of interpretation:

> Who would not say that commentaries increase doubt and ignorance, since there is no book to be found, human or divine, with which the world has any business, in which the difficulties are cleared up by the interpretation? ... When did we ever agree in saying: "This book has had enough? There is nothing more to be said about it?" … And yet do we find any end to the need for interpreting? ... On the contrary, we obscure and bury the meaning; we can no longer discover it without negotiating many fences and barriers…and there is always a different road to follow. There is no end to our investigations …There is more trouble in interpreting interpretations than in interpreting the things themselves, and there are more books on books than on any other subject. We do nothing but write comments on one another. The whole world is swarming with commentaries, of authors there is a great dearth[2].

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[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, (trans. W. Kaufmann), Vintage Books, New York 1966,85 (section 108).
[2] Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, (trans. J. M. Cohen), Penguin Books, New York 1958, 347-349.

From Montaigne's perspective toward interpretation, we can understand Nietzsche's phrase above as follows: Moral interpretation of phenomena is at the same time an interpretation of moral interpretations of phenomena. Since "moral interpretation of phenomena" is also a phenomenon to be interpreted morally, then moral interpretation is not something which determines the meaning of morality as such. Hence morality is always something to be captured in its being deferred or postponed. In other words, morality appears more to be a matter of discourse than an actuality of life here and now. Hence the matter for Nietzsche's "overman" is to go beyond moral interpretation of phenomena (that is, beyond good and evil) and to interpret the world in terms of the will to power.

Alfred Ayer would come close to Nietzsche's position when he argues that moral statements are merely expressions of moral sentiments simply because moral statements add nothing to empirical facts. He puts his ideas as follows:

> We shall set ourselves to show that in so far as statements of value are significant, they are ordinarily "scientific" statements, and that in so far as they are not scientific, they are not in the literal sense significant, but are simply expressions of emotion which can be neither true nor false … What we are interested in is the possibility of reducing the whole sphere of ethical terms to non-ethical terms. We are enquiring whether the statements of ethical value can be translated into statements of empirical fact … The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content. Thus if I say to someone, "You acted wrongly in stealing that money," I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, "You stole that money." In adding that this action is wrong I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it … It merely serves to show that the expression of it is attended by certain feelings in the speaker … If now I generalize my previous statement and say, "Stealing money is wrong," I produce a sentence which has no factual meaning. It is clear that there is nothing said here which can be true or false. Another man may disagree with me about the wrongness of stealing, in the sense that he may not have the same feelings about stealing as I have, and he may quarrel with me on account of my moral sentiments. But he cannot, strictly speaking, contradict me. For in saying that a certain type of action is right or wrong, I am not making any factual statement. I am merely expressing certain moral sentiments. And the man who is ostensibly

contradicting me is merely expressing his moral sentiments. So that there is plainly no sense in asking which of us is in the right. For neither of us is asserting a genuine proposition … In every case in which one would commonly be said to be making an ethical judgment, the function of the relevant ethical word is purely "emotive." It is used to express feeling about certain objects, but not to make any assertion about them … We can now see why it is impossible to find a criterion for determining the validity of ethical judgments … And we have seen that sentences which simply express moral judgments do not say anything. They are pure expressions of feelings and as such do not come under the category of truth and falsehood … The task of describing the different feelings that the different ethical terms are used to express, and the different reactions that they customarily provoke, is a task for the psychologist. There cannot be such a thing as ethical science, if by ethical science one means the elaboration of a "true" system of morals. For we have seen that, as ethical judgments are mere expressions of feelings, there can be no way of determining the validity of any ethical system, and, indeed, no sense in asking whether any such system is true. All that one may legitimately enquire in this connection is: What are the moral habits of a given person or some people, and what causes them to have precisely those habits and feelings? And this enquiry falls wholly within the scope of the existing social sciences[3].

It becomes evident that for Nietzsche and Ayer, morality is constituted merely within the subjective domain of humanity. In other words, for them, since morality reflects subjective reception of amoral phenomena or facts in the form of moral sentiments or moral interpretations, different words pertinent to moral issues do not mirror phenomena (facts) outside us. Then the realm of phenomena (facts) outside sets bounds to our subjective domain of morality. This is obviously a spatial (or, say, geometrical) limitation of morality in terms of the distinction between subjectivity (inside) and objectivity (outside). Since this imprisoning of morality within human subjectivity implies that the human mind can go to the realm of objective facts beyond morality, the human mind can have a critical reflection on moral sentiments or moral interpretations from without, i.e., by discharging itself from any moral

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[3] Alfred J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York 1946, 102-112.

obligation. Thus amoral realm of phenomena (facts) becomes a neutral standpoint for the analysis and critique of morality.

However, viewed from this perspective, since the books on morality, historical and social discourses on moral problems, and culturally and religiously established moral principles will stand within the realm of amoral phenomena (facts), morality (viz., moral sentiments and moral interpretations) will be deprived of the linguistic and social ground proper to its own character. Finally, it is transformed into a 'speechless morality'. To put it another way, both Nietzsche and Ayer lead us to a paradoxical thought as follows: Moral interpretation is amoral in itself simply because it is a social or historical phenomenon as such; similarly moral sentiments become amoral when they are expressed within language simply because moral language is a social fact in itself. Accordingly moral language is deprived of morality, and moral interpretation turns out to be an amoral phenomenon. Morality is intrinsically fused with, and at the same time separated from, amoral facts. Hence where is morality to be found and understood if we still claim that it really exists? Do not Nietzsche and Ayer transform morality into a sort of dream or mirage?

Even if a critique of Nietzsche's and Ayer's perspectives toward morality is not the basic objective of this paper, we can differentiate two opposite poles in their claims. They make us aware that moral truth cannot be constituted and validated by universalizing (objectifying) moral expressions on the one hand; they refute the objective reality and validity of moral truth by universalizing their own claim to invalidate moral truth on the other. Both Nietzsche and Ayer appear to stand in the Cartesian line of thinking when they take moral expressions as the representations of subjective ground against the objective world of phenomena or naked empirical facts[4]. However we should remember that they consider moral expressions themselves belonging to the objective world of phenomena as separated from subjective morality.

Nevertheless one may still wonder what makes moral expressions historically and culturally significant so much so that they never lose their meanings and functions in the course of time. Are we allowed to assume that moral expressions are of historical-cultural significance mostly because they are inseparable from morality? Put differently, can we take moral expressions as something dialectically engaged with moral truth which is a basically temporal and historical event? This paper will claim that moral truth is a temporal and historical event in the sense that it cannot be identified with, or universalized within, moral expressions (or moral

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[4] Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's words "God is dead" reveals the Cartesian structure of Nietzsche's thought specifically in the contexts of "will to power" and "overman." See M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, (trans. W. Lovitt), Harper Torchbooks, New York 1977, 53-112.

principles) themselves, while it makes itself understood and experienced by means of moral expressions.

When Nietzsche and Ayer claim that morality emanates out of human subjectivity, they indirectly teach us that an objective world of phenomena or naked empirical facts cannot be taken as the source for validating moral truth. In their view, since morality appears to be something beyond mere scientific observation or objectively valid use of language, both thinkers approach "moral truth" as the expression of subjective morality either as a matter of political interest or as a matter of psycho-sociological investigation. However much they differ in their approaches to moral truth as either political or psycho-sociological matter, they still come close to each other in their assumption that moral truth can be posed and refuted within a critical analysis of language. Finally, moral truth turns out to be something determined as a linguistic object so that it can be handled by the human will. Nevertheless we can still raise the following questions: Can moral truth be identified with moral principles' claim to universality or with the expressions of moral sentiments? Is the Cartesian schema of subject and object (which appears to dominate Nietzsche's endeavor to discover a genealogy of morals and Ayer's separation of morality from objective facts) appropriate to understand the nature of moral truth?

To survey the meaning of these questions, we should first attempt to pinpoint the location where moral principles claim universality. The history of ethics as the history of philosophy of moral order presents a plurality of perspectives to the source of moral principles. While Socrates and Plato inclined toward locating moral principles within the awareness of the eternal truth of ideas, Aristotle tended to temporalize them within the ethos of different cultures. While Christianity and Islam recognized moral principles as legitimated by divine revelation and the natural human mind, Immanuel Kant secularized them by reducing the source of ethics to the pure cognition of practical reason ("categorical imperative"). While British philosophers attempted to find the legitimacy of moral principles within human sentiments of societal and individual good, Nietzsche and some modern skeptical philosophers, like Max Nordau and Max Stirner, reduced them to either "conventional lies" or self-interest.

Albeit the plurality of perspectives as to the source of ethics cannot be reconciled, moral principles seem to have still something to claim in favor of being human. Thus the problem of the source (and legitimacy) of moral principles somehow differs from the call of those principles upon us to take a moral action. The reason for this is that while the source (and legitimacy) of moral principles is a philosophical or theoretical problem, the call of those principles upon us to take a moral action finds its real location in human praxis. In other words, the semantic and axiological meaning of moral principles cannot represent those principles' power to call upon us to act morally. The power of moral principles to call upon us to take a moral action is always more than semantic or an axiological determinations of their meaning. Even in Max Nordau's case, reducing moral principles to

"conventional lies" doesn't prevent us from thinking and acting morally, simply because any attempt to discover moral principles as "conventional lies" is to situate the human mind within a moral action. To discover a lie is to attempt to place human being within a morally secure field. Likewise Ayer's determination of a fact such as "stealing money" is already a moral determination, and not a mere neutral scientific explanation, of this fact. However the discussion on rightness or wrongness of stealing money belongs to a reflective level of moral thinking which is based on the previous moral determination of the fact[5].

To discover or experience a truth behind or in front of moral principles as applied within a historical situation is the event of moral truth itself. Said differently, all moral principles are reflexive in the sense that they allow us to reflect on both the situation surrounding us and on themselves critically. We can experience their reflective character mostly within the plurality of moral principles since each moral principle establishes a sort of dialogue or reflexivity in its relation to other moral principles. Put differently, the plurality of moral principles allows us to think about a moral problem within the space established by them. At this moment different moral principles take the form of dialogical discourses and hence let us reflect both on themselves and the situation surrounding us critically. Take note that Nietzsche's radical critique of traditional morality as the genealogy of morals is made possible not only by his historical-psychological research but also by the reflexivity of moral principles.

Nietzsche's historical-psychological researches stand within the field or path opened up by the reflexivity of moral principles. Just as devaluation of all values is, for Nietzsche, to pave the way for revaluing them, so to discover the demoralizing effect of traditional morality on human beings is to have a presupposition of the essence of morality and, hence, to remain in the realm of morality. The reflexivity of moral principles indicates that moral truth is not something to be determined within, and discovered from, moral principles themselves, due to the fact that moral principles can possibly be employed as a mask hiding immoral actions. Moreover, as we learn from philosophers, there cannot be a rule for the correct application of the rules. Since the best rules cannot prevent us from mishandling them, the semantic truth (i.e., linguistic meaning) of the rules is not the same as the practical truth emerging in their application within a given situation. Only through dialogical relation between different moral principles within a given situation, is it possible to discover if any moral principle is mishandled or employed as a mask. To determine any action as "masking" or "mishandling" is already a moral reflection.

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[5] For further discussion on the distinction and relation between these two levels of morality, see Robert Sokolowski, "Moral Thinking" in *Edmund Husserl and the Phenomenological Tradition: Essays in Phenomenology*, edit. By R. Sokolowski, CUA Press, Washington, D.C., 1988, 235-248.

Hence moral truth is always something to be discovered anew in every changing condition via critical reflection upon the situation surrounding us and upon the moral principles to be applied within this situation. In other words, moral truth can emerge in our critical awareness toward moral principles in their application to ever-changing situations. Moral truth presumes first our freedom to recognize morality and to act morally in every condition. Said more openly, moral truth presumes both our prior experience with itself so that we can re-cognize it and our openness toward its new (and possibly different) presence so that we can re-experience it. From this perspective, the problem with Kant's ethics seems to be his insisting on the categorical imperative as if morality is something to be fixed within universalized maxims. The un-conditionality of moral truth is not to be found within maxims universalized (formalized) by practical reason, but rather within the reflexivity and responsiveness of the human mind vis-à-vis moral principles and moral situations. Against Kant's moral theory, we consider that moral truth cannot be captured (or laid out or formalized) within universal moral expressions themselves. There is always a dialectical (finite, temporal, mutual) relation between moral truth and universal moral expressions.

However, at this point, we should not go astray—while seeking for the meaning of moral truth—by elevating the reflexive and responsive power of the human mind above all moral principles and the situation surrounding us. Obviously the idea of elevating the human mind above all moral principles and historical situations is a metaphysical and theoretical stand which stands for the imperialistic will of human reason. Since this presupposes a distance between itself and moral principles as well as historical situations, it loses its own legitimacy to criticize them due to depriving itself of the historical experiences of moral obligation. The Arabic word "khulq", the root-word of "akhlaq" (morality), is very helpful to designate the status of the human mind vis-à-vis moral principles and moral situations. "Khulq" has meanings like "character, nature, habit, and constitution." While "khulq" refers to the natural constitution of human being, "akhlaq" designates the moral formation of natural constitution of human being in terms of moral principles, moral actions, ethos, religion, and historical situations.

However, both "khulq" and "akhlaq" signify moral experiences of a person in the sense that this experience forms pre-understanding which guides the person regarding moral principles and a given situation. For that reason, it is in insurmountable tension with universal moral rules, so much so that the human mind can have a function only "in between" the universality of moral rules and the individuality of moral experiences. This approach indicates also the place where "moral truth" can come out. In Islamic ethics, moral truth is to be found in moral action which is brought to existence in a given situation through deliberate decision (moral intention), bearing twofold bonds with universal moral principles and individual moral experiences.

From this perspective, moral truth becomes a part of the moral experiences (pre-understanding) of a person while it enriches the semantic meaning of moral principles, and its existence has an influence upon changing situations. Moral experiences as pre-understanding of a person with regard to moral principles and historical situations develop basically through moral truth which is fundamentally a temporal and finite event. In its temporality and finiteness, moral truth does not necessarily imply a categorically true and valid moral principle which can function as a model for possible moral actions, as Kant assumed. Rather, moral truth signifies basically the temporality and finiteness of human being in such a degree that it brings the fallible character of moral consciousness to the fore.[6] As Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics reveals, human experience is basically an experience of negation.

Accordingly, moral truth is an event through which our finite being unveils itself in its temporality and gains an opportunity to reflect upon itself critically. As a part of our pre-understanding, moral truth pertains to our historical being in that it hints at how our being is formed. It becomes clear that the temporality of moral truth is not a mere moment which comes about and passes away, but is a part of our being. As the relationship between the words "khulq" and "akhlaq" suggests, moral truth temporalizes itself within our character, nature, habit, and constitution over the course of time, by means of which we can deliberate on moral principles and moral situations. Hence it is always more than our moral sentiments and good-will. By way of the temporality of moral truth as a part of our historical being, moral situations and moral principles reveal themselves as a world of meaning affecting our destiny and being affected by it, not as world of naked empirical facts (or phenomena).

Moral truth, thus understood, enriches the semantic meaning of moral principles. Even if all types of moral principles are expressed within universalized forms, the scope of their meaning is not determined for all times. Unavoidably all moral principles are in tension with moral experiences and thus with moral truth, in that they become subject to revision as moral experiences are being formed. Said differently, moral principles reflect mostly a sterilized (idealized) world of moral reflection similar to Plato's eternal ideas. In contrast, the actual moral world is always blurred and confusing, where moral truth is to be gained again and again. The tension between moral experience and moral principles unveils itself in many perspectives. For instance, the so-called "ought/is problem" reflects the unbridgeable gap between the universality of moral principles and the temporality of moral experiences. While "ought" represents basically our value-system and belief-based moral principles, "is" designates morality as ontological event. However, we observe that moral truth cannot be

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[6] For a philosophical and theological analysis of human fallibility from a Christian perspective, see Paul Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, Fordham University Press, New York 1986.

restricted either to the scope of "ought" or to the realm of "is". In our belief, it happens in between them. Namely, it occurs within the dialectical relation between "is" and "ought".

Hence the universality of truth-claim of moral principles cannot be wholly validated or invalidated within the temporality of moral truth due to the fact that the universality of truth-claim of moral principles belongs to the sphere of semiotics. Namely, moral principles reflect their universality of truth-claim by "pointing out" or by "indicating as a sign" within a given situation. From this view, moral principles can be characterized as "formal indications." They make a given situation visible from the moral point of view as they become intelligible through this given situation. As noted above, moral principles are reflexive in the sense that they allow us to reflect both on the situation surrounding us and on themselves critically. The semiotic nature of moral principles as formal indications is to open a field of vision where we find ourselves already related to our situation morally. When moral truth occurs within this field of vision, it enriches the scope of meaning of moral principles.

However, it is noteworthy that moral truth can enrich the scope of meaning of moral principles either positively or negatively. In other words, it may support or negate the universality of truth-claim of moral principles so as to revise them. Some moral principles of past ages disappeared and became obsolete when the moral truth of new ages occurred differently. The problem of slavery is a good example of how the moral truth of new ages negated some ancient moral principles for regulating the relation between lord and bond slave.

The actual existence of moral truth has an influence upon changing situations. From what has been said above, one can conclude that moral truth is not merely the content of moral consciousness; rather its occurrence reveals the nature of morality in its actual-historical sense. Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi's ethical-political life is a good instance of how the actual existence of moral truth influences historical situations. Moral truth which can be observed in the moral life of Gandhi cannot be restricted solely to some moral principles which Gandhi followed, or to his moral intentions and actions, or to the situations surrounding him. Rather moral truth occurred between Gandhi and the people around him and English politicians in India and in Great Britain.

In the life of Gandhi, moral truth influenced the economic-political life of Indian people in India and South Africa as well as British foreign policy, to the extent that the establishment of a new Indian Government became possible. Even today, Gandhi seems to be a symbol of the temporality of moral truth through "passive resistance" or "civil disobedience." Passive resistance or civil disobedience is an instrument for the occurrence of moral truth which is expected to improve the actual situation. For that reason, when moral truth occurred differently than what Ghandi had intended or expected, he applied passive resistance even to his

own soul and body via fasting and immersing himself in thought, so that moral truth might take place by enriching his view of morality.

To understand better the influence of moral truth upon historical situations, Gadamer's notion of "effective history" can be helpful. According to Gadamer, the real meaning of a text is not its mere mental content, but rather its application within historical situations. Through application, the text gains its real being so that its meaning becomes part of historical continuity. Thus the meaning of a text cannot be restricted to what its first readers or hearers understood from it. In a sense, a text temporalizes itself via its different interpretations within changing situations. Hence its meaning and its effects on different historical situations cannot be differentiated simply because it reaches its interpreters as a part of their pre-understanding. In other words, the text reaches its interpreters as already interpreted in its fore-applications which are reflected as its effective history.

Likewise moral truth as a part of our moral experiences (pre-understanding), as a part of semantic meaning of moral principles, and as a part of social, political, economic, religious situations is more a "historical being" than the content of our moral consciousness. For that reason, it occurs as something which determines more our consciousness than is determined by it. This point reveals the true sense of the temporality of moral truth which designates the "historical being" of moral truth effecting human moral consciousness historically. By means of its historical effects on moral consciousness, moral truth temporizes itself. This indicates also the fact that moral truth always remarks a problem for our moral consciousness to be investigated and re-appropriated again and again in ever-changing situations.

From this perspective, different kinds of ethics or moral philosophies such as naturalistic, idealistic, formalistic, emotive, contextualist, genealogical, teleological, theological, deontological, etc., appear somehow as interpretations (conceptualizations, discourses) of different aspects of moral truth at different levels. If this is the case, these discourses on moral truth emanate and disseminate the meaning of moral truth while taking their own significance there from. In other words, we can understand these discourses, which seem to be conflicting in their claims, to be the basis of morality, the different narratives on the occurrence of moral truth. We can even consider moral principles themselves as the narratives on moral truth in the form of command or description. This is because moral principles basically tell something about what kind of being moral truth is directly or indirectly. Their difference from ethics (i.e., philosophical discourses on morality) is in "how" they say it. Moral principles indirectly say that in a case of stealing money, for instance, moral truth would occur as a destructive event for the life of thief and his society. It does not matter if they say merely not to steal money or "stealing money is bad". A moral principle which does not say anything directly or indirectly on moral truth as a temporal and ontological event cannot be

obligatory or binding. Moral principles as formal indications refer their hearers to moral truth which has already occurred and will possibly reoccur.

The dialectical relation between "is" and "ought" refers to the fact that moral truth cannot be identified or conceptualized as such. This is another way of saying that different narratives which form different kinds of ethics and moral principles cannot be reduced to a single point analytically and historically. The escape of moral truth from pure single conceptualization or from being reduced to a single narrative implies the invalidity of a monistic view of morality.

However, since we take the possibility and actuality of pluralistic interpretations (discourses, narratives) of moral truth as the part of the effective history of moral truth, we assume also the possibility and actuality of a moral dialogue between these narratives, discourses, or interpretations within ever-changing situations. In this view, the real problem with different interpretations, narratives, or discourses on moral truth reveals itself when each one claims universality in the sense of comprehending representing moral truth or the essence of morality in its truth-claim. Obviously this leads many moral philosophers into the problem of epistemology within a Cartesian schema of object and subject which transforms the ontological basis of narratives, discourses, or interpretations into an object of epistemological investigation.

We do not indicate that each discourse, interpretation, or narrative on moral truth is acceptable as a correct or right one; this would be as an easy but very problematic approach as monistic view of morality. Rather the possibility and actuality of a moral dialogue between them already presumes that the problem of their validity or invalidity always depends on the temporality of moral truth. This is to say their epistemological status or value cannot take the place of the ontological character of temporal moral truth. Epistemology cannot be the basis of morality simply because the essence of morality (moral truth) is more an historical event (being) than a matter of cognition. In other words, the temporality of moral truth shows that the moral dialogue between the narratives, discourses, or interpretations is open-ended. If epistemology were the basis of morality, then it would be possible to translate morality into amoral terms and to turn moral dialogue between different discourses, narratives, or interpretation into a mere epistemological relation.

This understanding of morality brings us closer to both Heidegger and Emanuel Levinas. Disregarding Levinas' critique of Heidegger's phenomenological ontology[7], we can say that the temporality of Being in Heidegger and the priority of ethics over ontology in Levinas are not in contradiction if they are taken within the context of the temporality of moral truth. The temporality of Being is the presupposition of ethics in the

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[7] For the background and an analysis of Levinas' critique of Heidegger, see R. J. Sheffler Manning, *Interpreting Otherwise than Heidegger*, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh 1993.

sense that the other faces me in its infinity, i.e., in its temporality. I cannot overcome the other's otherness through my knowledge of the other's being. Otherness represents the resistance of the other's being over against my finite knowledge. Hence otherness reveals itself as the temporality of other. This is to say that my knowledge of the other's being is possible as long as the other temporizes itself within me not as a mere "other" beyond me, but also as the temporality of my being, my knowledge and my world. I can realize my temporality as long as the other's being temporalizes itself within my own being, my knowledge, and my world.

Accordingly, at this point, not our knowledge but the temporality of our being opens up a field or path where we can find ourselves as already related to each other, as belonging to a common being binding us, as dependent to each other's temporality. Accordingly, ethics finds its sense in this experience of commonness and mutual dependency-difference. This experience is not merely a matter of knowledge of being (ontology) but mostly an awareness of why I am responsible for myself and for the other. In other words, here knowledge of being does not lead to consciousness of responsiveness for the other; rather as long as I become aware of my temporality which happens as long as the other temporizes himself within my being, at one and at the same time responsiveness reveals itself as the structure of our relational beings. Thus, responsiveness is not a matter of obligation I take freely, but an event in which I find myself already immersed with others. Nevertheless, the degree of our reception of this fundamental ontological responsiveness is a matter of interpretation or moral consciousness. The awareness of the fundamental ontological character of responsiveness in any situation is partially a revelation of moral truth.

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THE HUMAN BEING BETWEEN THE SKY AND THE EARTH, BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL: THE HUMAN BEING NEXT TO US

MSGR. PETRU GHERGHEL

In 2002, under the signature and coordination of the town planner Neil Parkun, a remarkable English journalist and illustrator, a book called *Seventy Architectural Wonders of the World* appeared as a result of the collaboration of engineers, architects and historians. One impressive conclusion can be drawn: from this 3,000 page set, namely, behind all these wonderments we find the human genius able to accomplish real wonders of life and history: the Human Being. The works of a human being are real miracles. We tend to forget human grandeur, human values, human vocation and destiny.

But if we also analyze the troubled history of mankind, the terrible invasions and wars, the increasing number of crimes on earth, the innumerable arms and bombs constructed and accumulated per capita, as well as the tears shed in so many parts of the world, we come to ask ourselves: What is the human being? What is it (angel or devil)? Was it conceived thus from the very beginning or did something happen along its history? Researchers from all times have approached the human being looking and analyzing it from all perspectives, attempting to find its origin and scrutinizing its past, penetrating the mysteries of present times and trying to foresee its future.

How did and how does the Bible present the human being? What is the way that the Church sees man? What is the role of man in society and which is his vocation? What mission does man represent to the society and the world? What should he do in order to fulfill his vocation and destiny?

SCRIPTURE

From the very first page of the Bible, we read in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen 1:26) and in chapter 2, "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen 2:7), placing him in the earthly paradise in order to rule over all the creatures on earth.

Therefore, man carries the face of God in his soul and in all his being, thus becoming the masterpiece and crown of creation, bestowed with divine qualities and representing the mirror in which the Creator is reflected

on earth. The first page of the Holy Book records and proclaims God's great and wonderful work, placing the most precious creature of His plan in the heart of creation and all over the earth. This is where the history of the human being begins, of the man who vouchsafed to become the Creator's partner to the accomplishment of the world, so that he could truly carry the great image of the Eternal God in the universe. God placed an immortal soul inside a human body, meant for happiness and eternal life.

No wonder all the prophets, the Psalms, all the Books of the Scripture, of the first covenant, as well as those presenting the teachings and morals of the eternal Word in the Books of the new covenant, exalt the great work of the Creator, presenting the one created by His hands as His messenger on earth, the one who is after His likeness:

> Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth: when I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained; (I wonder) what is man that you think of him? What is the son of man that you care for him? You have made him a little lower than angels and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:4-6).

What God decided at the beginning of the history of mankind, His choice to make man a little lower than angels and above any other creature, with a mission to rule over the earth, is taken up and emphasized by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 2, verse 6, in fact reproducing the words of the psalmist (Psalm 8), the words which he applies to "the new man", placed for an instant lower than angels, made small and humiliated. Jesus we then see crowned with honor and glory for the death and humiliation He took upon Him for each of us, becoming completely human, apart from the sin.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews sees in the words of the psalmist, describing the place and destiny of man as related to the Creator, and placed above all creatures as the one who chose to become a human being, thus assigning a messianic dimension to God's plan for humanity.

Christ's rising from the dead, which is the hope of those fallen asleep, is a confirmation of the dignity of the human being redeemed through His death and resurrection. The magnificence of man and his dignity have always been the object of divine love, even in the context of the unfortunate choice of man of committing the sin and disobeying His eternal plan and decision through which He had bestowed so many blessings upon man. His decision to send his Son into the world represents an even greater love than that of the creation of man.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church presents God's plan for the human being from the very beginning, in the "prologue":

God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life". (CCC I, 1).

At this point, we ask again: What has the Bible taught us and what does it teach us about man?

Following the teaching of the Holy Scripture and the work of our Lord Jesus who came on earth for the good of the human being, the Apostles' Creed has been established, and clarified by the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople, where the mission of the incarnation of Christ was clearly stated: "*propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis*" – the Son of God became a human being for the good of man and his redemption. The Son of God would have become a human being even for the salvation of one single man, proof of the value of man that the Creator has given and renewed in him.

Biblical anthropology, so different from the mentality of other anthropologies or philosophies, considers man only from the perspective and light of God, in whose likeness he has been created. Natural limits are crossed; the human being is always analyzed in relation to God, Who after having created man sent his Son to become a human being in order to redeem man. Biblical and Christian anthropology, which take into consideration real theology, cannot be divided from Christology. Thus, the human being is regarded as the real image of God and, since he committed sin and compromised the initial plan of the Divine Father, man became part of the work of redemption through the plan of salvation of God-the human being, Christ, who rehabilitates him and makes him a new man.

This is how Christian theology sees the first man, Adam, as the representative of mankind, and through the redeeming intervention of God-the human being, he becomes the image and model of the living man, who is no longer the man he used to be, but the new one in God's likeness. Therefore, from this perspective, the prototype of the new man is not Adam, but Jesus Christ; not the one made of dust from the ground, but the one descended from heaven, or better, Jesus Christ, prefigured in Adam, a heavenly Adam renewed on the basis of the earthly Adam.

Adam, the human being, is neither a fallen god, nor a little part of spirit fallen from heaven into a human body; he is a free creature, endowed with remarkable abilities, in a permanent and essential relation with his Creator. The Book of Genesis describes his origin. He is made from dust

from the ground, but is not limited to the dust; he depends on "the breath of life" which God breathed into his nostrils and by means of which he becomes a living soul, a personal being depending on God. This is the only way we should think of the human being and the way we should define a person created after His likeness. When we speak about the human being, God's creature, we cannot describe him but in relation to God.

SOME GREAT MASTERS OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus, one of the greatest theologians of the second century, from Small Asia, died in Lyon (around the year 198), and was familiar with the relationship between the Creator and the creature. He uses the well-known definition: "*Homo vivens Gloria Dei et vita hominis visio Dei est*" (St. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, IV, 20, 5-7), meaning: that the living man represents the glory of God and is by nature the image of God. The living man, who received life, who received God's gift, becomes true, offers his life and spreads glory around him, glory for the One who created him; in other words, he praises God through his life. Lived in this light, human life represents God, by the fact that he is proclaimed and manifested through the Spirit of Christ, the only one who can reveal God.

Irenaeus says, "*homo vivens Gloria Dei et vita hominis visio Dei est*". He shows that this is only possible because Christ, the eternal Word, "became the dispenser of the paternal grace for the benefit of men, for whom He made such great dispensations, revealing God indeed to man, but presenting man to God" so that, even though God is invisible, He can be seen and discovered in many divine interventions, for the living man is the glory of God and his life is the image of God (St. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, IV, 20, 5-7).

To this voice from the first centuries, we must add the contribution of another great pope and theologian, Pope Leo I (The Great) (440-461), who in his original sermons and writings insists upon the vocation of man, of the Christian.

> Awake, O man, and recognize the dignity of thy nature. Recollect thou was made in the image of God, which although it was corrupted in Adam, was yet re-fashioned in Christ. Use visible creatures as they should be used, as thou use earth, sea, sky, air, springs, and rivers: and whatever in them is fair and wondrous, ascribe to the praise and glory of the Maker. Be not subject to that light wherein birds and serpents, beasts and cattle, flies and worms delight. Confine the material light to your bodily senses, and with all your mental powers embrace that "true light which light every man that cometh into this world," and of which the prophet says, "Come unto Him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not blush." For if we "are

a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwell in" us, what every one of the faithful has in his own heart is more than what he wonders at in heaven" (St. Leo, the Great, *Sermons*, 7, 26).

Indeed, the greatness of man and the acknowledgement of this greatness is a hymn of glory for the Creator and a reason for spiritual elevation to Him.

Thomas of Aquinas, the great theologian of the Catholic Church, answering the question about the reason for incarnation of the Word, says:

"*Unigenitus Dei Filius, suae divinitatis volens nos esse participes, naturam nostram assumpsit ut homines deos faceret factus homo*" ("God's only Son, in His desire to make us participants to His divinity, assumed a human nature, so that He, as a man, would turn human beings into gods") (St. Thomas of Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 57).

God turns to the human being in order to multiply in man and through his image to spread His divine love into the world, in order to make the relation of love of the Holy Trinity living in the heart of the human beings.

The Son of God communicates his own personal way of being within the Holy Trinity to His human nature, through the incarnation. Thus, in His body and soul, Jesus Christ humanly expresses the divine actions of the Holy Trinity.

THE COUNCILS

The Second Vatican Council, speaking about Jesus Christ, who assumes a human nature, says: "He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin" (GS 22). So, the Masters of the Church, the theologians and the councils, from the one in Jerusalem to Vatican II, have emphasized the great dignity of the human being, whom God created in His image and likeness. His Son's descending into the world redeemed him, giving him back his initial dignity, and he is always enriched by the Holy Ghost with divine blessings, so that he would always be and remain a worthy temple for the Holy Trinity to live in.

This truth is presented clearly and briefly in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, where a real portrait of the human being is drawn up as follows:

"Of all visible creatures only man is capable of knowing and loving his Creator" (Cf. GS 12,3) "He is the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake, and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity" (CCC 356).

He truly is somebody, not something. God created everything for man, but man in turn was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation back to Him.

Going back to the word of a great Master of the Church, St. Chrysostomus, and the Catechism says:

> What is it that is about to be created, that enjoys such honor? It is man that great and wonderful living creature, more precious in the eyes of God than all other creatures! For him the heavens and the earth, the sea and all the rest of creation exist. God attached so much importance to his salvation that He did not spare his own Son for the sake of man. Nor does He ever cease to work, trying every possible means, until he has raised man up to himself and made him sit at his right hand. (CCC 358).

Should we add to these words the words of Pope John Paul II about the human being, and then we really face the greatest miracle in the history of our planet!

THE TRAGEDY OF SIN AND TURNING EVIL INTO GOOD

God created man to His likeness and made him His friend. This implied a necessary condition, a willing obedience to Him through a friendly answer upon which his entire happiness depended. "Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness" (CCC 397).

The tragedy of sin accompanied and still accompanies the human being up to the present time. His place among creatures has been shackled and his aura compromised, and the consequences of this caused him to lose even the realization of his own good. The harmony of the first two people, Adam and Eve, has been destroyed because of this sin, and death has come into the world.

> What divine revelation makes known to us agrees with experience. Examining his heart, man finds that he has inclinations towards evil too, and is engulfed by manifold ills which cannot come from his good Creator. Often refusing to acknowledge God as his beginning, man has disrupted also his proper relationship to his own ultimate goal as well as his whole relationship toward himself and others and all created things,

According to the Second Vatican Council clearly expresses in the Document entitled *Gaudium et spes* (13,1).

God intervened and never ceases to intervene over this tragedy. After his fall, God did not abandon the human being, but made him part of a new plan of salvation, of redemption, through the work of His Son. A new Adam shall intervene and, mysteriously, evil shall be defeated and man lifted from his fallen state, from the sin, as the Book of Genesis expresses, in Chapter 3, the famous fragment called "proto-gospel" being the first annunciation of the Redemptory Messiah: the struggle between the woman and the snake and of the final victory of the one who would be born of her (cf. Gen. 3:15). The new Adam, "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:8) fully expiates the first Adam's disobedience.

The tragedy of the sin truly introduced a terrible chaos into the world, with so many consequences and losses, but God's new intervention through Jesus Christ, brought us, as St. Paul and the great Masters of the Church say, a grace even more important: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom 5:20). Related to this truth, Pope Leo I (The Great) says "Christ's Ascension has given us greater privileges and joys than the devil had taken from us" (St. Leo the Great, *Sermo*, 73,4).

Evil turned into good. The human being continues to be the Creator's most admirable creature, and Christ's redemption of man is an even greater proof of His love for human beings, as well as a reason for their dignity and mission in life.

EXISTENTIAL REALITIES

We are surrounded by a world we are impressed with, a world with innumerable wonderful things, with so many works of art, with so many civilizations that made a difference in the life of our planet, with so many breakthroughs in the field of science and arts. Researchers and men of science talk of so many wonders of the world (70) and of impressive breakthroughs in the research of the macrocosms, of engineering and genetic research. We are witnesses of some realities, inconceivable in the past and still unknown to some in the present times.

Moreover, the reason for all this is man, a being in the likeness of God, not entirely known, endowed with divine qualities, ruler over the entire creation and responsible for life on earth.

We enjoy an honorable status, and at the same time we are suffocated by malice, wars, invasions, dictatorships and tyrannies, injustice and crimes, sufferings and dangers, tears and dearth. Where is all this coming from, what caused it, which produced, coordinated and realized all this?

There is one single answer that we cannot deny. It was man. It is true that these are not the predominating things which are the beautiful and good ones, the innumerable and impressive achievements and works of art.

The positive image of man dominates and gives us the satisfaction through which we praise the Creator.

Faced with all these wonders, bad things sadden us and make us wonder: What will the world and human beings become if people do not control their status in the world, their mission among the nations, and if they do not mark their name in the great book of life, as they have been created, and most of all, recreated, redeemed with a divine cost?

God takes care of the future of humanity and of the planet, but He also sent into the world the human being, endowed with so many qualities and graces, to bear his likeness among the other creatures, to be responsible for all beings and the whole nature, to spread truth and good into the world. Each person coming into the world, in society, should work in order to accomplish this project.

It is human nature that man should enjoy a life of communion, living in membership, in family, in other words, life in society. The human being is not meant for isolation, for alienation from the world. "Man and woman", God has created them both and established their destiny, a plan they must observe in every particular situation in order to reach their aim and fulfillment, not by themselves, but together with others, with their brothers, we could even say with the entire society and everything around them. Man must always consider this mission and use all his abilities in order to accomplish it. After he is brought up in such a family atmosphere, after he is educated in school to give shape to his character and personality, man should always feel the support of the others.

The mission of civil society, of thoes who hold the power and of the citizens is fundamental. Society will continue to exist if the people in it know their dignity and vocation, know how to organize and protect it. Peace, harmony, health and hope flourished where the people responsible for society have understood their vocation. Where these same people have forgotten about God's role and importance, the mission of the Church and the dignity of the human person, are invaded by injustice, sufferings and tears.

The Church, most of all, must put its richness of values and teachings into the service of the completion of the new man, of the human being created by God, with a noble and eternal destiny. Authentic interpreter of natural and divine laws, the Church must always propose the moral direction of human behavior, according to the divine revelation, either natural or evangelical. Its actions must correspond to natural morality by means of which to ceaselessly promote good and truth, in order to turn all this into a praise of the Creator and spiritual elevation of each human being.

The morality of human acts depends on the chosen object, on the aim followed, as well as on the circumstances of action, which become sources or constitutive elements of the morality of human action. Thus, the value of the human being of the present times, as well as the value of the man of all times, consists in his moral conscience. His actions will be good

as long as he never forgets about his great dignity and role in the context of society and creation.

As a conclusion, we can assert together with the entire Church, the Christian tradition and the guiding lines of the Catholic faith, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (we could list and present here the norms of faith and morals of our brothers, the Orthodox Christians or of other religions), regarding man and his actions: "Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depth" (GS 16). The conscience is shaped by following God's word, the light of its steps. It is necessary for the human being to make himself master of this Word, through faith and prayer, and to put it into practice. This way, we will surely shape a moral conscience worthy of the human being created in the likeness of God.

In this direction of the assertion of human dignity and realization of his identification with the new human being, the Son of God who became a man, the Christian world has had and still has many lights, beacons, examples and models.

Rediscovering these values by observing the lives of the great heroes of Christianity, the saints in our calendar, and most of all by approaching the ones close to us: St. Therese of the Cross (Edith Stein), St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Blessed Pope John XXIII. Moreover, we could say with special joy and hope, why not approach our heroes who have demonstrated the value of the human being, taking it to the highest apices: our martyr bishops - heralds of the Romanian Christian dignity, among whom I am glad to mention our great shepherd, Anton Durcovici. His name will be mentioned again, a gifted bishop and martyr, who put all his life and work in the service of showing the beauty and greatness of the Christian human being, and offering even his own life to defend the freedom and dignity of the noble soul and most precious being, the human being.

To all this, I add the name of another apologist and apostle of the greatness of man, Pope John Paul II, of a blessed memory., When he said that man can be realized only through The One who has shown and realized the true elevation of man: The Human Being, Jesus Christ – *Redemptor hominis*.

What is man that you think of him?
What is the son of man that you care for him? (Psalm 8:4).

Bishop of Iaşi
Romania

CHAPTER VIII

BETWEEN BETRAYAL AND HEROISM

GABRIELA BLEBEA-NICOLAE

Here I would like to distinguish the meaning of a true life, which is tantamount to a good life, i.e. a morally correct life, from the meaning of a true sentence, which is tantamount to a sentence which does not tell a lie (and is, of course, not erroneous either).

The disjunctive relation in the title of this paper (between a true sentence and a true life) is inconceivable for a good part of the philosophical tradition, which regards, for example, any lying sentence as duplicity, which suspends the integrity of a person, because it involves the logical contradiction of the thinking, irrespective of how upright the immediate intentions of such a thinking mind may be (Kant).

This paper does not undertake to contradict the conjunctive relation between a true sentence and a true life. It intends only to see to what extent a true life is dependent on speaking the truth. In other words, it aims to see if telling the truth is a condition for a true life. No matter how naive or simplistic such a question could be, it actually stems from the dramatic experience of communism that imposed and instituted the practice of denunciation. After this experience, I can legitimately ask the following question: granting that the act of denunciation means giving information, telling the truth, can one consider it morally necessary even when an innocent person's life is endangered thereby? In other words, is the telling of truth everywhere and at any given time always the condition for a morally correct life?

Traditionally, we interpret certain answers given to this last question – for example Saint Augustine's, Thomas Aquinas's or Kant's – as affirmative answers. Our claim, in an interpretation that has become overarching and that is conventionally called deontologism, is that truth has to be told irrespective of its consequences. Therefore, we argue from the imperfection of lies, from the incapacity of a lieto secure an anticipated effect, and especially from the impossibility of universalizing the rule of the lie's rule. In this way, we perform a conversion, from not lying to telling the truth. In other words, if we accept that to lie is something evil, we then conversely feel obliged to accept – at least in the logical order – that to tell the truth is something good. Although it represents a very widespread line of thinking, this thinking does not cover the whole argumentative spectrum in favour of telling the truth.

Sometimes, though rarely, the demonstration for the obligation of telling the truth is done directly by a demonstration that places lying only in

the background. In this case (and I have in mind Kant's "On the Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns"[1]), the commitment to truth signifies a kind of contractual arrangement in which veracity works as a synalagmatic obligation that is binding as long as the social contract is in force. The faithful observance of this founding contract becomes the necessary condition for all the other contracts, for all the rights, for the life in common as a whole. In other words, the runaway needs be denounced in proof to the faith in the correctness of justice, for fear that "all the rights founded in contracts may otherwise become transient and lose their binding power"[2]. We would thus be obliged to justify the responsibility for any given deed by measuring it against the standard of the faithfulness to an imaginary original social contract – such a pact being of course contradictory in respect to a reality abounding in cases of injustice and specific infringements of the contractual ties that go unpunished. In this line of demonstration, there is yet another idea that remains intuitively uncovered: the presumptive social equality of all the participants in the contract, an equality in which all the parts are indiscriminately taken to be both participants and beneficiaries.

The totalitarian regimes are illustrative of such a breach of the social contracts and are therefore placed – in a setting closer to our own intuition in this respect – under the image of a world governed by the "subordination law". Such a world is constituted in view of the power algorithm, hence submitting to a morality phrased in terms of attack and defence or domination and submission, which are terms ultimately reducible to the survival theme, whether a physical or a psychic brand of survival[3].

This different understanding of the world, in my opinion, would call for a different conception regarding the way in which it is obligatory to tell the truth. In other words, if we take the good order of the world as our reference point, then we undertake to uphold this order by the telling of truth. If what strikes us is the injustice of our world, I believe that by keeping back the truth we are undertaking to reduce the world's imperfections[4].

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[1] Kant, Immanuel, *Uber ein vermeintes Recht aus Menschenliebe zu lugen*, Translated by James W. Ellington. *On the Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns*, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] The Hobbesian tradition is the eloquent case in question here.

[4] I am leaving out the case when, though we may acknowledge the disorder of the world, we may equally not wish to contribute to the increase in disorder by not telling the truth. It appears to me less plausible from an intuitive point of view than the case of authorizing the truth as a means of improving a world in which it so happens that truth is used against man himself.

In this way, in the first case, the will preceding the withholding of truth is making a choice for an accidental act that runs counter to the world's essence. In the second case, the will is making a choice for an act of improvement, which also means that the respective will is acknowledging the necessity of not telling the truth.

So, there could be a small distance from the acceptance of the world's imperfection to the consequently necessary step of acquiescing in the naturalness associated with the telling of lies, as is characteristically the case in the recent psychological and sociological approaches to this matter[5]. In a world that is basically unjust and hostile, runs the claim of these theories, not telling the truth is a means to feel safer. Consequently, the task of understanding a lie slides from a pre-space focused on the moral grounding of decisions to a post-space whose role is simply to identify a lie and to describe it.

Since I prefer not to talk about lying *per se*, although lying persists in the background of this subject, I shall rephrase a question which is specific to the discussions surrounding the issue of lying, and I shall express the same issue in terms of withholding the truth.

Thus, I shall dwell on the issue by wondering how it comes about that although we do not always *tell* the truth and only the truth, we wish to *know* the truth as the very freedom to choose - even in cases when the choice might entail suffering and disappointment. In other words, I shall wonder how it so happens that though we sometimes decide not to tell the truth, we tend to discredit other people who do the same. One obvious answer to these first two questions is to be found in the existence of a double standard. However, the key question for this paper I shall ask directly: why, in general, do we detest those people who fail to tell the truth, yet we – or at least I – profoundly disdain the people who "told the truth" when they denounced to the "authorities" their neighbor who would tune in to a forbidden radio station, or who had relatives abroad, or who was reading a subversive book, or who had been to church, or who had said or not said something precisely?

For those familiar with the contemporary moral approaches, it would appear normal to respond to these questions by appealing to such widely used terms as intention and goal, consequences and benefits, rights and contracts. I shall not choose any of the possible ways of analysis suggested by the deontological brand of systematic thinking (though it was precisely to such a brand that I referred when using the terms in the above series of characteristically Kantian words); neither will I resort to the terms contractualism or consequentialism. I will use instead Saint Augustine's

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[5] There is wealth of literature on this subject. I shall only quote two of the books that I have read and that appear to me as the most eloquent on this subject. They are: Caroline Sarni, Michael Lewis (eds.), *Lying and Deception in Everyday Life,* The Guilford Press, 1993; Barnes J. A., *A Pack of Lies-towards a Sociology of Lying*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

own text (*De Mendacio*) as a source for reflecting upon some necessary terminological distinctions, with a view to understanding the relationship between a true sentence and a true life, in the particular case of denunciation[6].

"...the deeds of men include not only what they do, but whatever they consent to be done unto them"[7]. This would have been my argument against denunciation. I would have said: you had better tell a lie than give your consent to depriving an innocent being of life. But Saint Augustine says the very opposite: do not lie, even if by means of that lie you were to save an innocent life. The important difference between my affirmation and Augustine's is that Augustine understands by the consent to the crime, in this quotation, that one's own life is endangered thereby, whereas what I refer to is somebody else's life (though I do not, of course, bar the possibility that one's own life may be the object of the crime in question). Augustine's argument against lies follows these steps: Even though by the lie one might save one's own life, one does no more, in fact, than transfer to one's own life the evil that someone else did if one absolves the other person from his or her sin, a crime, in the case in question; but one becomes instead burdened with an evil such as a lie is. By refusing to lie, it doesn't mean that we consent to the evil that the lie aims to avoid because one could forestall only the acts that are within the range of the human power, whereas the other acts can only be condemned or set right by giving advice. To put things differently, the quotation from Augustine does not indicate the same direction as my intention, i.e., towards circumscribing one's responsibility for the other's acts, in which case the withholding is a means to prevent the person you lie to from committing a crime; rather, the responsibility regards our own acts exclusively, whether they are direct or indirect acts.

Augustine's plea is grounded in convictions that have been lost to the moderns. The first one, the most important is that we live in a well-ordered world, controlled by God's will, a world in which the political order, for all its imperfections, is in itself the expression of God's will. Subsequent to this grounding conviction, there are two others functioning as arguments for the same imperviousness to any acts that condone truth-hiding: the conviction that virtues have axiological equality and that they have unity. But nowadays we find it hard to believe that a lie could be tantamount in point of gravity to a crime. Even more, judging things at the level of each vice, the fact remains that no matter how clearly we might

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[6]I am aware of the possibility of making Augustine's text an argument for one of the approaches mentioned. Moreover it is possible to make it an argument for deontologism. But I cannot limit myself to this «reading» of Augustine's text because, from my perspective, Augustine's text transcends such a strict frame of orientation.

[7] Augustinus, *De Mendacio*, IX, 12: "pertinere autem ad facta hominum non solum quidquid faciunt sed quidquid etiam cum consensione patiuntur".

hold the conviction that an act of theft should be censured, whether the thief is stealing to save a human life or rather for the pleasure of acquiring something that does not belong to him or her, we cannot consider the two acts of theft equal[8]. Moreover, today we do not consider that the acceptance of a vice, for instance the acquiescence in lies, implicitly means the acceptance of all the other vices. The loss of two other convictions essential for Augustine follows as a correlative from these "mutations": the belief that the salvation of the soul is more important than the protection of the body, and the belief that one cannot prefer one's own good or the weal of the other person because what is at stake, always in point of fact, is the infringement of the divine decree that love should by no means be preferential. It would be no more than banal to point out that the significance of these losses is indifference to the eternal values in favour of the transient ones. Today it appears as unacceptable to refrain from lying if in this way you could avoid suffering, torture, and insults just because of a wish to keep your soul unblemished. How could you possibly disregard the need to care for your body, or the dramas that may accompany the changes in your life ranging from dire poverty and/or imprisonment? What is more, how could you fail to prefer sin to lying when this would enable you to save someone's life, even if in this way you may be showing more love to the other person than to yourself?

Even if it is a fact that these mutations have naturally entered the modern common sense, for Augustine saving one's own life was no justification for any kind of sin, not for lying either, that is. I want to stress that the focus here is on saving one's life, since when it comes to saving another's life, Augustine's demonstration is not at all the same. When the question revolves around saving another person's life, the obligation of not lying is not translated as the obligation of telling the truth, with only one exception: the case when the person wanted is a malefactor. When a criminal must be turned in, says Augustine, you are obliged to be sincere, or else you are simply covering a sin by the lie. Although the denunciation of a criminal is unconditionally justified when we are certain of the respective person's guilt and we agree with the just sentence that will be applied to him/her, things are very different when we may be in doubt as to his/her guilt and/or the punishment likely to be administered in that case. The difficulty inherent in the state of uncertainty is increased by the interdiction to be found in the Holy Scriptures regarding sending an innocent to death. The difficulty would then lie in discerning the quality of the sought-for-man for how can you tell whether the man is guilty or not, and whether he is a just man or not, and also whether he is a mere instrument for an unjust decision or its very author? This series of questions could continue endlessly to disconcert you altogether. Every question is important since to clarify the status of the sought-for man is a matter connected to the morality

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[8] I have recently discovered that the French code of laws absolves those acts of theft motivated by extreme need.

of the act performed in it. If the sought-for person were certainly a malefactor, the situation would be plain: he should certainly be denounced. In such a situation the justice of the judgment passed upon him is a secondary matter. But if we are not entirely certain as to the guilt of the sought-for person, then the question of the justness in his judgment becomes essential. In this last case, of the denunciation, we have to choose between two evils: between the sin of false testimony and the sin of betrayal. The dilemma rests, therefore, in this point on two coordinates: the guilt of the sought-for person and the justness of the judgment. These two components are wrought into the confusion surrounding the definition of the betrayer. "Will he be a betrayer who has willingly accused to a just judge a murderer seeking to hide, and will he not be a betrayer who reveals the man who had entrusted himself to his confidence to an unjust judge, inquiring about the hiding place of an innocent man whom he seeks to put to death"[9].?

If the guilt of the sought-for person and the rightness of the judge are essential for the morality of the act to be decided, I can legitimately ask myself what guilt could be imputed to a person who was wanted during the communist or the Nazi regime, owing to crimes that only an absurd, deviant regime could deem infringements deserving to be punished with the deprivation of liberty for the respective person or even the loss of life. How come that you could be deemed guilty for having been born in a particular nation, for knowing several foreign languages, for reading whatever came to your mind or for believing in God? What's more: how much could you trust a judge who assessed such "misdeeds", blindly applying laws meant to erect a deviant world?

Consequently, it means that once both these coordinates, the guilt of the denounced person and the impartiality of the judge, that is, lose their relevance, we can perhaps accept exceptions from the rule of truth telling? Today we would unswervingly answer yes. Or at least I could answer yes. Under certain circumstances, I should say that the denunciation does not in fact avoid a false testimony but means an act of betrayal.

So I might stop here perhaps. Then I would only have to further define treason and to demonstrate why it was is evil thing. But had I done so, this would have indicated that I am not in the line of the Augustinian thinking, since my solution would involve an option against betrayal yet in favour of false testimony. Meanwhile, Augustine's solution is both against betrayal and against false testimony[10]. It is in favour of "heroism". That is,

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[9] Augustinus, *De mendacio*, XIII, 22: "An ille erit proditor qui justo judici latentem hominem ultro detulerit et ille non erit qui judici injusto ubi lateat innocens eum qui se fidei ejus commiserat?" here: Saint Augustine, *Treatises on Various Subjects*, vol. 16, translated by Sister Mary Sarah Muldowney and all, ed. By Roy Deferrari, Fathers of the Church, New York 1952.

[10] *Ibid*. XIII, 22: "Quanto ergo fortius, quanto excellentius dices: Nec prodam, nec mentiar".

you tell that you know the truth but you refuse to tell it. And you behave like Firmus, the bishop of Thagaste. When the forces in charge of the defence of law and order sent by the emperor came to claim a person who had taken refuge with him and whom he had hidden very thoroughly, the bishop said that he could neither lie nor betray the sought-for person. For all the tortures inflicted upon him, he never changed his position. When he was summoned before the emperor, it all ended up by the pardoning of the sought-for person[11].

However deeply we may be moved by Firmus's courage, today we find it hard to imagine that this courage could save a man's life. If we leave aside the weak possibility for things to happen along the lines imagined by Augustine, his plea appears to be extremely explicit to me: you cannot betray a man's hiding place, irrespective of the kind of torture you incur and the risk of suffering. In other words, you have to tell the truth in order to announce that you have not told the whole truth. This solution would seem entirely baffling if it were not for Augustine's own explanation regarding the interdiction of telling lies; this, we insist was not grounded on the authority of the veracity principle as much as on exercising one's caution, a characteristic component of practical wisdom. To tell a lie is not something that grants security, says Augustine, for "the official inquirers who are mistrustful may verify precisely the place they suspect". To keep quiet may be a sure way of delivering the sought-for person into the hands of the enemy. Acknowledging the fact that we know things while we refuse to cooperate, makes us humane (Augustine's words imply that we would retain our humaneness), and in this way we could avoid committing ourselves to any serious mistakes.

What we derive from all this is that in Augustine's attempt to find a solution for saving the life of a man to whom one had promised one's protection when giving him shelter lies the recognition that to lie or not to lie is a dilemma obviously less sharply in favour of veracity than Augustine himself claimed in other circumstances. Being aware that a choice which avoids lying but brings about great suffering would be a stupid mistake[12], but also feeling quite confident that any sidestepping due to lying is short

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[11] *Ibid.* XIII, 23: "Fecit hoc Episcopus quondam Thagastensis Ecclesiae Firmus nomine firmior voluntate. Nam cum ab eo quareretur homo jussu Imperatoris per apparitores ab eo missos, quem ad se confugientem diligentia quanta poterat occultabat; respondit quaerentibus nec mentiri se posse nec hominem prodere passusque tam multa tormenta corporis (nondum erant Imperatores christiani) permansit in sententia. Deinde ad Imperatorem ductus, usque adeo mirabilis apprauit ut ipsi homini quem servabat indulgentiam sine ulla difficultate impetraret. Quid hoc fieri potest fortius atque constantius?"

[12] *Ibid.* XIII, 23, "cum autem peccatum non sit ita mentiri ut neque cuiquam obsis neque falsum testimonium dicas et prosis alicui, stultum est et grave peccatum voluntaria frustra sustinere tormenta et fortassis utilem salutem ac vitam incassum saevientibus projicere".

lived[13], Augustine proposes this mixed solution: the solution of not telling lies while also is being half-way sincere. Not to lie, but not to tell what you know, telling nevertheless that you do know things, that is, announcing that you are going to keep a secret turns in this context into a virtue-a virtue that may turn out as dangerous for the person practicing it, but could prove capable to save lives[14].

The example chosen by Augustine to plea for heroism is illustrative, in the frame of his demonstration, for the attitude of faithfulness towards the promise made by the act of hosting someone and also, in his opinion, for the way out of the dilemma of choosing between betrayal and false testimony. The most significant hindrance today in accepting such an example is the reaction of the emperor pardoning the sought-for person. Today we find it hard to imagine a judge impressed by the courage of a person who prefers being tortured to denouncing another. On the contrary, the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century considered an infringement anything that prevented the abusive power enforcement.

The situation of the denunciation under communism for instance, is representative of one of the most controversial situations of the not-lying deontology, as it brings the most problematic type of lie: the lie to an aggressor, to a man who cheats. The lie that renders a service to a fellow human being[15], without doing harm to anyone, which undertakes to restore an order threatened by an arbitrary evil seems today rather an act of virtue, since one of the two terms that define lying, that is, the intention to cheat[16], loses its weight. What kind of deceit does it entail, one aimed at deceiving a deceiver, or one aimed at forestalling a vice, or barring the evil work? The restoration of order by fraudulent action turns into a merit today. This entails recognition that, in some circumstances, the order lies within the human power and, once the particular goal has been established, the means can be negotiated.

It is, therefore, clear that the discrepancy between denunciation in a totalitarian regime and the denunciation case discussed by Augustine comes primarily from the way in which we imagine the order of the world. The point of support for this order is to be found at the level of the judgment. In Augustine's perspective, the ultimate instance in judging an

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[13] *Ibid*, XIII, 23, "Perdes omnes qui loquuntur mendacium". (Ps, 5:7).

[14] *Ibid*., XIII, 23, "Horum ergo timorem sic accipio ut tamen illum laudabilem virum qui nec mentiri voluit nec hominem prodere et melius arbitrer intellexisse quod scriptum est et intellectum fortiter implevisse".

[15] *Ibid*., XII, 20: "Nom enim quisquam peccat abscondendo rem suam quam timet amittere. Sed si propterea non peccamus mentiendo quia nullius peccatum tegentes et nulli obsumus et alicui prosumus quid agimus de ipso peccato mendacii?"

[16] *Ibid*, IV, 5: "quapropter enuntiationem falsam cum voluntate ad fallendum prolatam, manifestum est esse mendacium".

act is not reducible to human authority. The instance is not to be reduced to the possibilities that would come up if we were in court, whether we refuted the accusations brought to a person or we elucidated the circumstances of the person's fraud, or, in more general terms, if we participated by our reports to the correct judgment of the case in question[17]. For Augustine, to give false testimony does not mean to refer only to the private person, or to a court of justice, no matter how legitimate this might be. In telling the truth, the interlocutor is God and it is to Him that we give our testimony,[18] irrespective of how banal our testimony may be.

Today, the recognition of such an interlocutor and of the instance represented hereby is becoming ever rarer, especially in contemporary philosophy. There are just a few tacit presuppositions of a higher order that pierce like an echo of the dimness, as in the landmark offered by the concept of the natural law. It is in harmony with the natural law concept and with anything that represents the connection to higher orders and, more specifically, with the belief or at least the fear that any deed has its own reward and that nothing remains forever hidden.

Outside this horizon, morality itself would be nothing but a transient convention with ever more precarious rules. In the possibility of intuitively conceiving a permanent witness to our deeds and in the possibility of his judging correctly, even if leniently, lies one of the important stays of morality. Expressing this in other words, today we call this impossibility of dissimulating deeds and this fear of the way we will be judged conscience, a concept whose theoretical relevance is not half as convincing as the popularity of its associated symbols.

As stated from the start, the purpose of this text is not to propose a disjunction between a true sentence and a true life, but to signal the fact that under some circumstances this relationship is much more problematic than it would appear at first sight. I have found rather unsatisfactory the classical interpretations in which the relationship between a true sentence and a true life would be easier to discern, either in view of their complete conjunction, or in their absolute disjunction. I consider the two extremes equally dangerous. The first one is dangerous because it could lead to making any law, no matter how unjust, into an imperative. The second one is dangerous

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17 *Ibid.*, XII, 21: "An falsum testimonium non est nisi cum quisque ita mentitur ut aut crimen confingat in aliquem aut alicujus crimen occultet aut quoquo modo quemquam in judicio premat? Videtur enim testis judici necessarius ad causae cognitionem".

18 *Ibid.*, XII, 21: "Sed si hactenus testem Scriptura nominaret non diceret Apostolus: "Invenimur et falsi testes Dei si testimonium diximus adversus Deum, quia excitavit Christum quem non excitavit"(1 Cor. 15:15). "Ita enim ostendit falsum testimonium esse mendacium etiamsi in cujusquam falsa laude dicatur".

because even when the precariousness of the laws is less evident, we could bring up as an argument the subjective crisis conditions.

Hence the purpose of this text is neither to make a plea for telling the truth in practically all cases, nor is it to make a plea for hiding the truth under very special circumstances. The present text is meant only to stress two marks in the argumentation of the moral decision regarding the telling or withholding the truth: as betrayal is vice and heroism is virtue.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND ITS RELATION TO TRUTH

OSMAN BILEN

In our age the concern about ecology is growing and, hence, the need for a sound environmental ethics. The search for normative and binding ethical guidelines to regulate the environmental activity of human being, it is hoped, will lead to a more responsible and viable relation with our natural and social environment. The desire to live in a healthier and more peaceful world and to leave a better environment for future generations is part of this growing consciousness of the environmental problems we face today. There are, in fact, many salient presuppositions underlying the ethical approaches to the environment. Given the fact that the era we live in is characterized as post-metaphysical or post-modern in the philosophical sense, any search for an environmental ethics with links to a conception of truth may seem to be untenable. But a close analysis of the ethical concern for the environment would reveal certain conceptions of truth which has deeper metaphysical roots. These may be listed as follows; First, any need for ethical guidelines for a better human environment imply that a) the environment constitutes a unity which is under siege today; b) an inter-relational whole whose parts are knitted together is interdependent; c) it is in itself a finite and composite unity that may disintegrate unless it is kept intact. Second, for an environment to deteriorate and thus be in need of betterment implies that it has an inherent esthetic value. Thirdly, in order for the environment to be respected, it must have an objective or ontological value; finally it must have a practical value for humans. These are all implicit value judgments whose underpinning is a conception of truth.

However, the concept of truth defined either as social convention or as the coherence of ideas, is not sufficient for environmental ethics. The concept of truth must meet the demands of moral choices we make concerning the environment. It can be derived from a metaphysical ground or from theologies, but yet it can serve as the basis of environmental ethics. In the following I will discuss the possibility of environmental ethics with a relativistic or non-objective concept of truth and analyze constitutive values of ethics from examples of ethical teachings in Islam related to the environment.

ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The religious traditions of diverse peoples of the world can be helpful if their teachings concerning man's relation with nature are brought

to light and interpreted for the purpose of raising the environmental consciousness of modern man. In the following pages we will bring to your attention moral teachings of the religion of Islam relevant to the environmental issues. An ecological theology will have diverse sources: Scriptural, scientific and philosophical. Scriptural sources of the Islamic theology of nature will be clarified later; we might now list some relevant concepts deriving from contemporary science.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Environment; in the larger sense of the term, is both the natural and social world in which we live. Ecology is the totality of relations, including human relations, within nature, and interdependency of each element in nature. Ecology is the study of the relations and environments in the balanced systems that make the web of life in general.

Adaptation refers to a particular aspect of ecological relationships, "Human adaptation is the process by which one makes effective use, for productive ends, of energy potential in his habitat;" then people in a particular environment characteristically extract and use the resources of that environment in order to provide for their survival and maintenance (food getting, shelter, protection and raising of their young, and so on); this constitutes their adaptive strategy. Science, technology, and the spiritual, mental, moral attitudes may all be considered parts of man's adaptive strategy toward the environment.

Therefore, from an ecological or environmentalist point of view, the definition of environment implies not only man's interactive involvement with the natural world, but also, with the social world as well. That is the reason why "human environment" means both the natural and social world we live in. Human relation with nature is primarily a matter of utilization and use of nature and its resources, secondarily of moral appreciation of its value for man, and, thirdly, of cognitive appreciation of its orderliness and aesthetic appreciation of its beauty. Environmental conservation activists have been concerned with the depreciation and defilement of nature in modern civilization since the beginning of the industrial age in the nineteenth century.

From the advent of Newtonian science of nature to the end of the nineteenth century, the world was thought of as a machine, static and mechanically determined in behavior. From the perspective of the nineteenth century's scientific materialism, the cosmos was considered to be no more than accidents, ultimately reducible to dead matter in motion. In this view, there is no value in the universe in any objective sense, and no purpose beyond short term survival and reproduction, purely instinctual and thus ultimately mechanical. To search for a moral compass in such a world seemed absurd. A solution to the problem of value was found in the dualist view that objective values do not exist externally, but nevertheless do exist as an internal feeling imposed on nature by humans.

This solution of dualism of nature and value is contrary to the understanding today of a vital and dynamic nature. Today nature is known to be a changing, evolving, creative process. This is an open universe, still coming into being. Yet, there is indeterminacy at the physical and biological level, and at the same time predictability and orderliness. This is to say, nature has its own potentialities and limits. It is, therefore, possible to take science seriously, and yet to affirm that purpose and value are not subjective human creations or fictions, but rather a basis of real kinship among species. That human beings have kinship with other forms of life is also affirmed by science.

Nature is an inter-relational whole or community. Unlike the earlier modern scientific view of nature, now a "holistic view" is to be adopted to deal with nature as an integral ecosystem. We are now more aware of the marvelous interdependencies and reciprocities among creatures, the long food chains linking diverse species in diverse place on the earth, the complexity of the cycles of elements and compounds, and the subtle balances that can be easily upset. Environment and the support system of life on the earth is largely the product of living things. Diversity of life forms, interdependence, and vulnerability are the basic features of the natural world.

Man is akin to all creatures, sharing the basic pattern and the fabric of life with them, participating in the same long creative process. Man is literally dependent on the plants that clean the air we breathe and on elements of earth that purify the water we drink. Many traditional religions share a theology of creation according to which, in the very composition of the human body, these elements are present. Even the word "human" comes from the Latin, originally meaning that which is from earth, soil, *humus*. So a theological ground for love of "nature" of "living things," for "*biophilia*" as a virtue can be developed from a religious perspective. We will not strive to save what we do not love. God's world is lovable; many reasons can be found for a theologian to fall in love with it more deeply than a scientist. Traditional religions are against the idea that man is an accidental creator through science and technology; that the natural world is just an instrument to be used in furthering the arbitrary projects of one purposeless species. Therefore, we must assert a more coherent cosmology through science, but also through theology of nature to instill wonder and holy fear of desecrating nature.

THE COSMOS IN ISLAM: MORAL-SPIRITUAL VALUES AND ECOLOGICAL MOTIFS

Concepts of Nature

The Quran, Muslim Scripture, speaks of nature and its creation, and its purpose more than anything else. It portrays the beauty and wonderful aspects of the natural world. The intent of the Quran is not only to describe

the minute details of nature, but also to draw the attention of man to his responsibilities toward the creatures of God. Man must be attentive to his immediate natural environment, close and distant, to the atmosphere and space.

The Quran also emphasizes the awesome and beautiful features of the natural world in order to provoke the human mind to reflect on the purposes of God in creation. The frequent mention of nature in the Quran seems to suggest the following points: First, the world of nature and natural events point to the existence of the Creator, indicating the permanence of life in the tension between change and impermanence, thus, the possibility of a life beyond the natural life. Secondly, one of the purposes for the creation of nature is the human use of, and benefit from, it. Thirdly, the Quran directs man to learn about nature so that he would not exploit it for selfish and short-term benefits.

Integrity of Nature

Nature is not the opposite of what is graceful or an unfortunate event that just happened. Nature is a creation and gift from the Creator. In the Quran, nature as creation is perfect, orderly and purposeful; as a divine gift, it is an innocent good placed at the service of man. The divine purpose in the creation of nature for human use is to enable man to do well and to achieve happiness. Hence, the famous divine announcement: "If you were not, if you were not, I would not have created the planets." This triple value of nature as orderly, purposeful and good characterizes the integrity of nature.

God alone is the creator of every being, the ultimate cause of every event, and the final end of all that exists. The whole universe itself is really the unfolding of the divine laws of nature, which are the manifestation of God's will. Therefore, for a Muslim, the universe is a living stage set in motion by divine creative activity, and God still actively operates in preserving and sustaining the life of the universe. There is then no power operative in nature besides the immutable laws of nature initiated by the Creator. This means that no other agent, by means of magic, sorcery, spirits, interferes with the process of nature. Islam sees all creation as subject to one transcendental God and does not allow any association of the sacred with nature. The theological view of nature in Islam made it possible to "secularize" the science of nature. The natural sciences developed through the removal of many theurgical, spiritual, ghostly causes, and other mysterious forces from nature. Real science needs not remove God from the universe, but it requires the removal of mysterious forces attributed to it, which are supposed to act arbitrarily and unpredictably. According to the Islamic view of nature, God never acts arbitrarily, and his laws are immutable and hence predictable. It is explained in the Quran that "you will never find exception to the patterns of God's creation and his patterns (*sunnah*) are immutable" (35:49).

Since God is the cause of the order of the universe, and it is by no means a Chaos, but a Cosmos, the working patterns of the universe are knowable, discoverable by observation and reasoning. God has already endowed man with these faculties at his creation, with the power "to name things" (2:7). Science needs to assume that nature functions according to patterns, that it is an orderly system. If natural behavior is arbitrary, erratic, happenstance, no science is possible. Science is possible on the assumption that every time a cause is provided, its effect will follow. If the scientist discovers a true law of nature, it means that, given the same cause, the same effect follows. Thus nature with its immutable patterns is fit and ready for "scientific" observation and analysis. It is the same with the causes of ecological balances. "Look into God's creation again and again and yet more for any imperfection. You will find none. Your sight will return to you humbled and convinced" (67:4). As the Quran says, nature presents us with such a sublime spectacle that, before the fascinating and complex ecological balance, the human mind is literally humbled. It evokes love, admiration, appreciation, and apprehension.

The order of nature is not just the order of material causes and effects; nature is also a realm of ends. Everything in nature fulfills a purpose and, thus, contributes to the balance and prosperity of all. The little people in a valley, the smallest living organism under the oceans, from galaxies to the stars, from whales to termites, from giant trees to fungus, everything in the world fulfills a purpose assigned to it. All creatures are interdependent, and the whole of natural life runs its course because of the perfect harmony existing among its parts. God says in the Quran that He has given to everything a measure proper to it". (54:49; compare also, 19:94; 65:3) The corrosive effects of the contemporary exploitation of nature have brought to consciousness the alarming danger to this ecological balance. Muslims attentive to the ecological implications of the Quran's message have been aware of this for centuries, and have invited everybody to see themselves as standing within this balance. For every human being is as much a part of it as any creature.

MAN'S UNITY WITH NATURE AND HIS PREROGATIVES

The fact that each element of creation feeds on another and is fed upon by a third certainly indicates a union of ends, perhaps the most visible among the higher creatures. The same nexus of ends dominates the unseen world of microorganisms, like enzymes and algae. This affair is more difficult to observe or to imagine in all its dimensions, but it is no less real. Still more difficult to discover are the feeding patterns of vegetal and animal life, and the chain of interdependence in the activities of all creatures. Our knowledge of the complexities of nature's ecology seems to be still in its infancy. The natural sciences have discovered much but revealed too little to imagine the ecological system as a whole.

Until quite recent times, the modern science of nature has succeeded mostly by isolating each segment of nature in order to be able to analyze the parts separately. The effect of this method is losing sight of the unity and the interrelations of things. The omission of the wholeness of nature may seem a trivial matter when compared to the gains in precision in predicting natural events and in applications of science to technological developments. But application of such a partial scientific method to nature has damaged much of nature and threatened us with an ecological crisis. Only after this threat is recognized by the environmentally sensitive man, does it come to our attention that a holistic approach to nature is needed. The idea is that the whole of nature is so harmonious that nothing in it functions except in connection with the other parts. Man now faces the fact that human needs and resources providing for him are interrelated with the other parts of the world, animate or inanimate, in a way that the current practices of science have failed to grasp because of its own self-imposed limits.

Not only have many scientists, poets, and mystics in the Muslim world, but also in the Western world, expressed a vision that includes the whole creation as a unity. Poets like John Donne could write: "No man is an island entire of itself / Every man is a piece of Continent, a part of the main." A Muslim from Persia, Shabistari could write: "To that one whose spirit lives in contemplation of the vision of God, /the whole world is the book of God most High." People from diverse cultures in the Muslim world have, over the centuries, felt impressed by the beauties of nature as the reflections of the bounty of God and the beauties of paradise in which man will be refreshed and renewed. Especially the mystics' (Sufis) literature is rich in expressing this perspective of all as related with each other. These Sufis accept the view that all creatures of God are brothers in love and harmony. As one of the Turkish Sufi poets, Yunus Emre of the thirteenth century writes:

> With the mountains and the rocks/ I call you forth, my God
> With the birds as day breaks/ I call you forth, my God
> With Jesus in the sky,/ With Moses on the Mount Sinai
> Raising my specter high-/ I call you forth, my God[1]

This view of nature as the interrelation of all and reflections of God in nature finds its clear expression in the Quran: "There is not a single thing in the seven heavens and the earth and everything in between, but praise His limitless glory, but you fail to grasp the manner of their praise of Him." (17:44) In another verse it is asked: "Do you not see that to God bow down in worship all things that are in the heavens and the earth- the sun, the moon, the stars, the hills , the trees, the animals?" (22:18) According to the Quran, there is an underlying purposefulness in the universe. This

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[1] Yusus Emre, *Selected Poems*, tr. by T. Halman, Ankara 1990, 158.

systematic teleology of the cosmos can be deduced not only through mathematical calculation (*husban*, 6:97), but also through discovering the harmonious balance (*mizan*, 55:7) and the functions of the things (*qadar* or *taqdir*, 54:49; 65:3).

Of this purposefulness of the creation, God, in the Quran, says: "We have not created the heavens and earth and all that stands between them in sport, but We created them only for a serious end, though most of them do not know" (44:38). The recognition of this purposefulness of the creation is possible at the human level because man himself as the integral part of the natural life, is the only self-conscious being with a rational and ethical disposition to do so. As a rational being, man is able to know about nature and to discover its integrity and worth. As a moral being, however, man is one of the "serious ends" for which nature is created. This puts on man the responsibilities of protecting and availing of nature for good ends. Nature is the only place we live in, but it is also a theater of man's moral activity for the purposes of confuting evil and error with truth and value. (21:18)

Nature, for its part, is created in readiness to receive the good results of efficacious moral activities of man and to aid them in their efforts to moral perfection. Among the men who are always alert to the responsibly of fulfilling such a function (is called by the Quran) are the "good reformer" and the "developer" of natural and social environment. They make a contribution to the vitality and liveliness of our natural and social environment. The opposite of the "re-former" (*muslih*) is the one that figures in the Quran as the individual in the habit of corrupting both nature and society. Concerning the destruction of nature in the hand of such man, the Quran warns: "Corruption does appear on land and sea because of what men's hands have done, and so He may make them taste a part of that which they have done in order that they may return (from evil and corruption). (30:41).

The indifference to the ecological issues and to the destruction of nature is in itself a betrayal of the trust given to man by God and is a resignation from the duty of vice- agency endowed to man by God. By so doing, man closes himself to the God-given bounty of nature that is for the subservience of nature to humans for the very purpose of moral and aesthetic perfection and not for the purpose of exploitation and corruption. This theme of corruption on earth occupies a central place in the Quran. These verses do not escape the attentive readers' attention. One commentator on the Quran writes:

> "The growing corruption and destruction of our natural environment, so awesome – if as yet only partially-demonstrated in our time, is here predicated as "an outcome of what men's hands have wrought", i.e.,., that self-destructive – because utterly materialistic-inventiveness and frenzied activity which now threatens

mankind with previously unimaginable ecological disasters."[2]

The primary meaning of the corruption (*fasad*) is the biological putrefaction and decay. The "corrupting hands" are only the external instruments of people who are morally corrupt. The indifference to the corrosive effects of our activities in nature and corruption starts within man's inner life, that is, in his moral life; then extends to social and, eventually, to the natural order. In the language of the Quran, corruption results from the activities of the kind of man "who whenever he prevails, goes about the earth spreading corruption and destroying the crops and the offspring. But God loves not corruption." (2:205).

All species of animals are portrayed in the Quran as "fellow communities." The Quran says: "No creature is there crawling on the earth, no bird flying with two wings, but they are nations like yourself." (6: 38).

Also, medieval Muslim scientists of nature have paid special attention to the place of plants and animals in the cosmic hierarchy, their genesis and growth. They consider that nature displays, in many respects, the power and wisdom of the Creator. Muslim historians of nature have tried to understand the behavior of these creatures in terms of the faculties given to them for life functions. By subscribing to the view that all things alive, plants and animals, have souls of their own, they averted the difficulties of regarding plants and animal as "machines," parts of a mechanical universe. It is interesting to note that one medieval writer even speaks about the resurrection of plants on the "day of Resurrection."[3]

The authors of Resail al-Ikhvan al-Safa have a special section devoted to a story in which the animals dispute with man over his right to use them for his own purposes. Animals refute man's entire claim of superiority by demonstrating their own spiritual and bodily qualities and virtues. It is only after realizing that there are a few sages and wise men who are cognizant of the purposefulness of the whole creation that the animals finally agree to submit to man[4].

RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN FOR PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Man is dependent on nature for the production of the basic necessities of his life. Production involves the extraction of materials and uses its forces by the producers. Whether the production is agricultural or industrial, this utilization of nature must be responsible. It is left to society, acting through its organs, to regulate the uses of nature in fulfillment of the

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[2] Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, Gibraltar 1980, 623.

[3] Molla Sadra, *Risale fi al-Hashr*, cited in S. Hussein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, (Albany: State University Of New York Press, 1981).

[4] *Dispute between Man and the Animals*, tr. by J. Platts, London, 1869.

responsibility requirement. Responsibility commends neither waste nor extravagance. The Quran calls those guilty of either "the associates of Satan." (17:27) It requires Muslims to use nature in the amount that is justifiable in terms of human need. This responsibility demands that no damage to nature happens to nature in the process of man's use of it. Because natural material and forces are gifts of God granted to man, we do not have full title to it. It is only a permission to use for the given purposes.

Nature is God's manor, and a man is merely a tenant. The gift must be returned to the Creator at death or retirement, improved and developed through man's production. The least he can do is to return it intact as it was received. The Quran expresses this responsibility by reiterating that "everything in creation will return to God." (11:123; 2:210; 28:39; 5:48).

Abuses of nature in the process of production run diametrically opposite to the Muslim ethics of production, and are condemned in the clearest terms. The productive operations must be innocent and pure from the beginning to the end. Neither plant, animal nor human may be hurt by the process. If damage occurs to the environment, it must be compensated. Man is the trustee of nature, and he is obliged to bring the abuser to justice, who is accountable for his deed to the society and the state.

Indeed, Islam seems to regard every act capable of adding, even a little, to the total value of the cosmos, as an act of worship, as a service to God, provided of course, it is entered into for His sake. The concept of service to God is the principle according to which man becomes able to transform the earth into an orchard wherein man is to find his nourishment and pleasure. The Quran affirms that God has created the world for man, and hence everything in nature is for man's use and enjoyment. The land, the sea, the rivers, the mountains, even the stars and skies, the sun and the moon, all have been created for man's use and aesthetic pleasure.

The Quran draws attention to this pleasure. "And We decorated the sky and made it beautiful for man to enjoy..." (15:16). "We planted on earth a pair of everything beautiful" (22:5). "God made subservient to you all that is in the heaven and the earth. In this, there are signs for those who think and reason. (45:13).

> It is God Who made the earth submissive to your design
> and action. Strike out in the earth, therefore, eat of bounty
> of God and remember that it is to Him that you will return
> (67:15).

To pollute the earth or ruin its resources is the opposite of the purpose for which God had planted humans on the earth, that is, to develop and revitalize the earth for better. "God gave you your homes as places of rest and quiescence; furs, wool and skins of animals as materials for your clothing and tents, from which to derive other advantages during your life on earth... Of His creatures, God provided for your shade, and of the mountains shelter. He made garments to protect you from heat and coats of

armor to protect you from violence. Thus does God shower his blessings upon you, in order that you may surrender (to Him)" (16:80-81).

> He enabled you to cultivate the plains (of the earth), build palaces and carve up mountains. Remember the gifts of God to you. Do not spread corruption and pollute the earth... (7:74).
>   He created you out of the earth and established you therein that you may develop (*isti'mar*) it according to His patterns... (11:61) It is God who has made the sea subservient to you, to extract from it soft meat to eat, beautiful jewelry to wear, and for the ships to cross it and bring you His bounty. Perchance you feel grateful. (16:14). O Children of Adam, look to your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but exceed not. God loves not those who exceed the limits. (7:31).

Nature is not man's property; it is a gift of God. Although nature is given for man's use and his enjoyment, he was granted this tenure by God and for the ends prescribed by God. Man has also the obvious duty of taking good care of his Lord's property in which he lives as tenant. His right to use and benefit from nature does not entitle him to destroy and ruin nature its ecological balance. This human right to use nature for his pleasure is an individual right which God renews with every single person at his birth. Neither is it a delegated nor a hereditary right, and therefore does not entitle man to pre-empt the future of other people's enjoyment of it. Man is the steward of all creation – indeed, a participant to the divine act of creation. He is supposed to hand over the trust to God in a better condition than it was when he received it.

The order of nature is receptive to changes that man can bring about as he wills. Nature is flexible, capable of receiving interventions into its workings, capable of suffering aberration of causal nexus by human deeds. No area or realm of nature is beyond the reach of man. The earth, the sky, and seas with all that they contain are his to explore and to use, for utility, for pleasure and comfort or for contemplation. All creation is definitely at the disposal of man, and its disposal is just at his discretion. But he cannot relieve himself of the responsibilities for the whole of creation.

ECOLOGICAL PROTECTION PRACTICES

There are numbers of reports concerning the Prophet Muhammad's advice and practice of environmental protection. He made it a religious charity to respect and protect the environment. He said: "Whoever plants a tree so that humans and domesticated animals and wild beasts or birds feed

themselves, this will be a charity, and he would earn the reward of charity"[5].

According to reliable reports, having returned from an expedition, when the Prophet Muhammad approached Madinah, he pointed to the city and pled to God: O God, just like the Prophet Abraham has consecrated the vicinity of Makkah as forbidden and protected zone, I too declare that Madinah be consecrated and a forbidden zone. The area between two rocks around the city is a protected zone. The trees should not be cut, the animals of prey should not be hunted, the grass should not be mowed, and the tree leaves should not be hewn."[6] Beside Madinah , it is also known that the Prophet also declared the Taif Valley as a protected natural park. "Neither the trees nor the bushes of the Taif Valley be destroyed, beast of prey should not be hunted. Whoever violates these rules should be arrested..."[7].

One of the five Muslim religious rituals, the pilgrimage has many environmental aspects. During the Pilgrim season, in the forbidden zone of Kaabah no living things can be killed or destroyed. According to tradition, the city of Makkah has been sanctified by Prophet Abraham. Taking life of any living being in this city was forbidden in certain months, and warring was unlawful in sacred months, although which of these months were sacred was disputed among the Arabs of the time. In Islam this tradition has been continued at least during the Pilgrimage season.

We have mentioned that the Prophet of Islam established at least three naturally protected areas and natural parks around the cities of Makkah, Madinah, and Taif. He also gave good counsel to people about environmental protection. Here are a few examples of these:

> Plant a tree shrub if you have it, even at the end-time when you still have just the last moment[8].
> Whoever plants a tree he will be rewarded as long as it gives a fruit[9].
> Whoever tends and develops a deserted, barren and arid land will be rewarded by God and it will be written on his record as long as humans and animals benefit from his improvement of that land[10].
> Whoever kills even a sparrow without any just cause will be accountable to God on the Day of Judgment[11].

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[5] *Sahih al-Muslim, Musaqat,* 7,8,10.

[6] Bukhari, Jihad, 71; Muslim, Hajj, 458,464; Abu Davud, Manaseq, 96.

[7] Muhammad Hamidullah, *al-Wasaik al- Siyasiyya* 3.rd ed. Beirut 1969, 236-238.

[8] al-Munawi, *Fayz al-Qadir,3/30*; Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad,* (Cairo, 1379), 168.

[9] al-Munawi, *Fayz al-Qadir,5/480.*

[10] al-Munawi, *Fayz al-Qadir*, 6/39.

[11] Dharemi, 2/11.

He also forbade the destruction of bird nests, damage to their eggs and hatching.[12]

Responsibilities cannot be limited to our responsibilities towards other men, but include our duties to all living beings as well. The Prophet Muhammad gave a warning that on Doomsday a certain person would be thrown into Hell because he had tied up a cat with a rope, giving it neither to eat nor to drink, thus causing the death of the poor animal. Again, the Prophet speaks of divine punishment to those men who did not fulfill their duty even to animals by not giving them sufficient food or loading them beyond their strength, etc. The Prophet prohibited even hewing down trees without necessity.

CONCLUSION

For Muslims or anyone with a good feeling for the environment, the model for a livable and enjoyable nature can be found in the Quranic description of Paradise as the final destiny of life after death. The purity and serenity of the place described as paradise has a relevance for a human perspective on the environment. One should pay attention to the frequent references in divine revelations to Paradise as the exemplary scene of uncorrupted nature-like dwelling places of serenity and purity. Say: Who has forbidden the ornaments (the delicacies, beautiful things) which God provided for his servants? "Say, such belong in this very world to those who believe. And they will enjoy it once more in purity in the other world" (7:31-32). Satisfying instincts and desires in this world for a conscious believer is a "taste" of the joys of Paradise in the world after, if he continues to fulfill his responsibilities. Apart from the eschatological meaning of the descriptions of the world after, it clearly presupposes honoring work, success and achievement in the transformation of nature. It would not be too optimistic to make the world we live in a paradise for all who are and will be living. It is possible with effort and hope. The Quran draws attention to this parallel between life in nature and life in the afterworld in Paradise, and invites us to think it is possible to make them alike. Here is its summoning question.

> Would any of you like to have a garden of palms and vines, with rivers flowing underneath it, with all kinds of fruits there...then a fiery whirlwind strikes it, and all is consumed by fire! Thus God makes clear the signs to you in order you may give thought. (2:266).

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[12] Abu Davud, Janaiz, 1, Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 139.

This is a very significant question with many environmental implications. Here this worldly paradise is described, and it invites us to imagine that all of a sudden this paradise is destroyed by a fire. Who would not feel deeply sad if such a calamity befell his property? Thus, God in the Quran draws the attention of men to the value of protecting nature, keeping it clean, and making it livable place for all.

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CHAPTER X

MORALS OF THE COMMUNICATION OF TRUTH: THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE

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This paper invites you to observe a recent phenomenon taking place in the "civilized" world, namely the openness manifested by the community of scientists towards questions pertaining to the religious sphere. This openness has been paradoxically prepared by the crises the civilized world went through: the crisis of atheist humanism, the crisis of morality and that of metaphysics. But the dialogue between scientists and religious people seems to be favoured by the process of globalisation, by the recent discoveries in the field of humanities and of social studies and, moreover, by the discussions regarding the morality or amorality of scientific research. Therefore this work invites you to take up the challenges through dialogue between philosophers, theologians and scientists, taking into account the contributions of philosophy, theology and science to the communication of the truth. In this way we might obtain a sense of the exigencies and finalities of the morals of the communication of truth.

But first, the crises of the civilized world involving anthropological, moral and philosophical challenges must be understood.

THE CRISIS OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD

The first crisis is the so-called drama of atheist humanism, of which the first consequence is the renunciation of Christian origins and the European man's alienation from God. Thus, the mentality of contemporary man is deeply impregnated with the principles of one of the three types of atheist humanism, different from a geographical and historical point of view: the positivistic humanism represented by A. Comte and L. Feuerbach, the Marxist humanism of K. Marx, and the nihilistic one suggested by F. Nietzsche. At the foundation of each of these humanisms are atheism, and even more precisely anti-Christianism. Though they are not opposed, reciprocal relations, hidden or obvious, are numberless; having as the common ground, the denial of God, the three types of humanism have similar outcomes, the main one being the destruction of the human being[1].

The second crisis is a moral one; it concerns not only the fact that the normative teachings are generally questioned, but also the fact that the

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[1] Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (1943), Morcelliana, Brescia 1988, 7-8.

universality and immutability of moral commandments are globally and systematically contested, particularly those which prohibit without exception intrinsically evil acts[2]. The dimensions of the crisis are obvious at a philosophical and theological level. Some philosophies deny any kind of dependence of freedom on truth: human reason is perceived as autonomous and creative in the determination of moral commandments. Likewise, philosophy has developed a personalism independent of any necessary reference to nature, so that the spiritual dimension of the human being is severed from any reference to objective truth or universal law. However, the most profound rupture is the one on the theological level, on the level of the distinction between faith and morals. As a condition of its universal validity, the secularization of morals is a process with historical roots, going back to the time of the religious wars, which darkened Europe at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. This process can also be observed in the radical distinction between earthly action and the specific Christian dimension. Moral values are divorced from redemptive faith. Consequently, revelation is seen as only tangential to morality. In the same respect, the teaching of the Church cannot claim specific competencies in the determination of moral laws anymore. Thus, ethical pluralism (with reference either to the historical or culturally diversified backgrounds, or to the diversified judgments of conscience) ought to be fully sustained as legitimate and compatible with the unity of Church, according to the slogan: one single faith with a variety of moral options[3].

Finally, the third crisis is on a metaphysical level and is mostly reflected in the separation between science and metaphysics. Indeed, one of the common grounds of contemporary European culture is that science represents the only appropriate instrument by means of which we can come to know nature. Science has obtained this exclusive right to speak about nature, by progressively eliminating metaphysics. We do not owe this actuality to science only, but also to Western contemporary philosophy, which gave up any pretence of knowledge, leaving the field of knowledge completely to science. However, philosophy has never ceased to be rational, but the finalities of rational research have been oriented in other directions, such as, the existential analysis of the condition of the living man or the phenomenological description of several ways of activity or human conditions, including the research concerning language and the structure of science. Turning analytical, philosophy limited itself to describing, decomposing and putting into place what, in a certain way, is given empirically. Thus, contemporary philosophy has become distrustful of the capacity of rationality to synthesize and create something by its own force,

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[2] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor* (06.08.1993), no. 115.

[3] Livio Melina, "The Light of Christ on Human Action", in: G. Borgonuovo / A. Cattaneo (revised by), *John Paul, the Theologist. In the Sign of the Encyclicals*, Mondadori, Milano 2003, 216-217.

without continually turning to empirical supervision. Certainly, in the past century, science provides many examples of solid knowledge. Philosophy, after giving up its relation with experience, rejected any type of metaphysical debate[4].

Faced with these challenges, the answer must be not unilateral, but global. If "the word 'culture' in its general sense indicates everything whereby man develops and perfects his many bodily and spiritual qualities"[5], the solution to these cultural problems requires the contribution of several disciplines. Scientific research is important for the details of method and analysis, history and philosophy for critical reflections, ethics and theology for suggestions leading to finalities, meanings and ultimate values. This is why science, philosophy and theology are called to discover possibilities for dialogue and ways of collaborating, to overcome the misunderstandings and conflicts of modern times. The strengthened relations among science, philosophy and theology ought to be compelling, clear and constructive in order to employ the elements of collaboration in a scientific culture which considers the deep aspirations of man.

REASONS FOR DIALOGUE

By dint of the challenges mentioned above, to which more may be added, such as the ecological crisis, the demographic one, etc., the community of people in the religious and scientific fields have begun to meet and work together; religious people have asked for the help of science in order to rule out the errors and superstitions; scientists turned to religion to free themselves from false idolizations and generalizations. The conclusion has been drawn that it is necessary for philosophers, theologians and scientists to engage collaboration and dialogue[6].

A decisive factor in bringing forward this type of dialogue is the process of globalization, involving all cultures. The process of globalization leads to the strengthening of cultures. Indeed, in our present situation, the culture we were born into continues to spread partial explanations, reductionist convictions, false and confusing ideals about man. However, considering the new problems scientists face these days, such as quality, purposefulness, complexity, relatedness, etc., the various fields of knowledge of reality are invited to take part in a dialogue[7].

Another reason for dialogue is based on the recent discoveries in the field of human and social sciences. Thus, biological conditionings,

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[4] Evandro Agazzi, *The Philosophy of Nature. Science and Cosmology,* Piemme, Casale Monferrato 1995, 34-37.

[5] Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes,* (4.12.1965), no. 53.

[6] Cf. John Paul II, *Letter to the Director of the Vatican Observatory*, June 1, 1988.

[7] Cf. John Paul II, Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, October 31, 1992, no. 2.

psychological pulsations, historical disparities, occult sociological convictions, ideological and political manipulations and economic pressures condition rationality and confuse the mind and thought, and discredited the debate on finalities, meanings, and values. These discoveries have introduced a separation between science and human life, which can no longer be avoided if we adopt a single point of view[8].

However, the most appreciable reasons have come out during the debate on the neutral character of science, according to which science would be completely independent of exterior judgments and interferences, particularly of those with an ethical value. During the first half of the twentieth century, Heidegger was one of the philosophers criticizing the pretence of neutrality of science, claiming the fact that it was the result of an exaggerated humanism, which refused any kind of limitation.[9] At the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, most scientific research was financed and influenced by the military, political, economical and financial powers, which minimized objectivity. In this respect, science would be neutral, if no factors or interests alien to the research intervened. However, since science requires activity characteristic of the human being, it is always subjected to personal reasons, social and cultural influences, and historical backgrounds that do not allow it to be neutral. In this situation, we face the ethical problem of scientific research[10].

Although ethics is necessary, it has not been elaborated yet. Presently, the possible conditions of ethics are being discussed: a detailed presentation on science from a historical and theoretical perspective is necessary; the ethical debate must be continued, and also the interdisciplinary debate concerning some specific problems, such as bioethics, ecology, etc. Likewise, the obstacles opposing the configuration of such an ethics are also debated: the modern conviction that there is no connection between ethics and science, the disintegration of classical systems of values, the crisis of moral commandments, contemporary pluralism, the widespread idea that the meanings, significations, finalities and values are the outcome of consensus, etc. However, the most significant obstacles are the inflexible positions of modern rationalism and positivism (the belief that the truth obtained by means of scientific research is

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[8] Gualberto Gismondi, "The Ethics of Scientific Work", in G. Tanzella / A. Strumia (revised by), *Interdisciplinary Dictionary of Science and Faith*, vol. 1, Urbaniana University Press / Città Nuova, Roma 2002, 539-540.

[9] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit. Mit einem Brief über den "Humanismus",* Berna 1954²; Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger's Way of Thought* (1963), Humanitas (translated by C. Cioabă), Bucureşti 1998, 201-203.

[10] Cf. Gualberto Gismondi, "The Ethics of Scientific Research", 539-552.

absolute), and the position of post-modern irrationality, denying the fact that the human being can reach the truth by reason[11].

Nevertheless, we have to mention the fact that:

> Modern philosophy clearly has the great merit of focusing attention upon man. From this starting-point, human reason with its many questions has developed further its yearning to know more and to know it ever more deeply. Complex systems of thought have thus been built, yielding results in the different fields of knowledge and fostering the development of culture and history. Anthropology, logic, the natural sciences, history, linguistics …, the whole universe of knowledge has been involved in one way or another. Yet the positive results achieved must not obscure the fact that reason, in its one-sided concern to investigate human subjectivity, seems to have forgotten that men and women are always called to direct their steps towards a truth, which transcends them. Sundered from that truth, individuals are at the mercy of caprice, and their state as person ends up being judged by pragmatic criteria based essentially upon experimental data, in the mistaken belief that technology must dominate all. It has happened therefore that reason, rather than voicing the human orientation towards truth, has wilted under the weight of so much knowledge and little by little has lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being. Abandoning the investigation of being, modern philosophical research has concentrated instead upon human knowing. Rather than make use of the human capacity to know the truth, modern philosophy has preferred to accentuate the ways in which this capacity is limited and conditioned[12].

Against agnosticism and relativism, against the modern, false generalizations and post-modern negations, Christian thought defends the existence of truth and the power of reason to reach the truth, even with the price of errors and limits. It emphasizes the need of an anthropology founded on the truth and dignity of the human being as the basis of ethics[13]. Christian thought harmonizes the authenticity, dignity, freedom, meaning

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[11] Cf. Marcelo Pera / Josepf Ratzinger, *Without Roots. Europe, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, Mondadori, Milano 2004, 14-27; 113-117.

[12] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio* (1998), Presa Bună (translation by W. Dancă), Iaşi 1999, no. 5.

[13] Cf. John Paul II, *Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences*, October 28, 1994, no. 4.

and the value of man with the proper aim of knowledge. This is necessary particularly for the technical-scientific cultures closed to transcendence, which subordinate the people and subjects of material exactingnesses within their immanent systems. Indeed, by generalizing rationality or, on the contrary, ruling out the ability to know the truth and denying the truth itself, we destroy not only the foundations of ethics, but technical-scientific research itself. Admitting the ontological limitation of man and his need to open up to the transcendence of "the humanism of the limit" sets the grounds for "the ethics of responsibility," founded on the dignity of the human being.

This conception replaces any pretence of absolute autonomy that transgresses the actual identity of creature. As values accepted by both the religious and the lay cultures, human dignity and responsibility agree in focusing ethics on values, not on limits, in order to guide free scientific, responsible and conscious research. Moreover, these end in overcoming the exaggerated humanism, which by theorizing man's absolute autonomy, would like to work out human problems with the sole help of science and techniques[14].

WAYS OF COMMUNICATING TRUTH

The road of the search for truth has not been an easy one in history. Looking back on the road done so far, we can notice lights and shadows, ups and downs, agony and ecstasy. Albeit the great efforts of discovering the truth and the brief moments of enjoying it, several generations of people have met Aristotle's and St. Thomas' belief, according to which "the slenderest knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things is more desirable than the most certain knowledge obtained of lesser things"[15].

These days, people have difficulties in discovering the truth, because, as Pope John Paul II said, the lack of balance between the technological progress of contemporary civilization and interest in moral life and the thoroughness of moral commandments has not been overcome[16]. Indeed, scientific research has made the road towards the truth

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[14] Cf. John Paul II, *Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences,* October 27, 1998, no. 1-3.

[15] Thomas Aquinas, I, q. 1, a. 5, ad 1. Anton Durcovici translates and comments upon this formulation: "The slenderest (minimal) knowledge that may be obtained of the highest truths is more precious and more desirable than the most certain knowledge obtained of least (minimal) things – a precious diamond as big as a dewdrop, not a pile of nothing". Cf. Anton Durcovici, *Religion lessons* (Second lesson, on November 10, 1936), A.E.R.C., Iaşi, File 2/1936; Wilhelm Dancă, *The Fascination of Truth. From Thomas of Aquinas to Anton Durcovici,* Sapienţia, Iaşi 2005, 13-111.

[16] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (October 4, 1979), no. 15.

more difficult and complicated for man. It has made the question of truth more complicated, either by bringing forward new problems, or by widening the fields of research, and, finally, by compromising the search through the deceitful roads of scientism and techniques. Thus, functionality and efficiency have become more important than truth; partial truth has become general truth and the logic of this field of research has been exaggerated. In order to succeed in this respect, we need to have an open mind toward the existential dimension of truth[17], toward all the levels of truth and, first of all, toward the truth of the being or "ontological truth," according to which every being is true since it corresponds to itself or to God's idea about it. Secondly, it has been stated that we need the truth of mind or "the logical truth," according to which intelligence is adjusted to the ontological truth[18].

These two kinds of truth are part of the sapiential heritage of Christian thought, which together with Aristotle support the idea that falsity is in thought and not in things[19]; together with Thomas of Aquinas, they support the idea that truth is in the intellect and being is the foundation of truth[20]. In judgment, the mind comprises truth, and the mind itself is comprised of the ontological truth. On an ontological level, untruth means closure or refusal to allow oneself to be comprised in the being of the existences. In this situation, the subject is ignorant. On a logical level, the untruth is the error or the insufficient adjustment to truth. Finally, the lie is the refusal of truth. In these situations, the subject deceives himself or becomes deceitful.

In modern times, human thought has eliminated certain theoretical problems characteristic of classical philosophy and has stifled the intelligibility of being, the intentionality of rationality and the various meanings of truth: subjective, negative, pragmatic, empirical, historical, etc. Starting from this point, the areas of research and the ways to reach truth expand: metaphysics deals with finalities, ultimate meanings and values; ethics studies the values and meanings concerning human action; science is interested in developing the experimental knowledge in order to control things by means of observations, experiments, quantitative and operative processes, etc. Though strengthened and improved, the scientific perspective did not succeed in pleasing the transcendental self-understanding of man.

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[17] Cf. Peter Henrici, "Truth and the Truths. Meditations on the Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio* of John Paul II, in *The Roman Observatory*, of November 11, 1998.

[18] Cf. Vittorio Possenti, "Truth", in G. Tanzella-Nitti / A. Strumia (revised by), *Interdisciplinary Dictionary of Science and Faith*, 2nd vol., Urbaniana University Press / Città Nuova, Rome 2002, 1502-1518.

[19] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI, 4.

[20] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, I, q. 2; *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 1.

Looking at the question of truth from a historical and synthetic perspective, we may say that the following seven concepts of truth have designated various traditions and moments in the history of thought: truth as correspondence or conformity between thought and reality; truth as manifestation, opening, evidence, direct contact; truth as divine relation; truth as coherence; truth as conformity with a canon; truth as inter-subjective consensus; truth as utility and efficiency[21]. Of these, the longest tradition suggested the understanding of the notion of truth as *adaequatio intellectus et rei*. The concept of truth as *adaequatio* is often translated as the adjustment of the intellect to the thing or being. The translation is accurate, but it may leave room for misunderstandings; this is why notions like correspondence or conformity are preferred, since they keep the theme of the continual adjustment to the res opened. In *De veritate*, St. Thomas of Aquinas says: "*Unumquodque ens in tantum dicitur verum, in quantum conformatum est vel conformabile intellectui*"[22], allowing for the understanding that *adaequatio* would always comprise *adaequabilitas*, that the truth of things endures always; the mind apprehends it by gradually passing from potency to action. Consequently, within the concept of truth, the conformity or correspondence between assertions and reality, there is a dialectical rapport or a relation between two poles (the mind and the *res*), which never ends and feeds on the logic of new discoveries. In this respect, the logic of truth is the logic of discovery, of novelty, not the logic of what is already known. We may say the idea of truth as discovery is part of the conformity concept, since the discovery is the conformity of a new answer to a new question. By sustaining the idea of truth as correspondence between thought or language and reality or being, I would like to say that this type of understanding of truth is universally valid in the field of sciences, philosophy, theology, natural world and supernatural world (Revelation). The object of study does not determine the closeness between these different fields, but the way in which this is asserted by all these disciplines. Therefore, it seems that:

> Truth is asserted in different ways, according to the being, and that there is a metaphysical truth, a scientific one, a moral one, a sensuous one, a hermeneutical one, within which the concept of conformity or correspondence is not applied in an univocal or even equivocal one, but concurrent, or according to the specific modalities. This concept remains normative, though the intention to leave the *adaequatio* determination seems to have influenced some of the compartments of philosophy and theology, where a fine disbelief towards this idea was recently

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[21] Vittorio Possenti, *Being and freedom,* Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2004, 55ss.

[22] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, I, q. 21, a. 1.

spread, as if it constituted an obstacle, a formal expression, depletion or even an attack to the persistence of the mystery. Nevertheless, if we destroy the primary root within the concept of truth, which expresses conformity (between thought and action, purpose and rule, model/master and apprentice), it is no longer possible to think or realize anything in which the idea of rule, reference or measure might still be present[23].

In the light of this way of understanding the concept of truth, as conformity, we can also notice the close connection among truth, ethics and the human being. The truth of the person lies in his spiritual, mental and physical nature, and in awareness of his limitation and dependence upon something else, which transcends it. Such nature allows the person to know and meditate (rationality), to choose (freedom) and to decide (responsibility)[24]. These elements are important both for ethics and for the dialogue among philosophy, theology and science. If the subject of ethics and of any other discipline can only be the human being, who is never completely autonomous or neutral, science cannot be considered either an autonomous ethical subject, or neutral. Therefore, the person's truth underlies the ontological, anthropological and ethical value of scientific research and establishes its principles and criteria[25].

Trying to gain an insight into the depth of the rapport between the human being and truth, we conclude that the person's truth consists in being a created, limited, embodied spirit, in communion, conscious, free, responsible, oriented towards truth and love. This truth is his nature and his aim, meaning and value. In other words, the human being was made for the truth and the truth for the human being, since he suffers in its absence and when it is limited. Consequently, since the love of truth is the first feature of his own being, man can never give up on truth, even though the search and rapport with the truth are never easy tasks or lacking risks. Man and humankind can only grow in the love for the truth, and that is why the constant search is the most elevated agent of humanization[26].

The human being is structured for the truth that "suits him" and the one "he conforms to." I refer here to the metaphysical truth (beyond any physics) and especially religious truth. The more he develops, the more man discovers that truth is not a subject that can be controlled, but a subject he is controlled by, not a subject he searches and accepts, but one he is searched

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[23] Vittorio Possenti, *The being and freedom*, 58.

[24] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor* (October 6, 1993), no. 5 and 115.

[25] Cf. Alejandro Llano, *The Philosophy of Knowledge* (1984), Le Monier, Firenze 1987, 144-147.

[26] Battista Mondin, *The Human Being: Who is he? Elements of Philosophical Anthropology*, Massimo Publishing-house, 1989[26], 115-121.

and accepted by. Besides this, the closeness to the truth goes beyond the field of pure observation, descriptions or experiments. Knowing this we can elaborate an authentic ethics of truth, which the ethics of scientific research cannot set aside. By means of this ethics, truth in every human activity acquires its full importance, including the scientific activity, namely verity, openness and credibility.

GOALS FOR AN ETHICS OF THE COMMUNICATION OF TRUTH

In a culture dominated by relativist and nihilistic ideas about truth, the ethics of the communication or affirmation of truth has a decisive importance, since it demonstrates man's permanent need of verity, openness and credibility.

Generally, facing the truth as value we need to act in accord with the truth. More precisely, we need the moral and social virtue that involves the human being in its fidelity to the truth, either for himself or when communicating. In the present situation, verity means a strict distinction between well-founded knowledge and the knowledge acquired by means of hypotheses, opinions, approximations, generalizations and speculations. Likewise, truth as value means openness towards oneself and towards others, and the dialogue among philosophy, theology and science. It involves the precise manifestation not only of the content of scientific information and knowledge, but also their nature, their degree of truth and how much credit one can put into them. In its own turn, credibility requires that the information and knowledge be faithful to the truth and be communicated with due care and charity. Thus, all three areas require the continuous thoroughness of research in order to make known their epistemological, heuristic and moral limits, and to develop humanistic and cultural openings. These are necessary in the process of education, as well as in the activities of public communication and information[27].

Regarding scientific research, we must emphasize some specific requisites: the communication or transmission of data considering the interaction between social subjects, senders and receivers, in other words the correct, public and on-time dispersing of facts and events, as well as the formation or qualitative maturation of people. And in this process, the following are fundamental: openness or the genuine expression of thought; credibility or the adherence to the reality of events, people and ideas, according to their background; honesty or transparency of language, observing professionalism and competence. Thus, communication and information, both at a professional and popular level imply appropriateness, credibility, honesty, openness, integrity and competence; the genuine manifestation of reality; transparent and complete presentation; adherence to the data presented within their global contexts; the just formulation of judgments. However, they have to observe certain limits, deriving from the

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[27] Cf. Gualberto Gismondi, "The Ethics of Scientific Work", 549-551.

preservation of reputation, individual and familial intimacy, natural and professional secrets, public integrity and utility, etc. We must mention here the propaganda and advertising, meant to determine the consensus behind the action. They are different in that the first is meant to determine the participation in choices and actions thought of as being useful and good for the society, and the second is about aims and limited participations. Nevertheless, these also have to be penetrated by the values of verity, openness, credibility and honesty. In this respect, the Decree *Inter mirifica*[28] and the pastoral observations in *Communio et Progressio*[29] have emphasized the need to respect the rights of individual persons and groups of people. Above all things, there is the right to be informed about the continuous changes in order to be able to choose and decide in a responsible way. In addition, the right to free access to the sources and channels of information and to receive proper and complete information in order to know events in their background, respecting the requisitions of justice and charity are important[30].

Owing to the rapid and continuous changes today, moral requisites of the truth become important and difficult to classify; one of the causes would be their polyhedral character, implying many personal, cultural, political and social responsibilities. However, we mention some of the most exigent: the overcoming of the mentality wishing to work out the human, cultural and social problems, only with the help of science and technique, especially when these are mostly determined by the scientific-technical activity; finding ways of participating in the choices and decisions regarding scientific research of people and communities; respecting the right of citizens to be properly and appropriately informed on the decisions when they have to make their views heard in public; directing scientific research to the people's advantage rather than to that of the increase of instrumentality and productivity; promoting a global perspective that would consider the needs of all nations and communities of people.

We notice nowadays a certain moral inaction of man when facing problems created by technological progress, exacerbated by one of the characteristics of the technological process itself, which is the rapid development and implementation of the new technical-scientific discoveries[31]. At a first look, this characteristic could mean a step ahead towards better conditions of life, but the real outcome is always equivocal. In order to solve this problem, new methods of work and instruments to

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[28] Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Media of the Social Communications *Inter mirifica* on December 4, 1963.

[29] Cf. Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Instructio pastoralis *Communio et progressio* on May 23, 1971.

[30] Cf. Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Instructio pastoralis *Communio et progressio,* no. 33-35; 37-40; 65; 82; 107.

[31] Cf. Stanley L. Jaki, *The Saviour of Science* (1988), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1992, 175-184.

reunite and unify sciences are sought. The present times seem to favor new types of understanding reality and a clearer dialogue among sciences, such as epistemology, history, sciences, ethics and theology. But how can we implement the dialogue among these sciences?

The solution presented by the radical ecologists today cannot possibly be accepted; it has something in common with an older invitation of the bishop of Ripon, Dr. E.A.Burroughs who, at the Conference held in Leeds in September 1927, invited the entire scientific community to interrupt the scientific and technological research for a couple of years[32].

Leaving aside the moral reductionist explanations rising from ideological, political, financial, military and other positions, the foundation of moral judgments of the scientist lies in the scientist. But, since the duplicity Saint Paul wrote about in the Letter to the Romans ("for it was not that which is good that I wanted to do, that I did it. Except, the evil that I did not wish to do, that is what I did" [Rom 7, 20]) is present also in this case, I ask myself together with the Latin writer, Juvenal: *quis custodiet ipsos custodes* – who will watch over the watchmen?

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[32] Cf. *The Times* (London), Sepetember 5, 1927, 15, col. 1-2 apud Stanley L. Jaki, *The Saviour of Science*, note 9, 176.

PART III

TRUTH, MORALITY AND PUBLIC LIFE

CHAPTER XI

ANTHROPOLOGY AND POLITICAL ACTION: ETHICS AS PREAMBLE TO A FAIR POLITICS

ABELARDO LOBATO, O.P.

The issue of the relation of anthropology and political action lies within the study of the relation that should exist between ethics and politics. They neither represent the same thing, as the totalitarianisms have historically stated, nor should they be completely separated as Machiavelli thought, which seems easily accepted by most political personalities of the modern times. These two attitudes have turned poisonous in the past century and must be left aside. Therefore, we have a third possibility, namely that of distinguishing between the two and of finding their complementarity. This third position, taken up by Aristotle and then intensely developed by Thomas of Aquinas seems to meet the case of our situation. Reflecting on this direction, ethics and politics must have a real autonomy and a certain primacy.

Politics is "architectonic" by its nature; its purpose is that of guiding all the activities of the citizens by proposing the appropriate goals and by searching for the necessary means for the human life in society. Politics administers and governs the life of the city, and its primacy is of a directive nature. "Thus by applying the criterion according to which the action whose object is more noble and more elevated is more valuable, we must admit that politics is the first of all the practical sciences, and has a making order function aiming at the acquisition of the ultimate and perfect good within human realities" (I *Pol.* Proem, 7).

Ethics also has a primacy within human action because it realizes in a perfect manner the promotion of man, not only by making his actions good, but also by determining him to be good, which we cannot say about the intellectual or factual virtues. The primacy of ethics is more special and it has a larger horizon. Of these two "primacies," the culture of our day seems to be more open to the one of politics: *"D'abord la politique!"* ("Politics first!"). Politics is more concerned with power and wealth, so with the domain of man over man. On the other hand, being ethical requires a considerable effort, an effort that not many persons are willing to give. The man of the present culture does not look for truth or well-being anymore, because these are strict; he is satisfied with the opinions and excuses suggested by the so-called "weak thought." The antinomy is that the man today, usually unemployed, asks the politicians for the reasons and bases of their actions more and more, and is hungry and thirsty for politics in the service of the human being.

In this situation, attention to the ethical dimension of man seems appropriate. The reflections of Thomas of Aquinas, as *Doctor humanitatis*, suggested by Pope John Paul II, help us bring back this ethical dimension necessary for the fair exercise of politics.

The present Congress, with the theme "Politics," is not the first one in Romania. The SITA Society started its cultural activities in Sinaia, in 2001, and in May 2002, the Second Congress was held in the city of Oradea, with the theme "Saint Thomas and political philosophy". My speech at that meeting dealt with St. Thomas' doctrine on the moral action in politics. A published volume and CD made available the works of the Congress, in Romanian. The speech today follows the development of St. Thomas' doctrine in this regard and is situated in the context of the contribution that ethics can and should have in politics and in the present cultural situation, without minimizing its autonomy in any way. Our opinion is that this is a significant contribution necessary to the political field. Politics deals with the social dimension of man, with human things, with the governing of society and the common good. In order for politics to be fair, it must have a satisfactory knowledge of the human reality, when suggesting and adopting the necessary means for human life.

Political activity implies anthropology. The smallest error or ignorance of man at the starting point grows bigger and bigger if not corrected at the onset. Saint Augustin, who proposed building the city of God, observed that the empires of the past were formed on injustice: *magna imperia, magna latrocinia!* Our observation of twentieth century events brings to our attention the biggest calamities in history. The starting point of such political and inhuman abominations is the errors and false theories about man. In fact, the historic crisis of the present time has a political cause. Carlo Levi described it in his book *Se questo è un uomo* ("If this is a man!"). According to Hume, it had become normal to leave aside ethics and religion, as private realities, without taking into account that both are the most universal components of culture, that they both embody transcendental values. The loss of moral sense, the forgetfulness of the soul, led to the loss of man's humanity. The retrieval of this humanity is a condition for our rescue. Therefore, the first contribution of ethics in politics is to bring the human being into the open in his whole truth. Anthropology, or integral humanism, has become a necessary preamble to a fair politics.

The human being is the subject and object of politics. Meta-anthropology, in its ethical dimension, has a significant importance for the human being; it suggests a preamble that reveals the man to man, as an answer to the question: who are you? This preamble can be developed in three dimensions: personal identity, the specific way as human and his rights. Political action, in order to be fair, must respect these components if it wants to be in the service of the human being.

THE HUMAN BEING AS A PERSONAL BEING

The thought in the modern times lost its transcendence when it abandoned metaphysics. The consequences are very severe. Then, through the anthropological approach, it concentrated on the search of the truth about man, expressed by Kant as a radical question: *Was ist der Mensch?* The answers given to this question are insufficient. Max Scheler reminded us of three answers, the Biblical one, *imago Dei*; the Greek one, *zoon logicón* or *animal rationale* (rational animal); and the Darwinian one, the arrowhead of evolution. In fact, once we leave aside the chain of being and that *mirabilis connexio* of the three orders of the creatures in the world (the material, living and the human one) what is left in the memory are the descriptions of the human being as a microcosmos, *quodammodo omnia*, and synthesis of the universe. The antinomy was obvious: modern man, just like the prodigal son in Luke's parable, after living in his parents' home, got lost in a remote place, forgot the memories of his origin and was not able to know his own destiny. The truth was that he was all alone, without God, without a world, and he saw himself as the product of random necessity.

After the "acclaimed death of God" the fatal hour of "the death of the human being" has come, and we already begin to speak about his post-human future. Beyond the horizon of the being, man is lost. The sciences of the human being have multiplied and the "prometheic" dream to produce cloned human beings or men programmed like robots, with the help of science and techniques, is present again. While we are shown these androids to the image of man, the truth is that the real man becomes more and more similar to his products. In this climate of confusion, caught up in this culture, which ignores the profound human reality, the answer to the question about the human being becomes impossible. Never has the human being ignored itself as it does today! New Age and the Map of the Earth are expressions of our present roving. From many unbearable situations, we hear an SOS cry denouncing this historical crisis and asking for help. But where can our rescue come from? Will the politicians today be able to give an answer to the agonizing human being?

The road back is the only means possible in order to help the lost man. Aristotle left us some valid roads to go back. In his book on the soul, which Hegel considers one of the pillars of Western culture; Aristotle suggests a starting point for the understanding of the human soul: this is a foremost and substantial act. Therefore, man is a being opened to totality, *quodammodo omnia*, because he has the intellect and the hands. He gave us two complementary definitions of man, of the man alone, and another about the man with man. The human being is a living being, endowed with intellect: rational animal. This feature distinguishes him from all other beings. However, he is not all by himself, but social and political by nature. Moreover, he is born into a family; he lives in relation to others; he belongs to a human community, both because he only finds the answers to his needs

in this context, and because he communicates with the others through language. Man needs the family and the city. This is why we also need to understand man as *animale politicum*. The *polis* is not just a place; it is also a co-natural and necessary dimension. According to Aristotle's description, man finds himself between *theos* and *zoon*. Some men may choose a solitary life, but only partly. The complete development of human life and being depends on his introduction into social life. Man is not the soul because he has the body with the senses, but his soul is the form of the body, a substantial unique form from which the species is born. Man is a citizen, and he is so as long as he takes part in the life of the city, Aristotle did not find place for slaves and women in this context.

The whole truth about the human being is not offered by the heritage of cultures, whether Romanian or Greek. The Jewish culture has left us an element crucial for the understanding of the human being. The privilege of this culture is that of having received a revelation of God, the Absolute Being, The One Who Is (Ex. 3:14), Spirit, Creator, Who created the man to His image, and moreover, through the amazing embodiment, made Himself a human being.

The discovery of the freedom of the human subject, which fascinates our culture, appeared with Christianity, so that the problem and the mystery of man would find the solution only in the light of the mystery of Christ. This Christian anthropology way has an answer to the question about man, a question and answer we find suggested in Psalm 8. The human being discovers his place in the world, made especially for him, but he can only find the base of his human dignity before God, Who created him and towards Whom he is going, in the fact that he is to His image (*ad imaginem*). This image (*imago*) is fully realized in the first couple, Adam and Eve, and in the perfect man, Jesus Christ. Christian anthropology suggests the radical truths about man: his reality made of spiritual body and soul, his spiritual dignity as the image of God (*imago Dei*), his destiny in the communion with God forever.

The nucleus of Christian anthropology is man as a personal being. Originally, the term "person" is thought to be an Etruscan word used in the Greek or Latin theatre and which means mask. It is in Seneca's thoughts that we can see the passage from theatre to the subject wearing the mask, from the person to the character; then it is passed on to the persons playing an important role in the religious and civil society, and finally it is used for a certain understanding of the mysteries, whether of the one of the Holy Trinity (one God and three persons) or of the embodiment of Christ (two natures and one person). The concept of person, the densest concept of metaphysics, is not only applied to the divine persons, to the spiritual beings, but to all human beings. Starting from Boethius, the person designates an individual subject of spiritual nature, or as St. Thomas would say, the most perfect of all realities, the subject that exists in the spiritual nature. The use of this word in modern culture extends to all human persons. Kant proposes it as opposed to the word "thing". The thing can be

exchanged with another thing, which has a price and is always a means. To the other extreme we find the person, who always has an infinite value, is not interchangeable with another person, is always a goal, and does not tolerate manipulations. The person is never alone, but in relation to another person. The person is expressed by a pronoun: me-you-us and needs a *communio personarum*. The essential relation is that of being with somebody. The interpersonal rapport is of cohabitation, acquaintanceship, and most of all love.

The whole truth about man, from the perspective of Christian humanism, conditions the political action in all its activities in the service of man. Pope John Paul II, in his first Encyclic *Redemptor hominis*, said that for the Church, too, the human being is the first and the main road to take.

Politics really is culture, whose base can be found in the nature of the human person that cannot be ignored. The whole truth about man is not satisfied with knowing the being of man; it embraces the whole sphere of human development, in the family and society. From this perspective, we can discover the nobility of political action and its complexity. We can apply to the political sphere the advice that St. Leo the Great gave Christians in order to encourage them in the school of Christ: *Agnosce, oh politico, dignitatem tuam!*. The gratefulness every man deserves, as subject and object of art, and the political exercise are the first steps to a fair politics.

As a polar star, the ethic preamble can lighten the present political night.

THE LAW AND THE FREE MAN

It is not enough for the political world to be aware of every individual's dignity, as a personal being, and of the respect he deserves in seeking the common good for all society. It needs another preamble of the same importance and value. The human being is always a *homo viator*; he is always on a journey; he is and he becomes at the same time. His being implies ability, his nature implies culture. While other creatures are governed by nature, the human being is the only one who needs to dominate it, to put it into his service. Culture is what man adds to his nature. In his anthropology, Kant advised us to leave tradition aside, that tradition which had been limited to the knowledge of what man had received from nature in order to discover what he might do with his freedom. Pico della Mirandola speaks of this road of freedom which distinguishes man from all the other creatures in the universe. In his view, man does not receive a fixed being; he has the privilege to shape himself as he wishes.

It is in this cultural context that the breach between nature and freedom occurs. Nature is denied, forgotten, overridden; and freedom becomes a myth. The tragedy of modern times has its roots in the mystification of freedom at the cost of human nature. The political problem

of our days, after Auschwitz, Gulags, Shoà and so many other genocides, is the return to the foundation of freedom in the human person. At the beginning of the third millennium, we can observe the universal hunger and thirst for freedom. We can feel the need for norms and rules kept by everyone at an international level, the need of a worldly vision, to open the road of peace. The culture of the present times has approached "the abolition of man," but at the same time, it looks for an absolute base, at a universal level. The answer to this need of a base for the development of man in the world, as a personal being of a free nature, is suggested and well-founded within the moral law of man, in the so-called *lex naturalis*. The knowledge of this law is the second anthropological preamble considered necessary for a fair political action. The so-called *lex naturalis* suggests the meeting point between nature and human freedom, guarantees the necessary base at the universal level, and gives reason to the endless cultural creativity of the history of humankind.

The return to the natural law must overcome some obstacles. The first one is the modern denial of nature, or of the essence, of all the realities, even human nature. Nature is replaced by myth, random and necessity, by ideologies, in order to be thrown away afterwards. Post-modern man has become arrogant and tries to replace even the Creator of the world. The Roman poet, Orazio, warned us: nature thrown out the door comes back through the window. *Natura si furca expellas, tamen usque recurret!* Nature is present in every created or uncreated reality. We can speak of God's nature, of the angels' nature, of man's nature and of that of other beings. Nature is not contrary to freedom. Man's nature implies freedom as far as he is the master of his actions. His being implies both reason and freedom. *Bonum hominis secundum rationem esse!* The human being is free, but his freedom is not absolute as to exclude God, as Sartre thought.

The second denial is that of the moral exigencies of the conscience and moral sense. Man has lost this sense, just as he has lost the sense of the sin or of the evil present in history. Starting from Hume, the ethical and religious dimensions start to be denied also; the human capacity of transcendence is denied. Hume invites readers to enter the library and to throw out the window all the books speaking of metaphysics.

Facing this proposal, human ingenuity vindicates the cultural space of truth. In order to deny metaphysics we must turn to metaphysics. The return to real things is necessary, the return to the unconquerable force of truth and to the human capacity of reaching absolute truths is necessary.

In this context, Saint Thomas' suggestion about man's moral law, or *lex naturalis*, regains its importance. The second article of line 94 from I.II of ST, is *monumenta*, similar to the five ways, or to one of the transcendental properties of beings. The notion of *lex naturalis*, far from being a denial of the horizon of freedom, means certain cooperation with God in conducting the world. The formulation is the following, in its Latin expression: *Lex naturalis nihil aliud est quam participatio legis aeternae in creatura rationali*. All creatures have a role in governing the world, through

their own actions. The difference is that the creatures without reason have a passive participation, while those endowed with reason have an active one. The human being and spiritual beings have a free participation. In the material world, only man governs himself, decides and collaborates in a responsible manner, takes part in God's activity, that of governing the world through the external law. *Lex naturalis* is the law of reason, either of the theoretical or of the practical; it guides human activities. Human theoretical action starts from the principle on which the conscience and the being are founded. Everything starts from this original concept and from the original judgment, through which we either deny or assert the principle of contradiction and the law of reason. Within the practical reason, there is also a corresponding principle, stated like a law: to do good things, not to do bad ones; *bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum evitandum*. Good is presented as an absolute goal, as the first principle of the practical order. *Lex naturalis* imposes the good as a desirable goal for practical reason. This is a basic disposition of human nature.

From this starting point of practical reason, other precepts, which are manifested in the *inclinationem naturalem*, are derived. St. Thomas discovered three orders of these dispositions; the first is that of the living nature, the second is of the animal nature, and the third is that of the intellective nature. The first one is deposed to the being, and denies nonentity; the second order is disposed to the transmission of life through the species; and the third order has superior dispositions to truth, God, to the person's life in society; all these are at a universal level. If we refer to the human being, all these begin in the soul, which is a substantial form. There is always order among them; the order of dispositions manifests the order of the precepts of moral law.

The *lex naturalis* manifested by the dispositions is the moral law of the human being. The law is in accord with man, a free personal being. The dispositions are in his nature, but they need a "cultural law." They are "road-signs" for the travelers, indications not to take the wrong road on the journey, "precepts" for our safety. Their right implementation is confided to the politicians; they are the ones who have to lay down the positive laws within the horizon of the real possibilities. What we cannot do is to go against the *lex naturalis*. As long as this law is the final base of its universal value, it is also a benchmark which cannot be escaped. The laws contrary to the *lex naturalis* cannot be enforced, and they must not be called laws because they are in fact corruptions of the law. The Latin formulation is the following: *Unde omis lex humanitus posita in tantum habet de ratione legis, inquantum a lege naturae derivatur. Si vero in aliquo a lege naturali discordet, iam non erit lex, sed legis corruptio*.

This second preamble to fair politics is not only perfectly connected to the first one, as an extension of it, but it is also the answer needed for the foundation of an universal ethics, for all men of all times. Universal ethics is needed for fair political action. It will not be an easy task for the present culture, which denies natures and confides itself to "the

dictatorship of relativism", which is satisfied with the majority or the consensus and trusts the power of science and techniques to realize what is possible, without inquiring whether that is allowed or not. Now, by accepting Hume's invitation to discard all the books "imbued" with metaphysics, we need someone who really understands the *lex naturalis* to discard all the positive laws contrary to it.

We do not fight nature in vain. They say that God forgives men sometimes and nature never. The big catastrophes of the twentieth century are very clear lessons of this *Übermensch* politics, or of that of the Big Brother. The philosopher Bacon, who dreamed that science is needed no more for the contemplation or for *gaudium de veritate*, but for domination, since science is power or (*scientia et potentia in unum coincident*) also showed us the method we should adopt in place of nature, who wins when we follow it - *natura parendo vincitur!* The important thing is to show the right way to a fair politics: to take into account the *lex naturalis*, as a necessary ethical preamble and firm base of man's truth.

HUMAN RIGHTS

We identify a third preamble, closely connected to the other two, still of an ethical nature, in human rights. *Lex naturae* or the moral law of man is closely connected to law, since it is always *aliqualis ratio juris*. In fact, modern thought, which manifests such difficulty in accepting the moral law of man, passionately receives the human rights. From a certain perspective, these rights are the contemporary expression of *lex naturae*, since they have become the angular stone of modern society and the sign of human provocation at an international level. *Jus sive iustum* is what fits by its nature to someone else. There are natural rights regarding things, and human rights which only regard human beings: *ius sive iustum naturale est quod ex sua natura est adaequatum vel commensuratum alteri*: II.II, 57, 2. Nature itself provides man what is good for his own well-being. When we speak of human rights, we go beyond the natural rights in order to include subjective faculties. Jurists do not agree with this way of speaking, which places natural rights, subjective ones, and laws on the same level. On the other hand, human rights do not leave space for the associated duties which precede them.

Human rights have developed since the eighteenth century and have garnered enhanced attention through social revolutions, especially the French Revolution that proclaimed *les droits de l'homme et du citoyen*. Today, such rights are seen as "signs of the time". A critical point of this ascendant process occurred in 1948 when the ONU, after World War II, suggested and published the so-called Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the importance of this document is always growing. The attitude of the teaching of the Church towards this Declaration is symptomatic. It went from the denial of its implementation, *du rejet a l'engagement*, as Cardinal Roger Etchegaray says: the first moment was that of a refusal, like it would

have been the *opus diaboli* working against "the rights of God." The second moment was that of receiving it in the *Pacem in terris* Encyclical, in 1963, in which the rights are seen "as a millenary stone on the road of humanity" and completed with the research for the basis of human dignity and of associated duties. The third step took place during the Papacy of Pope John Paul II, who from his first Encyclical went beyond the letter, in order to observe the spirit and to make these rights the norm of the present society and the measure of the promotion of individuals and communities.

However, all is not gold that glitters in this field either, and human rights, together with the respective duties, must be accepted by the nations. There is an order in the rights of the human person. The next one, after the right to life is the right to religious freedom. The rights are not concessions of the state, but they rather have to be acknowledged, protected, promoted and well-founded. The touchstone is the sanctity of the human person, which must be respected and acknowledged. The human person is not completely subservient to the political community, but he is unique and subject totally to God.

Human rights are also an ethical and juridical preamble that conditions art and political activity. So many false rights against life, dignity and human nature developed and have been accepted in the present doctrinal confusion, in the obscurity of the notion of evil, and these should be denounced. Politics needs the help of ethics.

CONCLUSION: THE PRIMACY OF ETHICS IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Contemporary culture has awakened that *animale politicum* in every man. In the past, either this dimension was in the shadows or it was forgotten. The same anthropology was satisfied with the analysis of the rational animal. The present situation is very different. We could say that the political animal forestalls the rational dimension. Man's being assigns the place of power over man. Pragmatics pre-empts science and political philosophy. Politics becomes not only autonomous, but also omnipotent, and takes on that *jus*, as in *jus utendi et abutendi*.

The time comes when we have to build the dam to stop the murderous waters of the political stream. Philosophy is called upon to help. Politics is an art in the service of man, not against him. Protagoras in decision is appropriate here: man is the measure and the norm of the activities in the political world. Moreover, it is within this perspective that we find the equilibrium between the dimensions of the rational and of the political, the reciprocal primacy of both. Saint Thomas of Aquinas, *Doctor humanitatis*, shows us the road to take.

On the one hand, we have to acknowledge the primacy of human nature over culture, and thus the limits of human action. The primacy of ethics in the political realm is paramount. The importance of St. Thomas' reflection is crucial. He discovered the role of moral virtues over the other

human dimensions. In fact, the moral virtues are authentic virtues, which not only make the action and the thing good, but they make the human person good. And this is what matters: knowledge is submitted to action. In the adjustment made by reason in political activities, there are two central virtues, caution and justice. This is the virtue in society, capable of giving everyone what he deserves. Aristotle compares justice to the morning star. Saint Thomas tells us that moral virtues are characteristic of man, the creature who is situated in the chain of being between spirits and beasts. The sphere of politics deals with justice and peace in the city on earth.

But Thomas takes into consideration also the human measure of politics. He states this when he shows the horizon of laws: in the dependency on *lex naturalis* we find the laws and rights, whether of human beings or civil ones. Saint Thomas names these laws *lex humanitus posita*. The adverb *humanitus* signifies that the laws suggested by man must be related to man's moral law, because they are either conclusions of the prime principles or applications of the existing reality. Everything must be done considering man's humanity: *humanitus*.

The primacy of ethics over politics has its roots in the rapport with man's nature, with human freedom, which implies the freedom to choose between good and evil. This ethical condition precedes the political sphere. Fair politics needs fair men, a very strict condition which cannot be verified in *ut in pluribus*. This ethical gap stands at the base of the historic crisis of modernity. How could this state of sickness be cured? It would be possible only with the fair persons' help. The political crisis sends us back to our origins again, to the primacy of ethics. We find ourselves in Prometheus' shoes, charged by Zeus to create human beings. They had all the essential elements necessary for the new species, bur when put together, cohabitation was impossible: they lacked the respect for the gods and the sense of the other, which are based upon ethics and reason. Prometheus found the solution in a jump to the sky and in stealing the virtues they lacked. Today, when neither family nor school function properly, (described by St. Thomas as "*uterus spiritualis*"), we find ourselves in the darkness of the political night for as long as ethics and religion, the most profound and universal dimensions of human culture, are cast aside and forgotten.

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CHAPTER XII

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND
THE NEW EUROPE

MSGR. IOAN ROBU

On the occasion of the Synod of Bishops of Europe, one of the cardinals raised a popular question: what does Europe really represent? I would add some other questions to this one: how does the new Europe settle into shape? Which are the Christian values still present in the new Europe? In what way does the Church contribute to this project for the future?

The reason for these questions is that Europe is not just a historical-geographical space, but it is the community of the nations which have received and preserved the inheritance of the Greek-Roman, Judaic and Christian civilizations. National traditions have turned classic inheritance and Christian faith into customs, traditions and institutions. The evangelizing of the European continent made a crucial contribution to the development of a humanistic transnational culture, the result of the interpenetration between biblical faith and Greek philosophy, founded on the primacy of the human being. The poet, Paul Valery, gave a three-word answer to the question "What is Europe?": "Athens, Rome and Jerusalem". Athens discovered the individual, Rome created the individual and Jerusalem revealed the person.

Emphasizing these roots of the European civilization does not mean the exclusion of the contribution made by other nations to its formation, at all, such as the Islamic contribution. However, we cannot say that Islamic culture is part of our historic memory, as we cannot say that about Judaic-Christian tradition either.

From the very beginning, we must state that the development of the new Europe will not be possible if we are not able to add a powerful spirituality to the united Europe, a profound ethical and cultural dimension beyond the political one.

The contribution Pope John Paul II has made in this respect is valuable and remarkable. We find the calling he addresses Europe, in Santiago of Compostella, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*[1], to which we will turn later on: "Be you. Rediscover your origins. Relive your roots" (EIE 120). This calling invites us to preserve and protect our identity, our belonging to a nation and our historic memory, though the times we live in "can seem to be a time of bewilderment" (EIE 7) and

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[1] John Paul II, The Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (28.06.2003), Presa Bună, Iaşi (the abbreviated form: EIE).

"European culture gives the impression of 'silent apostasy' on the part of people who have all that they need and who live as if God does not exist" (EIE 9), as Pope John Paul II said.

Should we make an analysis of the world we live in, we could start by saying that Europe today is experiencing great dangers and opportunities for the human being and humankind, a time of great responsibilities for all of us as well. All through the past century, man's possibilities and abilities to dominate materiality have increased considerably. However, at the same time, his power to dominate the world has brought about a power of destruction reaching dimensions which terrify us. In this regard, what we come to think of almost spontaneously is terrorism, this new war with no limits or sides. Less visible, and not less worrying, is the possibility of self-manipulation man has reached. He analyzes the mysteries of the being, works out the parts the human being is made of, and now man is also able "to create human beings" himself. Therefore the human being is not a gift of the Creator anymore, but a product of our action, which can even be selected according to our requisitions. Thus, we cannot see the splendor of being "to God's likeness" in this person. The source of human dignity and intangibility is now seen as the power of human ability. He is nothing but the image of man – but of which man? This is what the great planetary problems add up to: the inequity in sharing the goods in the world, the increasing poverty, the ever-greater number of poor people, the exploitation of the earth and its resources, hunger, the diseases threatening the entire world, the conflict between cultures. These deficiencies point out the fact that the development of our abilities is not equal to the development of our moral energy. Moral force has not developed to the same degree as science; in fact, it has decreased because technical mentality is always closer to a subjective morality, while what we need most is a public morality, a morality able to answer all the threats to our existence. The real and most terrible danger of the present times is this lack of balance between technical possibilities and moral force. The security we need, as an assumption of our freedom and dignity, cannot ultimately come from the technical control devices; it can only be the result of man's moral force. When the moral force is insufficient, the power man has been endowed with will turn more and more into a power of destruction.

We can note the existence today of a new type of moralism, whose key words are justice, peace, preservation of the environment, words reminding us of essential moral values that we really need. This kind of moralism remains vague, however, and is diverted into the political sphere and that of the various political parties, almost inevitably. Imposing itself as a fascinating political moralism, most of the times it is misdirected since it lacks clear reasoning, and places political utopia above man's dignity, even leading to destruction of the human good.

This brief analysis of the present times leads us to reflect on the situation of Christianity today, and thus on the foundations of Europe as well. The Europe that used to be the Christian continent has become the

source of the new scientific reasoning, offering us important possibilities, but threatening us as well. Certainly, Christianity was not born in Europe, and therefore we cannot call it a European religion, the religion of the cultural European sphere. Nevertheless, it was in Europe that it has received its most efficient cultural and intellectual mark, from a historical point of view, and this is why it will always have a special connection to Europe. On the other hand, it is true that, ever since the Renaissance and most of all during the Enlightenment, Europe developed that scientific reasoning which during the age of the discoveries has led to the geographical unity of the world and to the meeting of continents and cultures, but also affects and homogenizes the whole world in a personal way. Furthermore, Europe has developed a culture that rules God out of the public conscience, either by completely denying him, or by considering His existence impossible to be proved, thus doubtful, and therefore belonging to subjective choices, something that is not relevant for public life anyway. All this is done in a manner unknown to humankind until now.

This so-called functional reasoning implied a severe commotion of moral conscience, new even for the already existing cultures, since it supports the idea that rational facts are the ones proved through experiments. Since ethics belongs to a very different sphere, it disappears and has to be discovered in another way, because we have to admit that ethics is necessary anyway, in a certain manner. In a world completely based on calculus, it is the very calculation of consequences that determines what should or should not be considered ethical. Therefore, the sphere of good, as Kant clearly emphasizes it, disappears. Nothing is good or bad in itself; it all depends on the consequences that an action allows us to anticipate.

We can observe with amazement that scientism hides an intolerable dogmatism: the spirit is the product of substance; ethics is the product of circumstances and must be defined and applied according to the goals of society; all that contributes to the encouragement of a state of apparent happiness is ethical. The values that Europe was once based upon now sink into oblivion. Moreover, there is a rupture with the ethical tradition of humanity; there are no more values independent of the goal of progress. From the perspective of the possible, everything becomes licit and even necessary; everything becomes ethical in the new meaning of the term. Even the human being can become an instrument; what is important is not the individual, but the future, which becomes the terrible divinity ruling over everyone and everything.

WHERE DO WE STAND TODAY?

We find ourselves faced with a question: how are things evolving? Is there a future for the identity of Europe, within the terrible events of present times, one we should all become involved in? I am not ready to enter a detailed discussion about the Constitution of Europe. I would only

like to point out briefly the essential ethical elements, according to my opinion.

The first essential element is the "un-conditioning" associated with human dignity and human rights as values preceding any political jurisdiction. Fundamental rights are not a creation of the lawgiver, nor are they bestowed upon the citizens; they rather exist as everyone's due right, which must always be respected by the lawgiver, and which have always constituted values of a superior level. The value of human dignity, preceding every political action and political decision, brings us back to the Creator: He is the only one who can establish the values the essence of man is founded on, which are irreducible. The real warranty, characteristic of our freedom and human greatness, resides in the fact that there are values nobody can alter; in this, Christian faith sees the mystery of the Creator and the human being: created in the likeness of God.

Almost nobody explicitly denies today the precedence of human dignity and of fundamental human rights regarding any political decision, because the recent horridness of the Nazi times and racist doctrine are still fresh in our minds. However, in the specific field of the supposed progress of medicine we can observe real threats to these values: if we think of clones, of the production and conservation of human embryos for the sake of research and donation of organs; or if we think of the genetic manipulation, we cannot deny the slow depreciation of human dignity which is always more threatened. We can add to all this the increasing white slavery, the new forms of servitude, and the commerce with human organs used for transplants. We always emphasize good purposes in order to justify what cannot be justified.

A second essential element qualifying the European identity is marriage and family. Monogamist marriage, a fundamental structure of the relation between man and woman and at the same time a forming cell of the political community, has been predicated upon biblical faith. This is what allowed for the image and humanity of Western and Eastern Europe.

Europe would not be Europe if this fundamental cell of its social structure should disappear or be changed in its essence. We all know the numerous threats to marriage and the family: on the one hand, we lose the value of the indissolubility of marriage, which turns into forms of the divorce ever easier; on the other hand, the practice of the cohabitation between a man and a woman without the juridical form of marriage is more and more prevalent.

On the contrary, paradoxically, homosexual persons ask the juridical acknowledgment of their union, which would be equal to that of marriage. This way we step out the of complex of the ethical history of humanity, which, in spite of the diversity of the juridical forms expressed, has never lost sight of the fact that, in its essence, marriage is the special communion between a man and a woman, opening towards the family.

We are not talking of discrimination here; we are talking about the answer to the question of the nature of the human person, as a man and as a

woman, and about the kind of union we should recognize the juridical form. If, on the one hand, the union between man and woman becomes more and more distant from any juridical form, and if on the other hand, homosexual union is perceived as being equal to marriage, we are faced with a distortion of the image of man that can only have serious consequences.

The last essential element is religious. I do not want to go back to the complex debates during the last years; I only want to point out a fundamental aspect of all cultures: the respect due to what the other considers sacred, and most of all the respect for what is most sacred, for God. In a society with no respect, something very essential is lost. In our present society, owing to God, the one who blemishes the faith of Israel, its image of God and its great masters is punished. The one who blemishes the Koran and the Islamic beliefs is also punished. But when it comes to Jesus Christ and to what is sacred for Christians, freedom of speech becomes the ultimate good. Should we try to draw limits to it, this would be seen as a threat, as the abolition of tolerance or of freedom in general. This is the limit of the freedom of speech: it cannot destroy the honor and dignity of the other; it does not mean the freedom of lying or canceling human rights[2].

Let us take a closer look to this opposition between the two cultures, which have marked Europe. In the debate over the preamble to the European Constitution, this counter position has come into prominence in two controversial points: the problems of mentioning God in the Constitution and mentioning the Christian roots of Europe. Considering the fact that in article 52 of the Constitution the institutional rights of the Churches are guaranteed, they say we should not be worried. However, this means that, within the life of Europe, these are placed in the sphere of the political compromise, while in the context of the foundations of Europe the importance of their content is irrelevant. The reasons for this decisive "no" expressed in the public debate are shallow, and the fact that the real motivation is hidden, rather than stated, is obvious. The statement insisting that mentioning the Christian roots of Europe would hurt the feelings of many non-Christians in Europe, counts for little since we are talking about a historical fact which nobody can truly deny. Naturally, this historical reference also contains a present one since, by mentioning the roots, we point out the remaining ethical sources, which a factor in the identity of this whole is called Europe. Who would feel hurt? Whose identity would be threatened? Muslim people, often brought up in the discussion of this problem, do not feel threatened by our Christian ethical fundaments; but they do feel threatened by the cynicism of a secularized culture denying its own fundaments. Not even the Jewish inhabitants of our country feel offended by the reference to the Christian roots of Europe, because these roots, established on Mount Sinai - bearing in them the voice heard on God's mountain – unite us in the great fundamental directions that the

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[2] Cf. Marcelo Pera / Josepf Ratzinger, *Without Roots. Europe, Relativism, Christianity, Islam,* Mondadori, Milano 2004, 67-70.

Decalogue offers humanity. This is also valid for the reference to God: it is not the mentioning of God that offends the members of other religions, but rather the attempt to build the human community completely without God.

The motivations behind this double "no" are far deeper than the presented reasons allow us to see. They suggest the idea that only the illuminist radical culture, reaching its fulfillment in our times, could be constitutive for the European identity. Therefore, various religious cultures can coexist alongside it, each with its respective rights, if and according as they respect the criteria of the illuminist culture and are subservient to it. This illuminist culture is defined in a substantial way by the rights to freedom: it starts from freedom as a fundamental value, the measure of everything: the freedom of religious choice, which includes the religious neutrality of the State; the freedom of speech, if this does not impeach this very canon; the democratic organization of the State, that is the parliamentary control over the bodies of the State; the free organization of political parties; the independence of the magistracy; and, finally, respecting human rights and forbidding discrimination. Up to this extent, the canon is still forming, since there still are some contrasting human rights, as the case of the contrast between the woman's desire of freedom and the right to life of the unborn child. The concept of discrimination is ever more ample, and this is why the interdiction of discrimination can turn more and more into a limitation of the freedom of speech and religious freedom. Very soon, it will no longer possible to say that homosexuality is a factor of disorder within the structure of human existence, as the Catholic Church teaches us. In addition, the fact that the Church is convinced of having no right to ordain women to priesthood is considered by some people irreconcilable with the spirit of the European Constitution up to today. It is obvious that this canon of the illuminist culture, far from being definitive, contains important values we do not and cannot do without, as Christians. Moreover, it is equally obvious that the concept of freedom, wrongly defined or not defined at all, which lies at the foundation of this culture, inevitably implies some contradictions: and it is also obvious that because of the very way in which it is used (which seems to be a radical one), it implies limitations of freedom, which a generation ago we could not even begin to imagine. A confused ideology of freedom leads to a dogmatism appearing to be more and more hostile to freedom.

We should undoubtedly go over the problem of the internal contradictions of the present form of the illuminist culture once more. First, we should try to define it. The fact that it boasts of a universal pretence and considers itself complete, thus not needing any other cultural factors to make it complete, belongs with its nature, since it is the culture of a rationality, which is eventually fully aware of itself. This new identity, exclusively determined by the illuminist culture, also implies that God has no importance in public life and in the fundaments of a State.

Is this illuminist, laicized culture really the culture of the rationality common to all people, a culture eventually discovered as being universal,

and the culture that should have access in all areas, even into a mould different from a historical and cultural point of view? Moreover, is it really complete in itself, to the extent where it does not need any roots outside it.

THE MEANING AND LIMITS OF THE PRESENT RATIONALIST CULTURE

We have to give an answer, now, to these last questions. The first one is whether we have arrived to the universally true philosophy, eventually defined as a completely scientific one, by means of which the common reasoning of all people could be explained. The answer to this question is that we have surely come to important things, which can be considered as being generally true: the fact that religion cannot be imposed on by the State, that it can only be accepted by our own free will; observing the human rights, equal for everyone; the division of powers and the control of power. However, we cannot imagine that these fundamental values, that we find generally true, can be realized to the same degree in any historical context. Not all societies have a democracy based on political parties, as the West does; the same is true concerning the total religious neutrality of the State which should be considered an illusion.

This way, we come to the problems raised by the second question. First, we should make clear whether modern illuminist philosophies, considered in their wholeness, might be interpreted as the last decisive word of the common reasoning of all men. These philosophies are characterized by the fact that they are all positivist; God cannot eventually have any importance in them. They are based on a self-limitation of positive reason, appropriate to the technical field, which implies at the same time a mutilation of man, when generalized. The result of this is the refusal of man to accept any moral resort beyond his calculations and, as we have seen, refusal to accept the concept of freedom also; even though on the face of things it might look like he is broadening his freedom, eventually this leads to the destruction of freedom.

It is true that positivist philosophies contain important elements of truth, but at the same time, they are founded on a self-limitation of reasoning typical for a determined cultural situation – that of the modern West – thus making it impossible for them to be the last word of rationality. Although they seem to be very rational, they are not the voice of rationality itself; these are also culturally bounded, that is, connected to the present situation of the Western world. Therefore, they are not at all the philosophy that one day will be true for the whole world. We should say, most of all, that this illuminist philosophy and its culture are incomplete. This philosophy is consciously cutting its own historical roots, thus depriving itself of its original forces, of the fundamental memory of humanity, all-important for the orientation of rationality. In fact, the principle according to which man's ability is the measure of his action characterizes the present times. We can only do what we know how to do. We cannot speak of "I

know how to do it" separate from "I can do it" anymore, because this would be against freedom, which is the supreme value. However, man knows how to do many things, and more with each passing day; and if this ability of doing does not find its measure in a moral law, it turns into power of destruction, as we can already see. Man knows how to clone the human being and so he does it. He knows how to use the human being as a "bank" of organs for other human beings and so he does this; man does it because this seems to be a demand of his freedom. He knows how to build atomic bombs and so he builds them, being even willing to use them. Eventually, even terrorism is based on this manner of "self-authorization" of man, not on the teachings of the Koran. The radical detachment of the illuminist philosophy from its roots eventually turns into an abandonment of man. Man enjoys no freedom, the spokespersons of the natural sciences tell us, in an absolute contradiction with the starting point of this whole issue. He should not imagine himself as something different from all other living creatures, and so he should be treated in the same way they are treated, say even the most learned representatives of a philosophy, clearly separated from the roots of the historical memory of humanity.

We have asked ourselves two questions previously: if rationalist (positivist) philosophy is strictly rationalist and thus universally true and if it is complete. Is it self-sufficient? Can it, or maybe is it, necessary for it to reunite its historical roots to the very field of the past, and so to the field of what can be true only in a subjective way? The answers to both of these questions must be "no". This philosophy does not express the complete rationality of man, but only a part of it and because of this radical change of reasoning it cannot be considered rational. For this reason, it is also incomplete, and this can only be changed by reestablishing contact with its roots. A tree with no roots dies.

By saying this, we are not denying what this philosophy holds as being positive and important; we rather reaffirm the need for completion. This takes us back to the discussion about the two contradictory points in the preamble of the European Constitution. The mentioning of the Christian roots does not prove to be the expression of a superior tolerance that respects all cultures to the same degree, not wishing to discriminate one in favor of another, but rather a generalization of a way of thinking and seeing which cultures are in radical opposition with the other historical ones, among the cultures of humanity. The real contraposition characterizing the world today is not that of the various religious cultures, but the one between the radical emancipation of man and the roots of life, on the one hand, and the great religious culture, on the other hand. If we come to a collision between cultures, it will not be caused by a collision between the great religions – though there is always fighting among them, finally they have always managed to coexist peacefully – but one caused by a collision between the radical emancipation of man and the great historical cultures. Thus, even the refusal to mention God is not the expression of a tolerance wanting to protect the non-theist religions and the dignity of atheists and

agnostics, but it is rather the expression of a conscience which wants to eliminate God from the public life of mankind and leave Him aside, in the subjective field of what's left from the past cultures. In this way, relativism, which is the starting point of all this, turns into a dogmatism presuming to have the ultimate knowledge of rationality and the right to consider the rest as a phase in the development of humanity behind the times by now, which can be made relative accordingly. Actually, this does mean that we need roots to survive and that we should not forget God's importance if we do not want human dignity to disappear.

THE CONSTANT MEANING OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

Does Christian faith imply the refusal of the illuminist philosophy and modernity? Not, at all. Christianity has considered itself a religion of the logos, a religion according to rationality, from the very beginning. It did not individualize its precursors in other religions, but in the illuminist philosophy, which allowed the traditions to be directed towards the search for truth and good, towards the only God who is above all other gods. As the religion of the persecuted, universal religion, beyond the various States and nations, the Christian religion denied the State the right to consider religion as part of the political organization, thus positing the freedom of faith. It has always defined human beings as God's creatures, in His likeness, all human beings with no exception, proclaiming their dignity in general terms, though within the limits of social organization which we cannot set aside. From this perspective, the illuminist philosophy has a Christian origin, and it was not by chance that it appeared exclusively and right within the sphere of Christian faith, where Christianity had become the tradition and religion of State, though contrary to its nature. Although philosophy, as a rationalist study – even when related to our faith – has always been a prerogative of Christianity, the voice of rationality has been too quiet. It was the illuminist philosophy, and this is one of its credits, which suggested these original values of Christianity and which gave voice to rationality again. The Second Vatican Council, in the Constitution of Contemporary Church, has emphasized once more the profound correspondence between Christianity and illuminist pattern, trying to achieve a true reconciliation between Church and modernity, the great patrimony both sides should protect.

Nevertheless, it is necessary that the Church and modernity reflect upon their nature and be prepared to improve. Christianity must always keep in mind the fact that it is the religion of the logos. It is faith in *Creator spiritus*, in the Creative spirit, Creator of all that is real. This should be its philosophical force now, since the problem of the present times is whether the world comes from the irrational, and thus rationality is nothing but a "sub-product" of its development, maybe even harmful; or if the world comes from rationality, and this is its criterion and goal. Christian faith tends to favor the second thesis, and so from a purely philosophical point of

view, it holds many advantages, although many people still consider the first thesis the only "rational" and modern one. However, a rationality born form irrationality, so irrational itself in the end, is not a solution to our problems. Creative rationality only, which the crucified God has manifested as love, can truly show us the way[3].

The Catholic Church in Europe intends to take part in this project of the future: continuing to proclaim the mystery of Christ together with all Christians and through an open dialogue with other religions, especially with the Judaic religion and Islam, as it is emphasized in the papal document *Ecclesia in Europa*, to which I refer below.

Proclaiming the Mystery of Christ

"The Gospel of hope, received and assimilated by the Church, calls for daily proclamation and witness." This is the proper vocation of the Church in every time and place. It is also the mission of the Church in Europe today. For, "evangelizing is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. The Church exists in order to evangelize, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious Resurrection"[4] (EIE 45).

In various parts of Europe a first proclamation of the Gospel is needed: the number of the un-baptized is growing, both because of the significant presence of immigrants of other religions and because children born into families of the Christian tradition have not received Baptism, either as a result of the Communist domination or the spread of religious indifference[5]. Indeed, Europe is now one of those traditionally Christian places which, in addition to a new evangelization, require in some cases a first evangelization. The Church cannot shirk the responsibility of making a courageous diagnosis, which will make it possible to decide on appropriate therapies. On the "old" continent too, there are vast social and cultural areas, which stand in need of a true *missio ad gentes*[6].

> Everywhere, then, a renewed proclamation is needed even
> for those already baptized. Many Europeans today think
> they know what Christianity is, yet they do not really

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[3] Josepf Ratzinger, *Europe during the crisis of the cultures* – Speech delivered on receiving the "St. Benedict" award, offered by the Foundation "Vita e famiglia", at Subiaco, on the 1st of April 2005.

[4] Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8. 12. 1975), 14: *AAS* 68 (1976), 13.

[5] Cf. Propositio 3b

[6] Cf. John Paul II, The Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7. 12. 1990), 37: *AAS* 83 (1991), 282-286.

know it at all. Often they are lacking in knowledge of the most basic elements and notions of the faith. Many of the baptized live as if Christ did not exist: the gestures and signs of faith are repeated, especially in devotional practices, but they fail to correspond to a real acceptance of the content of the faith and fidelity to the person of Jesus. The great certainties of the faith are being undermined in many people by a vague religiosity lacking real commitment; various forms of agnosticism and practical atheism are spreading and serve to widen the division between faith and life; some people have been affected by the spirit of an immanent humanism, which has weakened the faith and often, tragically, led to its complete abandonment; one encounters a sort of secularist interpretation of Christian faith which is corrosive and accompanied by a deep crisis of conscience and of Christian moral practice[7]. The great values which amply inspired European culture have been separated from the Gospel, thus losing their very soul and paving the way for any number of aberrations. (EIE 46-47).

Proclaiming the Gospel of hope, that calls for steadfast fidelity to the Gospel itself. The Church's preaching, in all its forms, must be increasingly centered on the person of Jesus and increasingly converge on him. Vigilant care must be taken that Christ is presented in his fullness: not merely as an ethical model, but above all as the Son of God, the one, necessary Savior of all, who lives and is at work in his Church. If our hope is to be true and unshakable, "an integral, clear and renewed preaching of the Risen Christ, the resurrection and eternal life"[8] must be a priority for pastoral activity in coming years.

Although the Gospel to be preached is the same in every time, this preaching can be carried out in different ways. All are called to proclaim Jesus and their faith in him in every situation; to draw others to the faith through models of personal, family, professional and community life which reflect the Gospel; to radiate joy, love and hope, so that many people, seeing our good works, will give glory to our Father in heaven (cf. Mt 5:16) (EIE 48).
The power of the proclamation of the Gospel of hope will be all the more effective if it is linked to the witness of a

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[7] Cf. The Synod of Bishops – The Second Special Assembly for Europe, *Relatio ante disceptationem, I,2: Osservatore romano,* 3.10.1999,7.
[8] *Ibid.,* 8.

profound unity and communion in the Church. The individual Particular Churches cannot face alone the challenge before them. There is need for genuine cooperation between all the Particular Churches of the Continent as an expression of their essential communion; a cooperation which is also called for by the new reality of Europe[9]. (EIE 53).

Together with All Christians

The progress achieved on the ecumenical way, most of all that accomplished in Europe, is a gift of the Holy Ghost; and this led to the severe separations of Christians during the second millennium, who are still suffering because of the consequences of these separations. Despite the unresolved problems as well as the new ones, the ecumenical dialogue cannot be interrupted; on the contrary, it must be carried on with a renewed ardor, with a greater determination and with everyone's humble willingness for mutual forgiveness. The progress of the ecumenical dialogue, having its deepest foundation in the very word of God, is a radiant sign of hope for the Church today: the strengthening of the unity of Christians favors the mutual enrichment of everyone[10].

The future of evangelization is closely linked to the witness of unity given by all Christ's followers: "All Christians are called to carry out this mission in accordance with their vocation. The task of evangelization involves moving towards one another and moving forward together as Christians, and it must begin from within; evangelization and unity, evangelization and ecumenism are indissolubly linked"[11]. (EIE 54).

In Dialogue with Other Religions

"As is the case with the overall commitment to the new evangelization, so, too, proclaiming the Gospel of hope calls for the establishment of a profound and perceptive interreligious dialogue, particularly with Judaism and with Islam". "Understood as a method and means of mutual knowledge and enrichment, dialogue is not in opposition to the mission *ad gentes*; indeed, it has special links with that mission and is

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[9] Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (16. 10. 1979), 21: *AAS* 71 (1979), 1294-1295.

[10] Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (30. 12. 1988), 26: *AAS* 81 (1989), 439.

[11] John Paul II, Speech delivered during the ecumenical celebration of the word in the cathedral in Paderborn (22. 06. 1996), 5: *Insegnamenti* XIX/1 (1996), 1571.

one of its expressions"[12]. Engagement in this dialogue must avoid yielding to a "widespread indifferentism, which sad to say, is found also among Christians. It is often based on incorrect theological perspectives and is characterized by a religious relativism which leads to the belief that 'one religion is as good as another"[13].

It is rather a matter of being more vividly aware of the relationship which binds the Church to the Jewish people and of Israel's unique role in salvation history. As was already clear from the First Special Assembly for Europe of the Synod of Bishops, and was reaffirmed in the latest Synod, there is need for acknowledgment of the common roots linking Christianity and the Jewish people, who are called by God to a covenant which remains irrevocable (cf. Rom 11:29)[14] and has attained definitive fullness in Christ.

"Consequently it is necessary to encourage dialogue with Judaism, knowing that it is fundamentally important for the self-knowledge of Christians and for the transcending of divisions between the Churches, and to work for the flowering of a new springtime in mutual relations. This demands that each ecclesial community engage, to the extent that circumstances permit, in dialogue and cooperation with believers of the Jewish religion." This engagement also implies that "acknowledgment be given to any part which the children of the Church have had in the growth and spread of anti-semitism in history; forgiveness must be sought for this from God, and every effort must be made to favor encounters of reconciliation and of friendship with the sons of Israel"[15]. It will likewise be appropriate to mention the many Christians who, sometimes at the cost of their lives, helped and saved, especially in times of persecution, these their "elder brethren".

It is also a question of growing in knowledge of other religions, in order to establish a fraternal conversation with their members who live in today's Europe. A proper relationship with Islam is particularly important. As has often become evident in recent years to the Bishops of Europe, this "needs to be conducted prudently, with clear ideas about possibilities and limits, and with confidence in God's saving plan for all his children"[16]. It is also necessary to take into account the notable gap between European

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[12] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris mission* (7. 12. 1990), 55: *AAS* 83 (1991), 302.

[13] *Ibidem,* 281.

[14] Cf. The Synod of Bishops – The First Special Assembly for Europe, *The Final Declaration* (13. 12. 1991), 8: *Ench. Vat.,* 13, no. 653-655; The Second Special Assembly for Europe, *Instrumentum laboris,* 62: *Osservatore romano,* 6.08.1999 – appendix, p.13; *Propositio* 10.

[15] *Propositio* 10; cf. The Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism, *"We remember: a reflection on Shoah",* 16.03.1998, *Ench. Vat.* 17, 520-550.

[16] The Synod of Bishops – The First Special Assembly for Europe, *The Final Declaration* (13. 12.1991), 9: *Ench. Vat.,* 13, no. 656.

culture, with its profound Christian roots, and Muslim thought[17]. In this regard, Christians living in daily contact with Muslims should be properly trained in an objective knowledge of Islam and enabled to draw comparisons with their own faith. Such training should be provided particularly to seminarians, priests and all pastoral workers. It is, on the other hand, understandable that the Church, even as she asks the European institutions to ensure the promotion of religious freedom in Europe, should feel the need to insist that reciprocity in guaranteeing religious freedom also be observed in countries of different religious traditions, where Christians are a minority[18].

In this context, "One can understand the astonishment and the feeling of frustration of Christians who welcome, for example in Europe, believers of other religions, giving them the possibility of exercising their worship, and who see themselves forbidden all exercise of Christian worship"[19] in countries where those believers are in the majority and have made their own religion the only one admitted and promoted. The human person has a right to religious freedom, and all people, in every part of the world, "should be immune from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups and every human power"[20] (EIE 55-57).

This is the way in which the Catholic Church intends to participate to the development of the spiritual dimension of the new Europe: by ceaselessly proclaiming the mystery of Christ, being close to the other Christian Churches through dialogue, and enriching the knowledge about other religions new in Europe, first developing the dialogue with Judaism and Islam.

I would like to end my speech with words that the late Holy Father Pope John Paul II addressed to Europe: "Do not be afraid! The Gospel is not against you, but for you. This is confirmed by the fact that Christian inspiration is capable of transforming political, cultural and economic groupings into a form of coexistence in which all Europeans will feel at home and will form a family of nations from which other religions of the world can draw fruitful inspiration". (EIE 121).

Finally, reflecting on Romania's entering Europe, I want to say and repeat this to all Christian brothers in our country: Stay close to Christ in your faith! Inspired by the breath of our faith, let us participate in the broadening of the spiritual dimension of Europe, staying open to the dialogue and to the love of our brothers of other faiths. What we mostly need in this moment of our history are people who preach God to the world inspired by a strong and living faith. The negative witness of the Christians who spoke of God and lived their lives against Him has darkened the image

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[17] Cf. *Propositio* 11.

[18] *Ibidem*.

[19] John Paul II, Speech for the Diplomatic Corps (12. 01.1985), 3: *AAS* 77 (1985), 650.

[20] Vatican Council II, *Dignitatis humanae,* 2.

of God, and has opened the gate to godlessness. We need people who keep their eyes fixed on God, thus learning the true humanity. We need people whose intelligence God enlightens and whose hearts God opens, so that their intelligence might speak to the intelligence of others and their hearts might open those of others. It is only through people transformed by God that God might turn to the people.

Archbishop and Metropolitan Bishop of Bucharest
Bucharest, Romania

CHAPTER XIII

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE NEW EUROPE: ECUMENICAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSPECTIVES*

MSGR. DANIEL CIOBOTEA

UNCERTAINTY AND HOPE

The attitude of orthodox people towards the European Union differs greatly from one country to another and from one person to another. Currently, the only countries with an orthodox majority which are members of the European Union are Greece and Cyprus, with about ten million orthodox people. In 2007, more than twenty-five million orthodox people will become members of the European Union as a consequence of Romania's and Bulgaria's recent signing of the Treaty of Accession to the European Union (Luxembourg, the 25th of April, 2005).

On the eve of accession, Romania, with its twenty million orthodox people, will be the largest country in the European Union to have an orthodox majority.

The reserved attitude of some of the orthodox people towards the EU has several causes:

1. the memory of the religious and cultural antagonism between the Orthodox East and the Catholic and Protestant West, caused by the ancient division of the churches, by the Greek Catholicism, and by contemporary religious proselytism;[1]
2. the consequences of the ideological habitude opposing the two sides of Europe, the Western side, a rather capitalist side, and the Eastern ex-communist side as a consequence of education and propaganda during the Cold War and during the political blocs;
3. the present economic gap between Western countries and those in Central and Eastern Europe;
4. the lack of necessary and accurate information regarding the nature, structures, principles and aims of the European Union;

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* Conference held at "Marc Block" University, in Strasbourg, France, on the 27th of May, 2005.

[1] See Vasillios Makrides and Dirk Uffelmann, *Studying Eastern Orthodox Anti-Westernism: the Need for Comparative Research Agenda,* in the collective work *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe,* ed. Johnatan Sutton, Wil van der Berchen, Peeters, Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA 2003, 87-120.

5. the fear of a totalizing and secularizing integration, which would flatten and homogenize different cultures and identities for the global economic and strategic advantage.

At the same time, many Romanian orthodox people, especially those belonging to the younger generation, look to the EU with much hope, considering it an opportunity for a better future for their country, and as a normality for a continent too often divided from a religious and political point of view. The reasons are the following:

1. in order to overcome the present economic crisis of the country we need foreign support;
2. the introduction of democracy and rapid social growth imply national and international cooperation and co-responsibility;
3. national safety, the scientific and technical progress requires the European integration of Romania;
4. national culture should not become isolated, but join the continental and universal circuit;
5. The common Christian evidence and the contribution of religious communities to human life, on the national and international level, have better chances in a united Europe than in a divided one.

Considering these aspects, all Christian Churches in Romania, together with the Judaic religion, openly declared their agreement and total support for Romania's admission into the EU, on the 16th of May 2000, in Snagov, near Bucharest. The leaders of the Churches and religious communities who have signed a declaration in this regard have also emphasized the fact that Romania's joining the EU will be both a chance for us to receive help and a possibility to bring our contribution to the life of the EU, from a spiritual and cultural point of view. The official text emphasizes the profound religiousness of the Romanian people and their opening towards Europe:

> Having a religious life, Romania is ready to make a contribution to the enrichment of the spiritual and cultural European heritage, by reaffirming the respect for life, the human person's dignity, proprietorship, values of family and human solidarity, paying special attention to guaranteeing the freedom of thought, conscience, belief and religious life. The process of European unification can reach its plenitude in the context of a European spiritual enrichment, especially aiming at an economic unification. Looking at its own spiritual identity, shaped across the history, along with the other European countries,

Romania's contribution will increase the value of the European spiritual and cultural richness[2].

The cultural and religious particularities of each nation can act as a resource and connection for a stable and united Europe, instead of being a cause for conflict, as we have seen so many times along the history. Religious cults have the holy vocation of reconciling and bringing together the individuals and people for the glory of God and redemption of people[3].

This positive attitude of the Churches and religious communities in Romania regarding the EU can also be accounted for by means of the national and international ecumenical experience which they have lived for centuries, and also by means of the experience of cultural syntheses that Romania has long developed as a bridge between the East and the West. Such a synthesis is the Romanian Orthodox Church itself, uniting in its own identity the Eastern orthodox spirituality with the Western Latin spirituality.

KNOWING THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TAKING PART IN ITS LIFE

What orthodox people need today is constant, comprehensible, and very detailed information on the European Union, not only at the level of representation of Churches and experts, but also at the level of the clergy and believers. Without such information, the predominant tendency will be either to idealize the Union, either to condemn or to ignore it. It seems that many of the Church's representatives and political personalities who are familiar with the European institutions, and even fervent Christians, are not sufficiently involved in a common reflection on the way the Union is perceived by the basic religious communities, For example, it is announced from time to time, in Romania, that Romania will have to pay a price for the European integration, for which we must be prepared; but it should also explain, constantly and systematically, what this actually means. There is much to be done!

On the other hand, the Union itself is not simply an organization already done, but is in a process of construction of a perfectible project, which in time will become a way of living, an acquired experience (*aquis*) which later can become an inner experience (*vecu*) to be interpreted and passed on. If this European process of construction or reconstruction changes the life of nations and people to a certain degree, it can also be a challenge and/or an opportunity for the Churches and religious communities, which will thus be called to understand their own living

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[2] *The Declaration of the Religious Cults in Romania* (The State Secretariat for Cults), Bucharest 2000, 4.

[3] *Ibidem,* 5.

tradition as a process of renewal of their identity within a new context, a tradition we may call renewed fidelity. In this respect, the truth of fundamental religious principles must be thought of and expressed within a complex, complicated context and climate[4] by elaborating renewed rules of behavior and action on the basis of theological reflection and social experience. For example, observing the canonical and pastoral principles of the past in the era of European construction, the Orthodoxy must develop its creating tradition: that of establishing new pastoral and missionary rules that would intensify the fraternal communion and defense of human dignity, the search of holiness and unity, and also the expression of social solidarity in a context characterized by a powerful secularizing and individualistic tendency.

This context is described today by the sociologists as one marked by "the radicalizing of secularization and the emergency of new utopias with a non-political character" as well as by "an emergency of polycentrism. These manifest on a global level, where the universality of human rights is confronted with the diversity of cultures". As a consequence, "we are talking of a reexamination of the meaning of national appurtenance in a context of mobility and cosmopolitan"[5]. To all these, we can also add the relativisation of the meaning of what is sacred and of what is moral[6], accompanied by a recoiling in politics, as well as social and humanitarian affairs, in confronting the economic profit in the European Constitution[7].

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[4] "Modernity, since it expresses a fragmented reality, dissembles all that is not absolutely new and of present-day, but valorizes what places emphasis on transience, what determines the individual to conquer the present and enforces an organization of life oriented towards its future moments. The culture of what is immediate and transient (G. BALANDIER, *Le detour. Pouvoir et Modernité*, Fayard, Paris 1985), whose carrier modernity is, refuses all that is constructed and definite, in favor of the things which bring forward provoking experiments in contrast with everyday-life. The growing urbanization of the areas where the most important part of human existence takes place imposes rhythms and temporal sequencing more and more directed by tricks, and less and less by nature. The accelerated process of sciences and techniques, the synthetic development of forces of production, the intensification of the work carried out by man for an increased productivity, all these brought to the creation of a strong bureaucratic-informatized State in Europe (Luigi Tomasi, "Les contestations politiques er religieuses de l'Europe", in *Religions et transformations de l'Europe*, ed. Gilbert Vincent et Jean-Paul Willaime, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg 1993, 402-403).

[5] Jean Remy, *Laicité et construction de lEurope,* in the collective work *Religions et transformations de l'Europe*, 367.

[6] See Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *L'Europe, ses fundaments, aujourd'hui et domain*, Editions Saint-Augustin, Saint Maurice (Suisse) 2005, 35-37.

[7] Cf. Ignace Berten, *La Constituion européenne et les religions,* in *Revue théologique de Louvain,* 35 (2004) 477.

The Orthodox theologian, Oliver Clément, observes: "Western culture, the moment it tends to assume the aspects of human adventure, decomposes other cultures – first on the level of human souls – and finally in its own heritage. Instrumental reason, through its wonder machineries – from the TV to the "virtual spaces" = penetrates and influences the collective psyche and disintegrates the great symbolic references that have never ceased to protect and fertilize humanity"[8]. The same author suggests that "Against the laicism that marginalizes the Churches and turns religion into an absolute private business, Christians should bring forward a genuine lay character, within which each religion would find its own place, the place every acknowledged partner deserves and whose advice is needed"[9].

There is another example of renewed and creating fidelity: being national, the Orthodoxy of auto-cephalic Churches should also intensify their Catholicity (*sobornost*), universality, or ecumenicity on national or international level, up to the point of uniting local and national freedom with continental and universal co-responsibility, not in order to succumb to the uniformity of globalization, but in order to bring a corrective into it. Any association which is not unity within freedom cannot express living life and communion.

In the present and in the future in European construction, alongside the clergy an important role must be played by the Orthodox laity, who can confess a dynamic and creating fidelity, which is neither rebellion, nor resignation, but intelligent passion for the living communion within truth and love and, most of all, within the respect for human dignity and whom God loves beyond the cultural or national diversity. In this respect, the large number of Romanian students, both female and male, who study theology and other subjects in Western Europe, together with the large number of Romanian people who work in countries which are members of the EU, bear testimony both to their fidelity for their religion and culture, and of opening to otherness, to the culture and experience of other people.

Certainly, the tension between one's won religious identity, on the one hand, and accepting or receiving other people or nations different in terms of their faith and culture, on the other hand, is not always an experience easy to accept. In this regard, the Orthodox Church is called to find new sources of creative inspiration within its own tradition of hospitality and pacific coexistence with the other communions or religions, also considering the experience of Western Churches (Catholic and Protestant) in the European Union. Moreover, ecumenical and even inter-religious dialogue and cooperation is not something in fashion in the present time, but a permanent way of life. The Churches must bear witness to the fact that, although the united Europe does not make a goal out of becoming a Communion of faith, the Churches can live their faith and can act according to their faith in God, Who became a Human Being in history,

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[8] Olivier Clément, *Sillons de lumiére,* Fates Cerf, Paris 2002, 21.
[9] *Ibidem*, 31.

so that man could take part in God's eternal life. Certainly, true faith does not turn human construction into sacred ones, but it sanctifies life, which becomes loving communion between God and the human beings.

Together with the other Churches of Europe, which confess to the universality of God's love for human beings, the Orthodoxy must watch over and propagate the fact that we should never oppose unity with freedom, economic market with spiritual life, cultural identity with global solidarity, human finitude with the transcendence of mankind, material utility with human dignity. And most of all, as a Catholic French Bishop said two years ago, we must "refuse the ideology of winners and murderers"[10].

Several Orthodox Churches regret the fact that the new European Constitution does not mention the Christian roots of Europe. At the same time, we must also say that the Churches are not completely forgotten for the first article 52 assures that the "the Union respects and is not derogatory to the member of States, on the strength of national law.

By admitting their identity and specific contribution, the Union maintains an open, transparent and sustained dialogue with these Churches." Consequently, it is important to all Churches, including the Orthodox ones, to make preparations for and to follow an open, transparent, and sustained dialogue with the Union- a hopeful principle and a long-term endeavor! Orthodox people in Western Europe, whose culture is Western and whose faith is orthodox, can play an important role in this respect.

In conclusion, we can say that the work of building a united Europe turns into a new challenge and a new opportunity for the Orthodoxy to express in a new manner our fidelity in the Gospel of the Divine Love for mankind, in a new context in which the secularized lay character and the religious pluralism, the constant threat of fragmentation and the desire of unity, the tension between the unity of States founded on juridical principles, and existential community experienced by the different people and nations coexist and are confronted.

In the process of European construction, the Churches should avoid both isolation and dissolution. This means that they have to find, to express, and to realize their specific and irreplaceable contribution.

This will be the corrective for the liberalism of the present modernization only if the Churches know how to renew and strengthen their liturgical and spiritual life[11]. We must know that we'll also find in the Union what we brought into it! This is the common vocation of all the countries and Churches members of the EU.

This is also true for the Orthodoxy living in the era of the European construction, without forgetting its vocation for eternal life. In this respect,

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[10] Msgr. Jean-Pierre Ricard, *Sept defies pour l'Église,* Bayard, Paris 2003, 93-95.

[11] See Daniel Payne, *The Challenge of Western Globalization to Orthodox Christianity*, in *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, 133-144.

we can recall the words of St. John Chrysostom: "What is our gain from the present life if we don't use it in order to win the future one?"[12]

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[12] St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, 90, 3.

CHAPTER XIV

TRUTH AND MORALITY IN OUR DAYS

EMILIYA VELIKOVA

THE LOSS OF THE TRANSCENDENT AND CONTEMPOPRARY MORAL FAILURE

The present moment in human history is one of the most challenging periods in the whole of human development. The crucial transition from the second millennium and the third challenges human reason to provide a new meaning of human existence in newly global times, and challenges human ability to assure the future of humanity. The 20th century appears contradictory - it is a century marked by great discoveries and serious threats, by an impetuous pouring forth of human thought and by unparalleled moral failings, by the greatest hopes and the most crushing despair. There has never been another century in the history of humanity so racked by the elements of profound crises and by such a deep-seated and painful loss of direction. Humankind has never so distanced itself from the Being and from the Universe conceived as Cosmos. There has been no other century in which the future of humanity has been so problematic and so much in flux, and in which the profanation of life has been so truly all-pervasive, with so little hope of remedy. No other century has been so characterized by the transformation of non-sense into meaning, and of the Absurd into the sense and ultimate purpose of human existence.

That is why most of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century agree in asserting that the contemporary epoch is marked by deep crisis. For some this crisis finds expression in the crises of knowledge and ways of thinking, in other words in the crisis of human reason and the loss of its universalizing power. For others, this is in the crisis of the relation between the human being and others, the human being and society, and the human being and the Universe, that is in a crisis of human existence as a whole. The description of this crisis is well represented in the works of such social philosophers as Adorno, Marcuse, Erich Fromm and others, as well as in the elaborations of such existential philosophers as Heidegger, Marcel, Sartre, Camus, etc.

In the perspective of the fundamental metaphysical distinction, spiritual-material, the multiple dimensions of the crisis, pointed out by different philosophers, can be reduced to one, namely, the loss of spirituality in the contemporary epoch and the establishment of the domination of material over spiritual values. Indeed, this loss of spirituality in our days is at the basis of the break in the relation between man and Being, pointed out by M. Heidegger, and of the submergence of human existence into hopelessness and despair, into sadness and absurdity,

described so passionately by G. Marcel. So, as Marcel's analysis shows, we live in a "broken world" – a world whose "heart has stopped beating," deprived of soul and vitality, and, as a result, also of love and hope. It is a world which "*resounds with emptiness*" and in which the mystery of human existence is reduced to the comfort and security of everyday life.

This world is dominated by the spirit of abstraction and objectifying, by the function and power of technology, by material values and the striving for possessions. Here, human life is centered not in the mystery of the Being which gives supreme meaning to existence, but rather is scattered in the mechanical repetition of actions, devoid of creativity. Its unique purpose is to accommodate human life to the expectations of an objectified and mechanized society, treating human beings according to the model of machines.

That is why in the contemporary epoch man faces the questions of the sense of human existence and of the essence of being human. But then the joy of life disappears, replaced by sadness and tiredness (as Marcel describes it); the pursuit of comfort and sensual pleasures replaces the aspiration for internal concentration and the development of personality, and the mystery of existence is reduced to attempts to assure the security of everyday life. To that degree human existence sinks into emptiness and loses its "*ontological weight*" (Marcel). The human being finds himself confronted with questions about his real essence, his own identity, the meaning of his existence, and the sense of his presence in the Universe. In Scheler's words, humanity faces the question about its place in the Cosmos.

The main reason for this insufficiency of spirituality which determines the crisis of the contemporary epoch (including the crisis of human existence) is the suppression in the general human worldview of the vertical dimension of reality. The consequence of this is the loss of the role of the Transcendent and of the significance of the Sacred in human life.

In fact, modern times as a whole represent this gradual, but permanent falling off of the conscious presence of the Transcendent in human life and of the aspirations of human reason to reveal it and thereby to assure the supreme meaning of human existence. Beginning with the Renaissance – a crucial period, which radically changed previous visions of the Universe and the place of the human being in it – the development of modern Western philosophy shows an ever increasing refusal of human thought to refer to the Transcendent, a sense of an inability on the part of human reason to reveal it, and even a commonly accepted later conviction of the uselessness of any efforts made in this direction. The basis of this trend of philosophical thinking is the rise of the sciences, whose progress led finally to the establishment of a completely new vision of the Universe and of the role of the human being in it. In this vision in which there is no longer any room for the vertical (transcendent) dimension of reality, the extent and development of the world are therefore seen as located only on the horizontal plane.

To be sure, from Descartes, passing by way of Leibniz and Hegel, to Wittgenstein, the philosophical thinking of the modern era continued to reflect on the Transcendent. Nevertheless, it finally ended by eliminating it from the world, either by reducing it to immanence (Spinoza, Hegel), or by distancing it so far from reality that it comes to be beyond any possible knowledge – either absolutely unintelligible (Spencer), or totally opposed to reason as the mystical, whereof one cannot speak (Wittgenstein). By virtue of having been denied as a dimension of the world or removed so far from all reality and from all rational comprehension, the transcendent reaches the point at which it disappears.

With the transcendent thus disposed of, the sacred also re-disappears from reality, the sacred that had organized time and space, and which gave life its meaning and justified it. Being without the Sacred, the world loses its qualities of order and harmony, of unity and vitality, and even its foreordained role as the "hearth" prepared for man; it is transformed from Cosmos to Chaos[1]. From this there comes about in man a feeling of abandonment, of being left derelict in a hostile world, of the absurdity and weightlessness of existence, which existentialism took as an object of analysis.

But, as Ricoeur notes, in a world without memory of the Sacred, a world deprived of its sacred time/space, human existence sinks into homogeneity and into "in-difference". It becomes, to use the expression of Ricoeur, "de-centered, ex-centered, and un-centered"[2]. The fact of having lost the key pointer to its own center gives to human existence this quality of ex-centricity and dictates a radical change in the value orientation of human life. It ensures domination of material values which connect man, through his body, to horizontal reality as the only one remaining. This is instead of spiritual reality which would lead the human being above this reality, uniting him with his own self and with the source of his own existence[3].

Thus the elimination of the vertical dimension of reality and with it of the place of the Sacred in human life leads to the interruption of the relation of man to Being (as Heidegger wrote), as well as to an alienation of the human being from himself, to an oblivion of his real essence, to the loss

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[1] It is interesting to note here that one of the most recent scientific theories attempts to explain not only the birth and evolution of the Universe, but also all the natural and social processes in terms of organized Chaos. (For details see: J. Gleick. *La theorie du Chaos*. Flammarion, 1989.)

[2] In the original: "*décentrée, excentrée et acentrée*". See: Ricoeur, P. "*Manifestation et Proclamation*". In "*Le Sacré: Etudes et recherches*". E. Castelli (ed.), Aubier, Paris 1974, 71.

[3] The rapid development of industry in modern times, as well as the predominant role of the economy in the social world during the same period, also contributes greatly to projecting material values into the position of greatest prominence in the modern mental paradigm.

of his own identity and of the meaning of his existence. Instead of treating himself as a source of spirituality and creativity, he then strives for material possessions, thus subordinating his existence rather to the mode of *having,* than to that of being[4]. In other words, the human being in our days is not keen to develop him as a personality, to try to find in the depths of his soul this transcendently given vocation, which determines his unique place in the Universe, and to dedicate his existence to attempts at spiritualizing the world and extending goodness, truth and beauty in it.

This prevalence of material values over spiritual ones, which is a logical result of the loss of the place of the Transcendent and of the role of the Sacred in human life, is at the basis of the devaluation of morality on, not only the individual, but also the social level, to which we can testify in our days. The elimination of the Transcendent as a superstructure, serving as a ground for the hierarchy of values and as a final sanction of every action, leads, on the individual level, to the feeling of an unlimited freedom which does not recognize any given barriers or moral limitations; and on the social level, to the possibility of legitimating any arbitrariness and to breaking all possible restraints. Or, as a character in Dostoyevsky says: "If God doesn't exist, anything is allowed." Because of this loss of a sense of the Sacred and the suppression of any final restriction on human liberty, there appeared the horrors of the 20th century with its unprecedented inhuman actions, which gave rise to questions about the real essence of the human being and the presence of a naturally given good will in him, as well as about the future of human history. Or in philosophical terms, there is a direct relation between the place of the Transcendent in human life and the level of spirituality and morality which determine the quality of human existence. The social organization in the sense of regulatory institutions and legislative codification serves only as a slight compensation for the lack of morality in individuals, in particular, and in the collective consciousness, in general. It is a slight compensation, because its juridical system, even when it is well established and working well, can not always guarantee the triumph of justice. The possibility of "escaping" from social judgment (especially when the juridical system doesn't work well), added to the conviction that there is not another sanction from which it is impossible to "conceal yourself", facilitates the waning of the moral sense in the human being. That is why the process of moral decline is characteristic, to one degree or another, of the whole Western civilization as a result of its established general worldview. Yet, it is even more tangible in the post-communist countries, where during the totalitarian period the materialistic philosophy led to the previously mentioned one-dimensional vision of the Universe. This was imposed as the official and unique vision. In contrast, religion, which calls the human being to the Spiritual and supports the supremacy of spiritual values over material ones, was branded as an

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[4] I have in view here the two modes of existence, analyzed by G. Marcel, which characterize human life in the contemporary epoch.

anachronism and as ultra-conservative. The most tangible result of this was an increase in immorality both on the individual and on the social level as a whole. After the changes, this culminated in an increase of criminality, as a result of the destruction of the previously established institutions and the lack of well-working new ones. In other words, the emaciation of morality, which we witness at present, is due essentially to the loss of a religious sense in the people and the rejection of the role of religion in social life. In reality, religion affirms spiritual and moral values and directs human beings to make something of interior life. It also presupposes a sanctioning superstructure, which hinders the unleashing of the most vile human passions, thus contributing (together with well-working social institutions) to order in society.

This means that the way to social stability and to the possibility for assuring the real status of moral norms and of the highest values in our societies leads through re-discovering the place of religion in human life as the fundamental ground of human existence and as one of the most important factors for societal organization. This re-evaluation of the social role of religion is related, from a metaphysical point of view, to the need to re-think the place and significance of the transcendent in human life. Only when human thought directs itself to the Vertical (transcendent) dimension of the real, will the human being be able to elevate himself above the illusions of his temporality and to subordinate his existence to the wisdom of eternity, as well as to develop himself as a person and confirm his unique presence in the world. Precisely in this confirmation of the human being as a person, related to his spiritual development, lies the key to overcoming the crisis of the contemporary epoch and to assuring the future of humanity. For the person is not only the *telos* of universal progress, but, once this has been discovered, is also the unique center of its (re)-orientation.

This is in the direction of the spiritualization and personification of the universe, of its transformation in the light of the spiritual, of its incorporation into the destiny of the human being, and of its establishment as a personal creation[5]. This is in contrast to the individual who dissipates himself in material things, who looks only for sensual pleasures, who refuses to take on risks and adventures, engagements and responsibility, and who subordinates his existence to the comfort and security of everyday life.

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[5] According to the founder of personalism, Emmanuel Mounier, the process of the personalization of the universe is the *telos* of its history, which means that all its development pursues the aim of creating the conditions for the appearance of the *person* and thereby opening the possibility for its own personalization, achieved through the realization of the human being as a person. That is why the *person* is the "*initial reality*" and "*final value*" of universal development, the goal of natural evolution and "*center of re-orientation of reality*". Because of this the person is also the Supreme Being in the Universe, an absolute, which, in accordance with the Kantian moral imperative, should be considered always as a value in itself.

For the person the movement is toward the Transcendent and spiritual self-development, connected to creativity and activity in the world, which are subordinated to supreme spiritual values. Besides, the person is openness to others, ability for engagement and assumption of responsibility, for self-givingness and devotion.

In other words, the person is the polar opposite of the individual. The individual is impersonal, anonymous, unreliable, irresponsible and deprived of a sense of the higher meaning of his existence. He is, in other words, that thoroughly replaceable human being whom Heidegger designates as *Das Man,* and Mounier calls *on* or existence *"en masse"*, whereas the person is unique and nonpareil, creative and constructive, active and effective, moral and responsible, brave and able to be engaged (in a cause, in an ideal, in a position). If the individual is egoistic and self-centered, closed in upon himself and self-sufficient, directed to his own interests and non-benevolent (or *"indisponible"* in Marcel's words), the person is open to others and communicative, loving and giving, kind and trustworthy, generous and forgiving, charitable and compassionate, understanding and devoted to living for his/her neighbors. Taken as a whole, the existence of the person is dedicated to three interrelated spheres – the material world where one should spread the light of the spiritual; human society, where one should bring love in order to connect with one's destiny; and the totality of the spirit, which calls one beyond one's actual limits for accomplishment and fulfillment[6].

The development of the human being as a person is, according to the founder of personalism, the main and most urgent task of our day. Its realization requires a kind of revival of the Renaissance - the period in which was first introduced the idea of the person with its inerrant characteristics. The idea later was corrupted as a consequence of the establishment of industrial capitalism. This imposed a new type of functionalism, a new dependence of man on social institutions, and opened the way to material accumulation; finally thus allowing the reduction of the human being to the individual.

This was supported by theories which on the philosophical level introduced the idea of the abstract subject, detached from all its intrinsic adherences to the body, to nature, to the other. On the level of liberal ideology and in accordance with the abstract philosophical subject, theory insisted on the autonomy of the abstract individual, enclosed within its own liberty. This process in the development of Western civilization progressively destroyed the spirit of the Renaissance and led to the imposition of the individualistic attitude that is characteristic of the contemporary epoch.

Thus, instead of the recognition of the human being as a person, there appeared the individual, alienated from real human essence, from his

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[6] Mounier, Emmanuel *Revolution personnaliste et communautaire*.dans: Œuvres…, t. I, 153.

vocation, from others, and from community. He was seen as enclosed in his selfishness and incapable of establishing interpersonal communication. By reducing the human being to the abstract individual, deprived of spiritual vocation and responsibility, incapable of either interpersonal communication or personal heroism, the individual was directed to the material values of life. The individualism of industrial capitalism led to the corruption of the Renaissance ideal of the person and of the spiritual values related to this ideal. All of this made possible the "establishment of a race of human beings who are deaf to the sufferings of others, blind to miseries outside of the frame of their own inner world"[7], a race of people who have lost "both the meaning of being and the meaning of love"[8]. Mounier finds the deepest reason for the crisis of the contemporary epoch precisely in this direction of the development of Western civilization which has resulted in the reduction of the human being to an individual closed in himself, who subordinates his spiritual needs to the striving for material possessions. All of this constitutes a forgetting of the real essence of man and of the meaning of his presence in the world. The vocation of the human being is to develop himself as a person and to personalize his world, to transform it according to the highest spiritual values, spreading into it the light of the spirit. That is the real vocation of the human being, because by his essence he is spirit, despite the fact that by his existence he is an incarnated being, that is to say, a dual creature of body and mind. The vocation of his achievement as a person is a call, addressed to the human being from Transcendence, which gives rise to and supports his existence. This call, inscribed in the heart of the human being as the transcendent cipher (code), which determines the unique place of everyone in the universe, finds concrete expression in the personal vocation, which must be discovered and fulfilled. The fulfillment of the personal vocation presupposes individual spiritual realization, which is at the base of the spiritual renaissance of society. The uncovering and accomplishment of one's vocation is the main condition for the development of the personal being. Despite the infinite varieties of its possible modes, the vocation is always related to a creative activity through which the person transforms the living world in a direction illuminated by the highest spiritual values. In this way, it always requires an active presence of the person in the world, a sense of morality and responsibility, and a readiness to follow this, regardless of the problems and discomforts which this might entail. That requires a constant presence to the truth and the courage to reveal and confirm it in one's life, in spite of all possible risks and inconveniences.

This could be the way humanity approaches the ideal bequeathed from Plato's metaphysics – namely the "holy trinity" of truth, beauty, and goodness – the incorporation of which into the world alone can assure its

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[7] Mounier, Emmauel *Manifeste au service du personnalisme*. dans: Œuvres, Editions du Seuil, Paris 1961, t. I, 495.

[8] *Ibid*., 493.

unity and harmony. Even though, so many centuries after Plato's inspiration, humanity is still attempting to reach this ideal, without yet getting closer to it, we can hope that, after a century of such great suffering, after so many terrible experiences, humankind is finally ready to understand and to transform the wisdom of the ancients into a practice for our everyday lives.

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TRUTH AND GOODNESS, CULTURE AND MORALITY

GEORGE F. McLEAN

TRUTH AND GOODNESS AS CHARACTERISTICS OF BEING: THE POSITIVE FIELD OF MORALITY

In the past morality has too often been read negatively. This begins as envisaging morality as basically a set of prohibitions. From this there is a progressive degeneration. Morality comes to be looked upon as a limitation on human freedom, keeping one from doing this or that. Eventually the effect has been that morality has come generally to be thought of as an arbitrary set of dictates keeping one from what is good for oneself and others. The supposition becomes that something is wrong because it has been forbidden, not that it has been forbidden because it is wrong. Plato wrote to the contrary.

In common speech this finally comes to be the very opposite of morality. One hears: wouldn't it be good if I could just say that I had not been at the scene of my crime or, in the extreme, wouldn't it be good if I could just kill all the witnesses. Of course, to lie is not good because it would subvert human communication; and obviously it is not good to kill all the witnesses. Lying and killing are forbidden precisely because they are bad, not good.

Hence, it is important to change from a negative reading of truth and morality to one that is positive, and to do so in three steps: first in terms of being and its transcendental or all-pervading properties of unity, truth and goodness; second in terms of objectivity; and third in terms of subjectivity.

Let us begin then with truth and with the good as the positive side of moral actions, both are most basically characteristics of being. But what, in fact, is being? We find that for us being is the formal effect of God's act of creation which makes us to be. It is that eruption of divine power and love into time by which we and all that surrounds us are made to be. Being, then, is good.

When now we want to speak further about it we can say immediately that it is simply divided against or opposed to non-being, that is, that it is one or undivided in itself. Moreover, when we relate this to the human intellect it is not opaque or unknowable, but has the capacity, indeed is the capacity, to be replicated there in the intellect, to be intellected or known. Being, then, is essentially intelligible and, in that sense, true. It is to the degree that it is open to intellect or knowable. If we were to compare it

to a telecommunication system, being communicates or is utterly transparent, for which reason St. Theresa of Avila's image of the seven interior mansions of the soul is that of a crystal.

But it would be radically insufficient to think of being as simply intelligible or true, as manifesting itself to an inert and uninterested mind or soul. On the contrary, as being manifests itself to a limited soul, by that very fact it promises to perfect and fulfill it in all its hopes and desires. It is that promise which exerts an attractive force on the human person to the extent of the power of the being that it is.

This precisely is being as good, and it is this dynamic attraction of the good that is the field, indeed the very heart, of morality. This attraction of the good is manifest through desire when sought, and happiness when achieved. It is also temptation when sought by evil means or for evil ends.

This is the field of truth and goodness, of truth and morality. It is a dynamic creative field, in which we are placed by creation. Were it not for our failure to live up to its promise it would be a Garden of Paradise. But, of course, we have failed and find ourselves in the midst of a life or death struggle to attempt to realize the good in the midst of temptation of evil so strong that it ricochets back even to truth. Thus it attempts to tear from justice to injustice and from truth to falsehood, from good to evil. We must then look at this struggle to live in the world in a way that is moral.

OBJECTIVE TRUTH AND MORALITY

For much of the history of Western philosophy truth has been an objective matter. That is, it was a matter of conforming the mind, thought and human action to being as it existed before us and as cast "over against" us, etymologically, as "ob-ject".

This has not been arbitrary. We are not absolute, but limited beings, living in a world of great power and majesty. To pursue real goods in a real manner it is essential that we judge things as they are in themselves. Hence truth becomes a basic requirement for bare survival and for any positive interaction with things of nature or other persons in society. To be real in a real world means that our mind must correspond to what is, and hence deal in terms of truth as correspondence. Not to do so – to act blindly or arbitrarily – is destructive of self as well as of others. This would be the opposite of the pursuit of the good in which morality consists. Progress, even basic survival, means dealing in terms of what is.

This soon extends into the realm of justice, that is, to recognizing others in their rights and needs and providing for them in the proportionate terms of commutative and distributive justice. It is in these terms that others have claims on us, which if ignored will be the basis for continued tension and conflict.

This is illustrated in a work from Zimbabwe, *The Struggles after the Struggle*[1] in The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy series: "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change". The first chapters tell of the process of liberation from colonialism and the way in which it effectively froze the unjust distribution of property between the native and the colonial populations. The injustice of the earlier misappropriation of property by the colonial power, along with the exclusion of the African population from education which could provide a road for advancement, constituted the very situation of injustice which brought on the fight for liberation. To end this fight the flagrantly unjust disposition of property was frozen in place. This assured that the future would not be peaceful, as indeed it still is not. Truth is the essence of justice, and justice is the essential context for the good, the sign of which in social life is peace.

Moreover, when the truth is recognized – even in the above case of injustice through the effort at forgiveness and natural reconciliation – it can provide the dynamic propulsion to restore justice by a proper redistribution of land and of education so that justice can be reconstituted. But this is not yet intelligible by itself alone. The goal is not simply to be equal to others, but to be equal or at least proportionate to others in some scale in sharing in the enjoyment of the good. It is this orientation of truth and justice to the good that constitutes the field of morality, that is, the field of real fulfillment or realization in being.

In this context we can confront the phenomenon of corruption which not only impedes projects intended for the development of peoples, but undermines their very will for progress. The untruth of this injustice, flagrantly practiced for the enrichment of some over the needs of others and even of the common good itself, subverts social satisfaction and constitutes the major impediment to development for the larger part of the population of the world. This is not only a matter of the unjust enrichment of the few at the expense of the many; it is, moreover, the subversion of the essential structures for human cooperation into means of exploitation and suppression. Systematic corruption becomes corruption of the structures or system with the result that the effort of truth to generate the good is stymied, perverted and finally inverted.

For this reason the objective pattern of untruth, injustice and corruption culturally embedded must be corrected so that the negative twisting of truth no longer subverts the good, and thereby corrupts morality at its core, but once again promotes human progress.

SUBJECTIVE TRUTH AND HOPE FOR A NEW MORALITY

Much of the history of at least Western philosophy has been devoted to objective truth. For example the search of Descartes was for

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[1] *The Struggles after the Struggle*, David Kaulemu, ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), introduction.

objective simple natures, and as Marcel noted, even the *ego cogitans* remained for Descartes an epistemological subject of objective cognition.[2] Nevertheless, there remained one continent largely unexplored: it was not the object but the subject itself.

In modern thought this began to change with the work of Kant. For the first time it began to be considered that the structures and categories of reality might be not only a matter of things in themselves, outside of, and in contrast to, mind, but of the mind itself in its work with things or 'objects'. It is not necessary to go so far with Kant as to say that the thing in itself is simply unknowable, to place of the structures of reality in the mind, or especially to look to these structures as universal and necessary. But it certainly is a crucial breakthrough with regard to morality to begin to appreciate the role and hence the responsibility of the human, not only for responding to reality, but for shaping it, and especially for the experience we have of it.

In the 20th century this turn to subjectivity was notably developed. At the beginning of that century it had appeared that the rationalist project of stating all in clear and distinct objective terms was close to completion. This was to be achieved in either the empirical terms of the positivist tradition of sense knowledge or in the formal and essentialist terms of the Kantian intellectual tradition. Whitehead wrote that at the turn of the century, when with Bertrand Russell he went to the First World Congress of Philosophy in Paris, it seemed that, except for some details of application, the work of physics had been essentially completed. To the contrary, however, the very attempt to finalize scientific knowledge with its most evolved concepts made manifest the radical insufficiency of the objectivist approach and led to renewed appreciation of the importance of subjectivity.

Similarly, Wittgenstein began by writing his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*[3] on the Lockean supposition that significant knowledge consisted in constructing a mental map corresponding point to point to the external world as perceived by sense experience. In such a project the spiritual element of understanding, i.e., the grasp of the relation between the points on this mental map and the external world, was relegated to the margin as simply "unutterable". Later experience in teaching children, however, led Wittgenstein to the conclusion that this empirical mental mapping was simply not what was going on in human knowledge. In his *Blue and Brown Books*[4] and his subsequent *Philosophical Investigations*[5] Wittgenstein shifted human consciousness or intentionality, which previously had been relegated to the periphery, to the very center of

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[2] Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Eustime,* trans. M. Harare (London: Hawill Press, 1948), reprinted in *Perspectives on Reality*, eds. G. Kreyche and J. Mann (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World), 630.

[3] Tr. C.K. Ogden (London: Methuen, 1981).

[4] (New York: Harper and Row).

[5] Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958).

concern. The focus of his philosophy was no longer the positivist, supposedly objective, replication of the external world, but the human construction of language and of worlds of meaning[6].

A similar process was underway in the Kantian camp. There Husserl's attempt to bracket all elements, in order to isolate pure essences for scientific knowledge, forced attention to the limitations of a pure essentialism and opened the way for his understudy, Martin Heidegger, to rediscover the existential and historical dimensions of reality in his *Being and Time*[7]. The religious implications of this new sensitivity would be articulated by Karl Rahner in his work, *Spirit in the World*, and by the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution, *The Church in the World*[8].

For Heidegger the meaning of being and of life was unveiled and emerged – the two processes were identical – in conscious human life (*dasein*), lived through time and therefore through history. Thus human consciousness became the new focus of attention. The uncovering or bringing into light (the etymology of the term "phe-nomen-ology") of the unfolding patterns and interrelations of subjectivity would open a new era of human awareness. Epistemology and metaphysics would develop – and merge – in the very work of tracking the nature and direction of this process.

Thus, for Heidegger's successor, Hans-Georg Gadamer[9], the task becomes the uncovering of how human persons, emerging as family, neighborhood and people, by exercising their creative freedom, weave their cultural tradition. This is not history as a mere compilation of whatever humankind does or makes, but culture as the fabric of the human consciousness and symbols by which a human group unveils being in its time.

The result is a dramatic inversion: where before all began from above and flowed downward - whether from the king in structures of political power or from principles in structures of abstract reasoning – as we enter the 21st century attention focuses rather upon developing the exercise of the creative freedom of people in, and as, civil society as a new and responsible partner with government and business in the continuing effort toward the realization of the common good. This is manifest in the shift in the agenda of the United Nations from Cold War debates between economic systems and their political powers, to the great conferences in Rio on the environment, in Cairo on the family, and in Beijing on women. The agenda is no longer reality as objectively quantifiable and conflictual, but the more difficult, or at least more meaningful, one of human life as lived

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[6] Brian Wicker, *Culture and Theology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1966), 68-88.

[7] (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

[8] *Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W. Abbott (New York: New Century, 1974).

[9] *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1975).

consciously with its issues of human dignity, values and cultural interchange.

As a result we now find the relation of truth and morality much enriched, indeed. It is no longer merely a matter of corresponding to what is, but of working with what is in order to shape it creatively. In this sense humankind is not only directed to avoid some things because they are destructive of being as good. Rather, as is noted especially in the Islamic tradition, inasmuch as the human is the vice gerent of God the creator, the human task is to continue the process of creation, working with it in order to bring out the good that is given in potency and depends upon creative human action in order to be realized and brought to fruition.

Joining subjectivity to objectivity it is now possible to see how this takes place.

Values

The drama of free self-determination, and hence the development of persons and of civil society, is most fundamentally a matter of being, as affirmation or definitive stance, against non-being as implied in the work of Parmenides, the first Greek metaphysician. This is identically the relation to the good in search of which we live, survive and thrive. The good is manifest in experience as the object of desire, namely, as that which is sought when absent. Basically, it is what completes life; it is the "per-fect", understood in its etymological sense as that which is completed or realized through and through. Hence, once achieved, it is no longer desired or sought, but enjoyed. This is reflected in the manner in which each thing, even a stone, retains the being or reality it has and resists reduction to non-being or nothing. The most that we can do is to change or transform a thing into something else; we cannot annihilate it. Similarly, a plant or tree, given the right conditions, grows to full stature and fruition. Finally, an animal protects its life – fiercely, if necessary – and seeks out the food needed for its strength. Food, in turn, as capable of contributing to an animal's sustenance and perfection, is for the animal an auxiliary good or means.

In this manner, things as good, that is, as actually realizing some degree of perfection and able to contribute to the well-being of others, are the bases for an interlocking set of relations. As these relations are based upon both the actual perfection things possess and the potential perfection to which they are thereby directed, the good is perfection, both as attracting when it has not yet been attained and as constituting one's fulfillment upon its achievement. Hence, goods are not arbitrary or simply a matter of wishful thinking; they are rather the full development of things and all that contributes thereto. In this ontological or objective sense, all beings are good to the extent that they exist and can contribute to the perfection of others.

The moral good is a narrower field, for it concerns only one's free and responsible actions. This has the objective reality of the ontological

good noted above, for it concerns real actions which stand in distinctive relation to one's own perfection and to that of others - and, indeed, to that of the physical universe and to God as well. Hence, many possible patterns of actions could be objectively right because they promote the good of those involved, while others, precisely as inconsistent with the real good of persons or things, are objectively disordered or misordered. This constitutes the objective basis for what is ethically good or bad.

Nevertheless, because the realm of objective relations is almost numberless, whereas our actions are single, it is necessary not only to choose in general between the good and the bad, but in each case to choose which of the often innumerable possibilities one will render concrete.

However broad or limited the options, as responsible and moral an act is essentially dependent upon its being willed by a subject. Therefore, in order to follow the emergence of the field of concrete moral action, it is not sufficient to examine only the objective aspect, namely, the nature of the things involved. In addition, one must consider the action in relation to the subject, namely, to the person who, in the context of his/her society and culture, appreciates and values the good of this action, chooses it over its alternatives, and eventually wills its actualization.

The term 'value' here is of special note. It was derived from the economic sphere where it meant the amount of a commodity sufficient to attain a certain worth. This is reflected also in the term 'axiology,' whose root means "weighing as much" or "worth as much." It requires an objective content – the good must truly "weigh in" and make a real difference; but the term 'value' expresses this good especially as related to wills which actually acknowledge it as a good and as desirable[10]. Thus, different individuals or groups of persons and at different periods have distinct sets of values. A people or community is sensitive to, and prizes, a distinct set of goods or, more likely; it establishes a distinctive ranking in the degree to which it prizes various goods. By so doing, it delineates among limitless objective goods a certain pattern of values which in a more stable fashion mirrors the corporate free choices of that people.

This constitutes the basic topology of a culture; as repeatedly reaffirmed through time, it builds a tradition or heritage, about which we shall speak below. It constitutes, as well, the prime pattern and gradation of goods or values which persons experience from their earliest years and in terms of which they interpret their developing relations. Young persons peer out at the world through lenses formed, as it were, by their family and culture and configured according to the pattern of choices made by that community throughout its history – often in its most trying circumstances. Like a pair of glasses, values do not create the object, but focus attention upon certain goods rather than upon others. This becomes the basic orienting factor for the affective and emotional life described by the Scots,

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[10] Ivor Leclerc, "The Metaphysics of the Good," *Review of Metaphysics*, 35 (1981) 3-5.

Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith, as the heart of civil society. In time, it encourages and reinforces certain patterns of action which, in turn, reinforce the pattern of values.

Through this process a group constitutes the concerns in terms of which it struggles to advance or at least to perdure, mourns its failures, and celebrates its successes. This is a person's or people's world of hopes and fears in terms of which, as Plato wrote in the *Laches*, their lives have moral meaning[11]. It is varied according to the many concerns and the groups which coalesce around them. As these are interlocking and interdependent a pattern of social goals and concerns develops which guides action. In turn, corresponding capacities for action or virtues are developed.

Indeed, Aristotle takes this up at the very beginning of his ethics. In order to make sense of the practical dimension of our lives, it is necessary to identify the good or value toward which one directs one's life or which one finds satisfying. This he terms happiness and then proceeds systematically to see which goal can be truly satisfying. His test is not passed by physical goods or honors, but by that which corresponds to, and fulfills, our highest capacity, that is, contemplation of the highest being or divine life.[12]

Virtues

Martin Heidegger describes a process by which the self emerges as a person in the field of moral action. It consists in transcending oneself or breaking beyond mere self-concern and projecting outward as a being whose very nature is to share with others for whom one cares and about whom one is concerned. In this process, one identifies new purposes or goals for the sake of which action is to be undertaken. In relation to these goals, certain combinations of possibilities, with their natures and norms, take on particular importance and begin thereby to enter into the makeup of one's world of meaning.[13] Freedom then becomes more than mere spontaneity, more than choice, and more even than self-determination in the sense of determining oneself to act as described above. It shapes – the phenomenologist would say even that it constitutes – one's world as the ambit of human decisions and dynamic action. This is the making of the complex ordering of social groups which constitutes civil society.

This process of deliberate choice and decision transcends the somatic and psychic dynamisms. Whereas the somatic dimension is extensively reactive, the psychic dynamisms of affectivity or appetite are

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[11] *Laches*, 198-201.

[12] *Metaphysics XII*, 7.

[13] B. Mehta; Gerald F. Stanley, "Contemplation as Fulfillment of the Human Person," in *Personalist Ethics and Human Subjectivity*, vol. II of *Ethics at the Crossroads*, George F. McLean, ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1996), 365-420.

fundamentally oriented to the good and positively attracted by a set of values. These, in turn, evoke an active response from the emotions in the context of responsible freedom. But it is in the dimension of responsibility that one encounters the properly moral and social dimension of life. For, in order to live with others, one must be able to know, to choose and finally to realize what is truly conducive to one's good and to that of others. Thus, persons and groups must be able to judge the true value of what is to be chosen, that is, its objective worth, both in itself and in relation to others. This is moral truth: the judgment regarding whether the act makes the person and society good in the sense of bringing authentic individual and social fulfillment, or the contrary.

In this, deliberation and voluntary choice are required in order to exercise proper self-awareness and self-governance. By determining to follow this judgment one is able to overcome determination by stimuli and even by culturally ingrained values and to turn these, instead, into openings for free action in concert with others in order to shape one's community as well as one's physical surroundings. This can be for good or for ill, depending on the character of my actions. By definition, only morally good actions contribute to personal and social fulfillment, that is, to the development and perfection of persons with others in community.

It is the function of conscience, as one's moral judgment, to identify this character of moral good in action. Hence, moral freedom consists in the ability to follow one's conscience. This work of conscience is not a merely theoretical judgment, but the exercise of self-possession and self-determination in one's actions. Here, reference to moral truth constitutes one's sense of duty, for the action that is judged to be truly good is experienced also as that which one ought to do.

When this is exercised or lived, patterns of action develop which are habitual in the sense of being repeated. These are the modes of activity with which we are familiar; in their exercise, along with the coordinated natural dynamisms they require, we are practiced; and with practice come facility and spontaneity. Such patterns constitute the basic, continuing and pervasive shaping influence of our life. For this reason, they have been considered classically to be the basic indicators of what our life as a whole will add up to, or, as is often said, "amount to". Since Socrates, the technical term for these especially developed capabilities has been 'virtues' or, as indicated by its etymology, special strengths.

But, if the ability to follow one's conscience and, hence, to develop one's set of virtues must be established through the interior dynamisms of the person, it must be protected and promoted by the related physical and social realities. This is a basic right of the person – perhaps *the* basic human and social right – because only thus can one transcend one's conditions and strive for fulfillment. Its protection and promotion must be a basic concern of any order which would be democratic and directed to the good of its people.

Cultural Tradition

Together, these values and virtues of a people set the pattern of social life through which freedom is developed and exercised. This is called a "culture". On the one hand, the term is derived from the Latin word for tilling or cultivating the land. Cicero and other Latin authors used it for the cultivation of the soul or mind (*cultura animi*), for just as good land, when left without cultivation, will produce only disordered vegetation of little value, so the human spirit will not achieve its proper results unless trained or educated[14]. This sense of culture corresponds most closely to the Greek term for education (*paideia*) as the development of character, taste and judgment, and to the German term "formation" (*Bildung*)[15].

Here, the focus is upon the creative capacity of the spirit of a people and their ability to work as artists, not only in the restricted sense of producing purely aesthetic objects, but in the more involved sense of shaping all dimensions of life, material and spiritual, economic and political into a fulfilling pattern. The result is a whole life, characterized by unity and truth, goodness and beauty, and, thereby, sharing deeply in meaning and value. The capacity for this cannot be taught, although it may be enhanced by education; more recent phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiries suggest that, at its base, culture is a renewal, a reliving of origins in an attitude of profound appreciation[16]. This leads us beyond self and other, beyond identity and diversity, in order to comprehend both.

On the other hand, "culture" can be traced to the term *civis* (citizen, civil society and civilization)[17]. This reflects the need for a person to belong to a social group or community in order for the human spirit to produce its proper results. By bringing to the person the resources of the tradition, the *tradita* or past wisdom produced by the human spirit, the community facilitates comprehension. By enriching the mind with examples of values which have been identified in the past, it teaches and inspires one to produce something analogous. For G.F. Klemm, this more objective sense of culture is composite in character[18]. E.B. Tylor defined this classically for

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[14] Vittorio Mathieu, "Cultura" in *Enciclopedia Filosofica* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1967), II, 207-210; and Raymond Williams, "Culture and Civilization," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), II, 273-276, and *Culture and Society* (London: 1958).

[15] Tonnelat, "Kultur" in *Civilisation, le mot et l'idée* (Paris: Centre International de Synthese), II.

[16] Vittorio Mathieu, "Cultura" in *Enciclopedia Filosofica* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1967), II, 207-210; and Raymond Williams, "Culture and Civilization", *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), II, 273-276, and *Culture and Society* (London, 1958).

[17] . Vittorio Mathieu, "Civilta," *ibid.*, I, 1437-1439.

[18] G.F. Klemm, Allgemein Culturgeschicht der Menschheit (Leipzig, 1843-1852).

the social sciences as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits required by man as a member of society"[19].

In contrast, Clifford Geertz focused on the meaning of all this for a people and on how a people's intentional action went about shaping its world. Thus to an experimental science in search of laws he contrasts the analysis of culture as an interpretative science in search of meaning[20]. What is sought is the import of artifacts and actions, that is, whether "it is, ridicule or challenge, irony or anger, snobbery or pride that, in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said"[21]. This requires attention to "the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs"[22]. In this light, Geertz defines culture rather as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of intended conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life"[23].

Each particular complex whole or culture is specific to a particular people; a person who shares in this is a *civis* or citizen and belongs to a civilization. For the more restricted Greek world in which this term was developed, others (aliens) were those who did not speak the Greek tongue; they were "barbaroi", for their speech sounded like mere babel. Though at first this meant simply non-Greek, its negative manner of expression easily lent itself to, perhaps reflected, and certainly favored, a negative axiological connotation, which soon became the primary meaning of the word 'barbarian'. By reverse implication, it attached to the term 'civilization' an exclusivist connotation, such that the cultural identity of peoples began to imply not only the pattern of gracious symbols by which one encounters and engages in shared life projects with other persons and peoples, but cultural alienation between peoples. Today, as communication increases and more widely differentiated peoples enter into ever greater interaction and mutual dependence, we reap a bitter harvest of this negative connotation. The development of a less exclusivist sense of culture and civilization must be a priority task.

The development of values and virtues and their integration as a culture of any depth or richness takes time, and hence depends upon the experience and creativity of many generations. The culture which is handed on, or *tradita,* comes to be called a cultural tradition; as such it reflects the cumulative achievement of a people in discovering, mirroring and

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[19] E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London, 1871), VII, 7.
[20] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), 5.
[21] *Ibid.*, 10.
[22] *Ibid.*, 13.
[23] *Ibid.*, 85.

transmitting the deepest meanings of life. This is tradition in its synchronic sense as a body of wisdom.

This sense of tradition is very vivid in premodern and village communities. It would appear to be much less so in modern urban centers, undoubtedly in part due to the difficulty in forming active community life in large urban centers. However, the cumulative process of transmitting, adjusting and applying the values of a culture through time is not only heritage or what is received, but new creation as this is passed on in new ways. Attending to tradition, taken in this active sense, allows us not only to uncover the permanent and universal truths which Socrates sought, but to perceive the importance of values we receive from the tradition and to mobilize our own life project actively toward the future.

The Genesis of Tradition in Community

Because tradition has sometimes been interpreted as a threat to the personal and social freedom essential to a democracy, it is important to note that a cultural tradition is generated by the free and responsible life of the members of a concerned community or civil society and enables succeeding generations to realize their life with freedom and creativity.

Autogenesis is no more characteristic of the birth of knowledge than it is of persons. One's consciousness emerges, not with self, but in relation to others. In the womb, the first awareness is that of the heart beat of one's mother. Upon birth, one enters a family in whose familiar relations one is at peace and able to grow. It is from one's family and in one's earliest weeks and months that one does or does not develop the basic attitudes of trust and confidence which underground or undermine one's capacities for subsequent social relations. There one encounters care and concern for others independently of what they do for us and acquires the language and symbol system in terms of which to conceptualize, communicate and understand[24]. Just as a person is born into a family on which he or she depends absolutely for life, sustenance, protection and promotion, so, one's understanding develops in community. As persons we emerge by birth into a family and neighborhood from which we learn and in harmony with which we thrive.

Similarly, through the various steps of one's development, as one's circle of community expands through neighborhood, school, work and recreation, one comes to learn and to share personally and passionately an interpretation of reality and a pattern of value responses. The phenomenologist sees this life in the varied civil society as the new source

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[24] John Caputo, "A Phenomenology of Moral Sensibility: Moral Emotion," in George F. McLean, Frederick Ellrod, eds., *Philosophical Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development: Act and Agent* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), 199-222.

for wisdom. Hence, rather than turning away from daily life in order to contemplate abstract and disembodied ideas, the place to discover meaning is in life as lived in the family and in the progressively wider social circles of civil society into which one enters.

If it were merely a matter of community, however, all might be limited to the present, with no place for tradition as that which is "passed on" from one generation to the next. In fact, the process of trial and error, of continual correction and addition in relation to a people's evolving sense of human dignity and purpose, constitutes a type of learning and testing laboratory for successive generations. In this laboratory of history, the strengths of various insights and behavior patterns can be identified and reinforced, while deficiencies are progressively corrected or eliminated. Horizontally, we learn from experience what promotes and what destroys life and, accordingly, make pragmatic adjustments.

But even this language remains too abstract, too limited to method or technique, too unidimensional. While tradition can be described in general and at a distance in terms of feed-back mechanisms and might seem merely to concern how to cope in daily life, what is being spoken about are free acts that are expressive of passionate human commitment and personal sacrifice in responding to concrete danger, building and rebuilding family alliances and constructing and defending one's nation. Moreover, this wisdom is not a matter of mere tactical adjustments to temporary concerns; it concerns rather the meaning we are able to envision for life and which we desire to achieve through all such adjustments over a period of generations, i.e., what is truly worth striving for and the pattern of social interaction in which this can be lived richly. The result of this extended process of learning and commitment constitutes our awareness of the bases for the decisions of which history is constituted.

This points us beyond the horizontal plane of the various ages of history and directs our attention vertically to its ground, that is, to the bases of the values which humankind in its varied circumstances seeks to realize[25]. It is here that one searches for the absolute ground of meaning and value of which Iqbal wrote. Without that all is only ultimately relative to an interlocking network of consumption, then of dissatisfaction and finally of anomie and ennui.

The impact of the convergence of cumulative experience and reflection is heightened by its gradual elaboration in ritual and music, and its imaginative configuration in such great epics as the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. All conspire to constitute a culture which, like a giant telecommunications dish, shapes, intensifies and extends the range and penetration of our personal sensitivity, free decision and mutual concern.

Tradition, then, is not, as is history, simply everything that ever happened, whether good or bad. It is rather what appears significant for

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[25] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1975), 245-253.

human life: it is what has been seen through time and human experience to be deeply true and necessary for human life. It contains the values to which our forebears first freely gave their passionate commitment in specific historical circumstances and then constantly reviewed, rectified and progressively passed on generation after generation. The content of a tradition, expressed in works of literature and all the many facets of a culture, emerges progressively as something upon which personal character and civil society can be built. It constitutes a rich source from which multiple themes can be drawn, provided it be accepted and embraced, affirmed and cultivated.

Hence, it is not because of personal inertia on our part or arbitrary will on the part of our forbears that our culture provides a model and exemplar. On the contrary, the importance of tradition derives from both the cooperative character of the learning by which wisdom is drawn from experience and the cumulative free acts of commitment and sacrifice which have defined, defended and passed on through time the corporate life of the community as civil society[26].

Ultimately, tradition bridges from ancient Greek philosophy to civil society today. It bears the divine gifts of life, meaning and love, uncovered in facing the challenges of civil life through the ages. It provides both the way back to their origin in the *arché* as the personal, free and responsible exercise of existence and even of its divine source, and the way forward to their divine goal, the way, that is, to their *Alpha* and their *Omega*.

SPIRITUAL VALUES AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

The countries of Eastern Europe have always been considered the cross roads of the world - the delicate balance point between East and West. Great civilizations have been challenged there to play that role: Greek and Roman, Christian, Islamic and Marxist. Now the new states in the region are faced with taking up that role in a context suddenly become global.

This is a daunting challenge: it is necessary to avoid losing the civilizing heritage from all of the above civilizations, yet to establish a clear and firm identity which distinguishes these nations from Russia to the East; to revive the Islamic roots of their identity, yet without falling into, or falling prey to, a fundamentalism which would impede progress; to develop their economic base, yet not at the cost of a new servitude, now to the West;

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[26] *Ibid*. Gadamer emphasized knowledge as the basis of tradition in contrast to those who would see it pejoratively as the result of arbitrary will. It is important to add to knowledge the free acts which, e.g., give birth to a nation and shape the attitudes and values of successive generations. As an example one might cite the continuing impact had by the *Magna Carta* through the Declaration of Independence upon life in North America, or of the Declaration of the Rights of Man on the national life of so many countries.

and to take their place politically in the world, yet to retain and promote their proper independence.

While moving from a centralized to a more open economy, these nations are engaged not only in balancing great world forces, but integrating them into a new and viable whole. In this sense, the future of civilization is here in play.

Truly humane progress will be possible only to the degree that these peoples are able to find ways of inspiring their disparate elements with spiritual values in a way that promotes both the dignity of the human person and the social cohesion and cooperation of its peoples. This challenge of our times finds its focus here as much as anywhere.

Professor S. Shermukhamedov provides us with an excellent description of spiritual culture. This is "the system in which the values of human society and humankind are reflected, impressed and incarnated with their needs, wishes, interests, hopes, beliefs, persuasions. This is the world of emotions, sensations, aspirations, views, wills, impulses and actions, as impressed upon the internal world of man and realized through the interaction between society and nature in which man is the subject of national and common values. Man is the highest value and his life, goodness, interests, harmony and happiness are the goals of society." These words reflect an important shift taking place in contemporary culture.

Previously, in fact from the time of the great trio of Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, thought had evolved in an objectivist direction. Concern was centered upon the way things were, rather than upon the human person who knows and engages them. This orientation was radicalized at the beginning of modern times, which came thereby to be characterized by rationalism.

It is then of epic moment that in our day we should become aware of not only the achievements of this orientation, but also of its limitations and of the way in which these have held us captive. Now the concerns, rightly underlined by Professor Shermukhamedov, have come to the fore. They are reflected not least in the new freedoms of Eastern Europe and in the new hopes and aspirations of its peoples.

This provides orientation for searching further into the nature of spiritual civilization, its foundations and its significance for social progress.

One of the most important characteristics of human persons and societies is their capability for development and growth. One is born with open and unlimited powers for knowledge and for love. Life consists in developing, deploying and exercising these capabilities. Given the communitarian character of human growth and learning, dependence upon others is not unnatural – quite the contrary. Within, as well as beyond, our social group we depend upon other persons, according as they possess abilities which we, as individuals and communities, need for our growth, self-realization and fulfillment.

This dependence is not primarily one of obedience to the will of others, but is based upon their comparative excellence in some dimension -

whether this is the doctor's professional skill in healing or the wise person's insight and judgment in matters where profound understanding is required. The preeminence of wise persons in the community is not something they usurp or with which they are arbitrarily endowed; it is based rather upon their abilities as these are reasonably and freely acknowledged by others.

Further, this is not a matter of universal law imposed from above and uniformly repeated in univocal terms. Rather it is a matter of corporate learning developed by the components of a civil society, each with its own special concerns and each related to the other in a pattern of subsidiarity.

All of these - the role of the community in learning, the contribution of extended historical experience regarding the horizontal and vertical axes of life and meaning, and the grounding of dependence in competency - combine to endow tradition with authority for subsequent ages. This is varied according to the different components of tradition and their interrelation.

There are reasons to believe, moreover, that tradition is not a passive storehouse of materials simply waiting upon the inquirer, but that its content of authentic wisdom plays a normative role for life in subsequent ages. On the one hand, without such a normative referent, prudence would be as relativistic and ineffective as muscular action without a skeletal substructure. Life would be merely a matter of compromise and accommodation on any terms, with no sense of the value either of what was being compromised or of that for which it was compromised. On the other hand, were the normative factor to reside simply in a transcendental or abstract vision the result would be devoid of existential content.

The fact that humans, no matter how different in culture, do not remain indifferent before the flow of events, but dispute - even bitterly - the direction of change appropriate for their community reflects that humanism is committed actively to the realization of some common - if general - sense of perfection. Without this, even conflict would be impossible for there would be no intersection of the divergent positions and, hence, no debate or conflict.

Through history, communities discover vision which both transcends time and directs our life in all times, past, present and future. The content of that vision is a set of values which, by their fullness and harmony of measure, point the way to mature and perfect human formation and, thereby, orient life[27]. Such a vision is historical because it arises in the life of a people in time. It is also normative, because it provides a basis upon which past historical ages, present options and future possibilities are judged; it presents an appropriate way of preserving that life through time. What begins to emerge is Heidegger's insight regarding Being and its characteristics of unity, truth and justice, goodness and love. These are not simply empty ideals, but the ground, hidden or veiled, as it were, erupting into time through the conscious personal and group life of free human

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[27] Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1975).

beings in history. Seen in this light, the process of human search, discussion and decision - today called democracy - becomes more than a method for managing human affairs; more substantively, it is the mode of the emergence of being in time, the very reality of the life of persons and societies.

One's cultural heritage or tradition constitutes a specification of the general sense of being or perfection, but not as if this were chronologically distant in the past and, therefore, in need of being drawn forward by some artificial contrivance. Rather, being and its values live and act in the lives of all whom they inspire and judge. In its synchronic form, through time, tradition is the timeless dimension of history. Rather than reconstructing it, we belong to it - just as it belongs to us. Traditions then are, in effect, the ultimate communities of human striving, for human life and understanding are implemented, not by isolated individual acts of subjectivity - which Gadamer describes as flickerings in the closed circuits or personal consciousness[28] - but by our situatedness in a tradition. By fusing both past and present, tradition enables the component groupings of civil society to determine the specific direction of their lives and to mobilize the consensus and mutual commitments of which true and progressive community life is built[29].

Conversely, it is this sense of the good or of value, which emerges through the concrete, lived experience of a people throughout its history and constitutes its cultural heritage, which enables society, in turn, to evaluate its life in order to pursue its true good and to avoid what is socially destructive. In the absence of tradition, present events would be simply facts to be succeeded by counter-facts. The succeeding waves of such disjointed happenings would constitute a history written in terms of violence. This, in turn, could be restrained only by some utopian abstraction built upon the reductivist limitations of modern rationalism. Such elimination of all expressions of democratic freedoms is the archetypal modern nightmare, *1984.*

All of that stands in stark contrast to one's heritage or tradition as the rich cumulative expression of meaning evolved by a people through the ages to a point of normative and classical perfection. Exemplified architecturally in a Parthenon or a Taj Mahal, it is embodied personally in a Confucius or Gandhi, a Bolivar or Lincoln, a Martin Luther King or a Mother Theresa. Variously termed "charismatic personalities" (Shils)[30], "paradigmatic individuals" (Cua)[31] or characters who meld role and

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[28] *Ibid.*, 245.

[29] *Ibid.*, 258.

[30] Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 12-13.

[31] *Dimensions of Moral Creativity: Paradigms, Principles and Ideals* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978).

personality in providing a cultural or moral ideal (MacIntyre)[32], they supersede mere historical facts. As concrete universals, they express in the varied patterns of civil society that harmony and fullness of perfection which is at once classical and historical, ideal and personal, uplifting and dynamizing - in a word, liberating.

Nor is it accidental that, as examples, the founders of the great religious traditions come most spontaneously to mind. It is not, of course, that people cannot or do not form the component groups of civil society on the basis of their concrete concerns for education, ecology or life. But their motivation in this as fully human goes beyond pragmatic, external goals to the internal social commitment which in most cultures is religiously based.

It is necessary then to look into the nature of cultural traditions as constituted of freedom as it forms values, virtues and tradition and to the hermeneutics whereby these can be interpreted and applied in a progressive manner.

In this we find the three dimensions of truth. One is objective and looks to what is and what it implies for how we should act. The second is subjective and enables us to appreciate our own properly human responsibility for shaping what we receive into a place and a life that is good.

But beyond these two the metaphysical and religious dimensions of awareness enable us to see what this personal effort truly is, namely, the continuation of the creation whereby being itself, which is truth and goodness, is shared with, and as, limited beings. It is the glory and challenge of man that he alone among creation is able to understand this and join freely and responsibly as vice gerent of God in bringing to fruition the very work of creation itself.

This he does, not alone, but as a member of human communities each of which has developed its culture through which this task is understood and people are formed and mobilized in response. Today this has newly become a truly global task. The morality of the future promises to be rich with the sonorities of all.

In sum this casts the challenge of truth and morality in a new light, focused not on the negatives of lie, injustice, corruption and evil, but on truth and justice, creativity and human fruition.

If we look about us in the world today we can see much that is indeed evil, but we can find as well the beauty of nature in the flowering of trees in the springtime, the architecture of great cities which provide protection and sustenance for their population, and the social structures which, while not perfect and even at times bent upon destruction, yet enable human cooperation in the search for the good. This is an engagement of truth, both scientific and humane, in the pursuit of the good as moral in the sense of the creation of the common good. As artists engaged in creating

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[32] *After Virtue*, 29-30.

our future this is what we must pursue to the full extent of human insight and creative hope.

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HUMANITY BETWEEN
THE POLITICAL ORDER AND MORAL LAW

Anton Carpinschi: We talk here today about the distinction, the relationships and the interactions between public and private space. I have also been tempted to define the political through the public. The public-private relation should be seen as a public-private continuum and an interchangeable relation between the public and the private. This is needed not only because of the recent boom of non-materialistic movements in the political field, such as ecology and feminism (especially with its slogan that "what is private is public"), but also because of what women have to undergo in domestic life. The aggression and anguish they must bear are a public matter, a political problem, not a private thing hidden in the bedrock of the family or of the household. So, for this public-private continuum, I see a redefinition of the political through a public-private dynamic.

Hu Yeping: You talk about dialogue as if there were some conflict. But politics, ethics, and morality should not be a conflicted, as Lobato mentioned. He said that ethics should come before politics. So if we talk about a dialogue between politics and morality, it means there is a problem. How can we solve this, for which dialogue is not enough? When did the problem come to us? I think probably in modern times, for in Aristotle's *Politics*, Hobbs, Hume, etc., one sees a quite different emphasis. In the *Politics*, Aristotle notes three stages in human development: the first is basic instincts, the second is self-preservation, and the third is the common good. Modern thinkers or philosophers eliminate the common good and emphasize only self-preservation. In today's situation everything is judged on the level of self-preservation. Hence the task of philosophers is to emphasize goodness, and not only for the public good is proposed by the Marxists. Whereas the common good is for all, the public good is for institutions as experienced during the communist period. Common good considers both public and private goods; we should say that we need to pursue the good for ourselves and for our fellow beings.

Valerie Marius Ciucă: What Hu Yeping tells us is very nice; it is a very clear adjustment of our preliminary conceptions. Several persons can adhere to a certain type of logic. But a single person can't think of a single phenomenon according to several types of logic, for that would be schizophrenic. Therefore, if we think of this at a social level, we call it normativity as a generic name, including the ecclesiastical, socio-political, and moral. The paradigm here has radically changed and we find ourselves on the opposite side of the situation. Presently, each part of society

expresses a certain type of power, and almost every person calls for his own truth. We have used this word a little carelessly for only God owns truth. Our truth is a simple statement, not a truth, and everyone pretends that his own statements should be seen as fiducially in relation to other individuals. In other words, everyone says, "I am the center of the universe. Within this isomorphic anthropocentrism you must create all necessary conditions to respect the power deriving from my statements". This is the state of confusion we have reached; not tolerance, but an exaggerated substitution of the idea of truth through personal statements. Nevertheless, the truth is congruent; it unifies, and is usually quite intolerant of our common heresies. If we want to keep it as the truth, if we want to pervert it, we can say that any sentence is true once it is pronounced, simply because it expresses something. Lawyers should be as wise as Professor Carpinschi requires political personalities to be, or as Lucian Farcaş requires of theologians. I use this with the students, telling them: first you have to be philosophers, and then you must be theologians, because we lawyers were born through their encroachment. You must be good anthropologists in order to understand the human soul; at the same time, you must have a holistic image of the world, so you must be wise. Only after passing this exam are you able to enter the Law Faculty. Americans admit students to the Law Faculty only after they have graduated from college. However, if the students would be that wise, not only would they no longer attend the Law Faculty, but possibly they would be dangerous for the Law Faculty. They would be so because their rich knowledge and empathy towards knowledge would be so relativist as to allow the affirmation of all rights, without any type of truth above them as a unifying element. This would lead not to an anarchic society, but to a confused, troubled and fearful world, full of cares and anxiety, without support, no anchor, or faith, simply with this image of truth present in everyone and at the same time in nobody. The world would become insular, an archipelago of individuals who would not communicate even though they would have the possibility of direct communications. This, for example, this bottoming of communication between island people, even when they have all the satellites and mirrors in the sky at their disposal day and night; in spite of all this, people no longer understand one another.

Gabriela Blebea Nicolae: I would suggest a relation between truth and dialogue, inspired by the idea of morals. A moral man does not question whether he should steal or not, whether he should commit a sin or not. It is the same thing with the truth; there are obvious truths, for instant it is now light outside and we do not question that. But when we need to have a dialogue it is because we are not sure about a truth which we want to discover. This is our topic here. In the political field we establish some subjects we need to talk about, but what matters most at the present time in Romania is the frame of mind we have when it comes to a real dialogue. We must bring a conversation to a common ground otherwise we would not

have a dialogue. A certain elegancy of aesthetics of Western dialogue can impede this. In Romania, there are two types of public voices: some at the level of the mavericks who impose themselves by yelling, and the ones on the level of those governable, using a *bafflegab* and repeating slogans without authenticity. To have a dialogue we just need to be ourselves, not to impose our truth or to repeat some things. We need to engage in a search for truth.

Emilyia Velikova: It was said that there is a need for a dictionary in order to understand each other. But before a dictionary we need a desire to understand the others. Understanding the other means the ability, but first the desire to want and to try to put you on the side of the other, from the point of view of the other, to judge with his judgment, to appreciate with his appreciation and to have initially this conviction in yourself that he might also be saying the truth. The metaphor of the whole truth can be broken into several different pieces through which everyone can see the truth in different ways. Before we have this pre-conviction that everyone has his own truth, we should try to understand the truth of others.

Another nuance of the possibility of dialogue are the differences first among different people and secondly among different cultures and civilizations. The truth or way in which the truth is seen depends very often on the cultural tradition, which comes from history, especially education as Hu pointed out. The way in which Western people see the world and understand morality is very different from the way of Eastern people. Therefore, in order to understand each other and to have a real dialogue, we should include in our moral law respect for others in their otherness. That is, first to accept that the other is other and secondly, that there is no inequality between points of view. I cannot impose my point of view on others but only try to understand why they see things the way they do, why they think that way, why they judge that way. Only through this respect of others in their otherness, can we enter into real dialogue.

Abelardo Lobato: The dialogue about the truth and morality of institutions is important today. Everyone wants be heard. The world we live in is similar to the one described by the Bible under the name of Babel. In Babel everyone speaks but no one understands. We have to transform this Babel into a place similar to the Coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, when one speaks and the other understands. The dialogue of our days seems to be more like monologues; it was the Papacy of Pope Paul VI, who wrote an Encyclical on the dialogue of colloquy, the Christian revelation and the dialogue between man and God. The human being must represent the Word, which must be spread and which is addressed to the one who listens; if one listens, the Word has value. We must be the listeners, the obedient executors and messengers of the Word. We need this Word as much today as in the past. Hence we need dialogue about the truth. A big question during the Middle Ages: what is truth? *Quid es veritas?*; it was Pilate's

question to Jesus Christ. The problem about morality today is that we have lost our moral sense. There are five external senses. Saint Augustine speaks of others, too, but the moral sense is the one related to our sense of good and evil. People seem now to have lost this sense and try to save themselves by talking about morality. The difficult thing about dialogue is that there has to be a true conversation, a meeting in order to reach unity. Dialogue seems to be taking place today: Parliament seems to be the ideal place for this. Instead of viewing how difficult the dialogue seems to be, how difficult it is to reach a consensus.

One difficulty arises when it concerns a field or topic about which the speaker knows nothing. When one is not cognizant in a certain field, he should not speak. We have many opinions, suggestions, and experiences in our day, but the truth is abandoned by those speaking to the public. We are victims of the mass media, hearing so many slogans or decisions which then appear in the newspapers and on the radio. Though the team dialogue is fashionable today, it is a difficult thing to accomplish. Generally, important issues like euthanasia, abortion, things that go beyond our knowledge are put to the public vote. It was said of the European Union treaty that it was too long, that almost no one has read it, and that it was too difficult. Can it then be put to the public vote? We can see how difficult true dialogue is; we must have accurate rules and conditions. The issues of the dialogue are not the same. Concerning Christianity which has objective accurate doctrines, religion is not put to a vote. Therefore dialogue should not be sought. We must have a criterion in order for the cognitive persons in the field of law, science, philosophy, theology, and politics to be heard. In the political field, decisions should be made taking ethics into consideration, with the human being in the center. That is why it is necessary for the rules to be established in advance so that the dialogue can lead to a solution; otherwise, we return to Babel. If we want to see how dialogue can be useless, it is enough to look at a session of the Italian Parliament, where everyone speaks but no one listens. However, the opposite also exists: if only one speaks and the others just listen, they are not human beings. The Church should have its own truth, but some truths cannot be put up for discussion. So, if we want to have a real dialogue, a colloquy in which we all agree and in which the truth, which is always difficult and which no one knows, except maybe God or Jesus Christ, we must have truth as a fiduciallyly point. Let us look for the truth of things, because this has an impregnable force, Pope John Paul II quoted extensively from St. Thomas of Aquinas: "*Veritas in se ipsa invincibilis est*," "The truth in itself cannot be defeated": eventually truth wins. Nevertheless, we must all search for it together, which is why we need dialogue.

Gabriela Blebea Nicolae: Regarding dialogue with ourselves, we are doing what Aristotle called "deliberation": we deliberate on some actions. But very often we cannot deliberate when it comes to our feelings,

we cannot deliberate over whether we love or we don't; we love God, or we don't love God; whether we love someone or we don't. We can only deliberate on our actions, the consequences of this love. It is important to trust the dialogue in which God was telling him what to do; but love precedes this state of deliberation or guidance. Within religious space every deliberation is preceded by this love of God and, just as in other spaces we must love and have faith in our fellow beings. Good dialogues starting from Plato are those left open; they plant the seed from which the fruit grows; they are maieutics in the Platonic style of giving birth to the truth, and they keep asking questions until the truth comes out.

Isidor Chinez: Regarding religious truth in the public space, the case of Mrs. Adriana Iliescu comes to mind. The parliamentarians had reacted immediately, and a few days later a law was before Parliament. The opinion of a professor, a Catholic priest and a bioethics professor at the Theological Institute, provided one title, "The law for healthy human reproduction". This sounded really bad for we must try to present the truth in an elegant and aesthetic manner. Hence, I reported that is a reaction about which we should be happy, first because the public has something to say in this matter, second they are doing something but, third, that the law was not fair as it was and needed changes but had to be tolerated. According to the principles of morals with regard to tolerance of the law, I can understand that a law must be tolerated, hoping at the same time for a better one. The Church must make its point and does so, but not by marching like Americans in demonstrations which seem a bit violent. The Church does not present the truth this way but provide appropriate and affective strategies.

The religious truth the Church presents without art and without elegance. In order to have a dialogue between the Church and civil society in terms of the truth, the Church needs to present the truth delicately in order to open the door to human sensibility and emotional. It is a door through which truth enters if it is opened almost without being noticed. This is a strategy for presenting the truth. Another aspect of this problem of entering into contract with civil society is presenting the truth with charity. Someone told me during a break of the Italian expression "half of the truth is lying." I do not agree, but without love, truth can kill, just as Jesus Christ said: the letter kills, the spirit gives life. In this sense we should look at the Eastern fathers, who were very giving, appreciative and clement, though there were situations in which they could not say the whole truth. The Church says it all, very directly, but in an elegant manner. I have a deep appreciation for Pope John Paul II, for his manner of doing so. Pope John Paul II and Paul VI did not present truth from a high position, but from reason, using a rational approach. They started out from a dialogue with everyone, and then amplified the knowledge of truth for the community of faith. This is how the church presents truth.

How does civil society react to this? Going back to the law, parliament was in a big hurry so they changed almost nothing. In regard to healthy human reproduction, they changed the years for artificial insemination, so that it would not be possible for women after a certain age; but the problem is that we do not meet directly the human person in the truth. At the political level, there was utilitarianism, applauded by Europe. Finally, meeting and dialogue is something everybody wants, but is the will to work for the benefit of the human being present on both sides? I am sure that the Church places in the center the inestimable value of the human being, but on the side of civil society utilitarianism affects the dialogue. The final consequence is the need to form political personalities. Catholics, the Orthodox and Protestants should be this at least at the level of reason.

Anton Carpinschi: Indeed, the truth within dialogue and the dialogue within truth must be done aesthetically but this does not and should not eliminate the deliberation and sometimes even the intransigency with the strength continuity, and discipline to put it into practice. Elegance is an art, but it does not meant convention, conventionalism or formalism but good common sense, reason, limits, simplicity and, as much as possible, order and clarity in the complex and complicated things we face in our lives. I emphasize elegance, but together with firmness. We often quote from Pope John Paul II. How could we not be moved by his firmness, tenacity and courage when he explains some delicate historical truths that other persons did not have the strength to say a few years ago regarding the mistakes that the Church has made? Pope John Paul II asked God and the victims of these mistakes for forgiveness. This was truth in beauty.

Zbigniew Wendland: Dialogue may not be so difficult but just the contrary. The dialogue is the easiest thing to achieve because man is by nature a dialogical creature. Whenever two or more meet they begin dialogue and exchange their points of view on every topic. It is a most natural feature of man to be dialogical. We can have hope that all matters, including moral and political laws, can be solved on this ground.

Wilhelm Dancă: I would like to stop here concerning the dialogue and its necessary conditions. However, I appreciate the use of the word elegance. Having noted surprise that we talked about the elites, there is a strong desire, here in Romania, to continue to be elite or elegant people. This will remain an ideal, and we need to meet again in order to talk more about this. Certainly, faith tells us that God endowed the human being with great dignity and nobility. Some cultures have emphasized one or another of the fundamental aspects, of the important qualities of the human person. We have said, even during our Congress, that Rome promoted the human person as a citizen, Athens spoke about the human being as an individual, and Jerusalem spoke about the human being as a person. Do we still have persons in the public space? Do we have individuals or perhaps only

citizens? How can we reclaim dignity, nobility and elegance? First, I would like us to refer to social life in Romania, and then extend our discussion to other public spaces as well. Is the human being recognized as treated?

Lucian Farcaş: Years ago, because of the political situation we did not have so many possibilities of relaxation. However, we had numerous stage-plays as a means of entertainment. Plays are one source of dialogue. The actor and the audience have to see each other and communicate. Professional actors would come to help us, and always told us: be careful how you turn, how you stand: always keep direct communication with the audience. Starting from this detail, when I go out into society where our whole public life is a stage, we need the quality of theatrical art. To meet the actors I have to go backstage. Theatre is not played on the stage anymore, but backstage. This is the place where decisions are made; and the biggest and most important game takes place. As for the audience, well probably, some clown comes and entertains them or just gives commercials for some producers. But I no longer find meetings where the person should appear and transmit the message with all the needed qualities.

Valeriu Marius Ciucă: In this respect for *elegantia iuris*, I should say something wrapped in velvet gloves. I think we abuse the notion of dialogue in order to justify something we are doing here or more exactly our potential dialogue. The dialogue has a constructive valence or excellence. It is the basis of the solutions that commonly appear and are adopted by the participants. What we are doing here is communicating our prejudices, or convictions, or maybe mere opinions. And in most cases, this remains tentative, because we are always superficial. We can hear people speaking more and more of a perverted type of neo-sclavagism; one in which having all the rights and assurances of our freedom, we no longer have the strength to enjoy them, because we are under the tyranny of matter and of the moment. Chronos has become merciless with his sons and overwhelming. I will not use the vulgar argument that every moment costs to remain in the *elegantia iuris*, for that is too trivial and reductive. Our superficial effort to keep the dignity of communication with others makes us indulge in this *ersatz* dialogue and communication. I met on the street a philosopher accredited by the whole society, but he told me he was in a hurry when I wanted to discuss a theme with him. Then I met on the street a priest who is the herald of God but he also told me he was in a hurry, "another victim of Chronos!" Then I met someone who works in my legal field but one cannot begin to imagine in what a hurry attorneys are today! In the past only slaves said that they did not have time. Important people did not have the right to pronounce that word; otherwise, they would be beheaded the next day. How is that possible? You are the creator of time, creator of neo-ethic structures; you are the one transmitting a culture in society, a public culture; most of all, as politician, you do not have the right not to have time! You do not have the right to act like a slave who will be

sentenced to death the next day precisely because he didn't meet the only criterion for him, that of time! Considering this, can we speak of dialogue in the present times? Maybe we can speak of a real dialogue in the case of the dialogue between Jesus Christ and his apostles; they all had so much time! Nothing stopped them from reaching a solution in the end.

Wilhelm Dancă: This means that in the public space, people are in a hurry and we have neither individuals anymore, nor citizens, nor persons but just hurried people. This reminds me of a quotation from Dostoievski: in the Inferno, people are always looking at the clock and asking, "What's the time?"

Valeriu Marius Ciucă: I would not say we are in the Inferno, we are different, more superficial, and cannot aspire to the dignity of comparing ourselves, for then we would labour under the illusion of our emancipation. We are too degraded from that perspective, for our flaws are huge. Even admitting them now would be an act of insolence, because everyone knows them. A coordinate of this is superficiality. We encourage this forging of the dialogue.

Hu Yeping: Talking about time reminds me of being in India and seeing many cows walking along the street and even stopping the traffic. That way their home is their kingdom. So, I asked a professor, "Why do you let the cows walk along the street"? His answer: "Cows teach us how to slow down and how to enjoy life." We need to slow down sometimes, but not always. If our house burns, we have to save our house. In Chinese and especially the Confucian traditions, we do not emphasize definition, but rather human contact, for this dialogue is a means to clarify the nature of dialogues. My question is: do we still have our goal, our end in mind: what we want to talk about, what we want to discuss? Therefore, we have to think about the relationship between ends and means, the difficult situation and the problems in our world today.

Regarding politics and truth Aristotle noted that we are political animals who live in a society; in order to live an ordered life, we need political structures. Of what kind must these be in order for life to be better ordered? I would suggest four factors: the first, rule by wise men; second, rule by a group of persons as representatives; third, democracy or majority rule; and fourth, tyranny or dictatorship. He proposed the first two; the third, democracy is a goal for us, but its nature is less clear. This morning it was said that it is not democracy simply that the majority votes, for everything depends on what they vote for. For the Chinese, especially Confucian tradition, in solving ethical problems, the vote of the majority does not count because this sometimes is based on false theories and is not always good. There is another question: what is human nature and what is its orientation? Do we still have the same nature as 2000 years ago? In the political struggle of Confucianism for society, politics and Government, the

main goal is to achieve a harmonious society. No one wants to live in a chaotic situation: we need harmony, unity and goodness, because morality is always directed to something good: good thinking, good acts and good words.

A second point: what is truth? Because our specific community is Christian, mostly we talk about the divine truth or God. If we talk to a Moslem, too Jew and to other religions, do we talk about the same truth, do we understand it in the same way? If we want to talk about the same truth, we have to deepen our way of understanding it. But we are finite beings and have limited ways of understanding truth. The Indian thinker, Swami Vivekananda, said that there is only one truth but the approaches are different. Like light, all the lamps of different shapes, big or small give only one thing: light. So metaphorically speaking, the light is the truth and the lamps are all of us. We understand that truth, and as human beings, we need some guidance to understand it. And what guidance can we receive? Each religion has its own teachings to show us how to reach the truth and how to understand it. Both the listener and the speaker are needed for communication and dialogue. Listening and speaking are important, but after we listen we must reflect; after dialogue we need to contemplate. There is too little contemplation in our lives; we talk but do not listen. In our days we lack real listening. We need to talk but at the same time we need really to listen in order to learn.

Anton Carpinschi: Let us think of the individual, citizen and person as phases of the human being, the individual as the result of processes of individualization. First, we have the collectivity, the community, a multitude of human beings. This develops through the individualization of various individuals, through endowments, selections, through competitiveness in one field or another. In this manner, the group forms, reproduces, and an interpersonal structure is formed. The phase of the individual is within biological space, and is transposed to a social level as well as that of the computer, and of statistics which deals with the dynamic of numbers and individuals. The phase of the citizen is a superior one related to the state. It is superior to the body politic. This is not the proto-politic here in which the individual tries to be as good a citizen as one can within the public space. We must fulfill our duties as citizens, and the state must protect us as citizens. But in speaking of the person, we are already in a different dimension. We are persons as long as we think of God and as long as we live as free creatures of the Creator, the absolute person. We are reflections of that Absolute Person, and our freedoms are relative to the Absolute Person.

Gabriela Blebea-Nicolae: When we want to become a citizen we want to enjoy all the prerogatives citizens of that country enjoy, that is to travel with a passport without needing a visa, to have social assistance, and so on. We are in the statistics as individuals; we have our rights and duties

as citizens of that state. We are on the way to becoming moral persons. But the most important thing is to have a name and be known as an individual.

Emilyia Velikova: To continue this reflection, I would like to take the direction not of Gabriela's citizen but of the person. The human being is not a person simply by the fact that he is born as a human being or created in the image of God, Who is a Personal Being, for this, is the potential rather than the actual person. The paradox of the personal being is that it belongs to the human being by essence but at the same time, must first be developed and confirmed. Here natural and artificial powers are insurmountable which tend to make objective the human being or destroy him as a personal being. The social tendencies that reduce the human being are elements of a big social machine. So, the personal being is in a continuous struggle and requires a continuous effort to maintain oneself as a personal being.

To relate this to the idea of time and being in a hurry, perhaps we do not realize sufficiently that the human being is not only a finite creature, but is also time-limited. As many philosophers say, the only sure thing in our destiny is that death waits for us, we are moving towards death. Or, as Marcel says, we are born with a one-way ticket. Human beings do not appreciate the fact that they do not have infinite time and this is true, especially of our Balkan region. Here we believe ourselves immortal. We say, "Oh, there is so much time! Why hurry?" One can lose so much time waiting for that thing to happen, instead of using that time in order to do something positive, creative and really important. Therefore, I think that we should be in a hurry to develop our personal being. This does not mean that we should always be in a hurry and that we should not take the time to enjoy life, because wise behavior requires occasional patience. According to an Eastern Proverb "I can think, I can hurry, and I can wait." However in speaking of time, I would like to draw attention to this very important fact; our time on this Earth is limited; we should try to give the best of ourselves in this limited time.

Participant: All here spoke eloquently and in a very well informed manner in religious, philosophical, legal, and scientific fields. To use a common language, I would say that mathematicians also studied the concept of truth starting from very early times. The results of mathematical logic are discouraging. In the analyses done by mathematicians, there have been some important phases in the clarification of the concept of truth. They start from some fundamental truths called axioms, which cannot be demonstrated. These are extracted from nature, just as religion starts from certain principles, doctrines, and then, logically, in accordance with Aristotelian logic, we try to find new truths. The concept of truth was completed by the Vienna School of Logic. On the ruins of the Hadsburg Empire, groups of scholars in various fields gathered to influence the science and culture of the twentieth century. Schoelinger mathematized

quantium mechanics. At the time, it was known as an early discipline with many contradictions. Kurt Godel, from the School of Logic, analyzed these logico-mathematical structures from the point of view of their strength and demonstrated that a sentence could be true or false. This is the Aristoteliam logic: *tertium non datum*. The most spectacular achievement concerns formal logical systems, Aristotelian logic or other logics refined by the mathematical logic. Here in Iasi, 85 years ago the academician Moisil was working on the mathematical logic. His name, beside the other scholars and their researches, is a basic point even today for mathematical logics.

In the evolution of mathematical logic, there are formal systems which contain unclear sentences. In other words, no matter what we do in that system with the logical means and axioms we started from, we cannot say if certain sentences are either false or are true either. This was the end of a chapter in mathematical logic but they did not stop. This mathematical analysis of this concept, more precisely of the mathematical logic, has led to the sad conclusion that we cannot get to the basis of truth.

Participant: Dialogue involves a meeting among participants. In order for this meeting to take place, we must meet three conditions: of space, time and opening towards the other. Even if we are in the same space and time together, if we do not open ourselves to the other, everything is useless, and the dialogue cannot take place. It was Christianity which helped us to open towards the other. Jesus Christ's coming into the world helped us succeed in saying not "me" but "you". Jesus Christ taught us how to think of the other by telling us: do not harm your fellow being, love your fellow being, as you love yourselves. The Church must help us discover the other, if we want to achieve the results of dialogue.

Wilhelm Dancă: In these two days of reflection and meditation on the relation between truth and morality, our goal was not to find a solution to all problems. We have established the fact that some problems remain unsolved, and thus we must meet again for another dialogue.

We have seen negative aspects in the public life, both here and in other places, but we have seen that there are positive aspects, too, places where values are manifest, attract and even fascinate. We should do something in order to multiply these initiatives, so that there will be places where value manifests itself, in spite of all the limitations and risks.

EPILOGUE

FOUNDATIONS OF TRUTH AND MORALITY IN PUBLIC LIFE: FROM THE SECULAR TO THE SACRED

GEORGE F. McLEAN

THE CHALLENGE

Perhaps the key problem for morality in the public mind is that, rather generally, it is expressed in negative terms and comes to be understood inversely not as protection against the bad, but as a restriction upon access to the good. It therefore comes to be seen not as the proper exercise of human freedom, but as being "in the way" of human striving. As a result it is put aside or marginalized in various ways. Two of these come immediately to mind on the economic and political dimensions of public life.

In the economic order, morality is reduced to being not a norm for its proper exercise but a means for attaining its goal of profit. Here truth becomes the rationality of economic calculation of means to end or essentially utilitarian. In these terms morality is absorbed into a capitalist system or ideology. Thereby human life is not enabled, but rather enslaved to profit-making and its mechanisms. The time a mother can spend with her newborn infant is strictly rationed; the education of the child is seen as training for competitiveness. As this proceeds all, except what fits the person to be a tool of the machine, is taken away: no matter how well-trained one is one, begins a family without stability of place. Finally, after a lifetime of service to the economy, one may well enter old age without assurance of the resources of the pension toward which one had contributed for decades. The person is not only a slave, but a dispensable one at that.

In the political order the negative reading of morality removes from it the context of reasoned justification by which it is intelligible and able to be directed. It seems not that things are forbidden because they are bad, but rather that they are bad because they are forbidden. As a result morality comes to be seen as arbitrary, voluntaristic and authoritarian. The main effort becomes to legalize all possible choices of behavior, as if not being against the laws enacted by a particular jurisdiction rendered an action not only legal but moral. Hence the great surge in abortions once they were ruled legal by the courts.

The result is a twin fundamentalism. In the religious order many proceed on the basis of faith without reason, for having come to consider that morality lacks all objectivity, the modern mentality came to see it as at best pragmatic and arbitrary, if not a mechanism for exploiting the weak.

Hence, morality could be only arbitrary dictates of the will of God, and understanding what is moral could come only from books of divine revelation, whether Bible or Koran. Correspondingly, the infusion of human reason would seem only to dilute that message of the divine will. Indeed, for many, human nature and hence reason is fallen and corrupted; therefore it must sedulously be kept away from any effort to discover and pursue the will of God in our behalf.

In the political order a parallel mechanism takes over. Morality is seen as a matter of popular will operating without relation to the truth, and via this to the good and to natural law. Morality becomes only what can attract majority consent, which one comes to find is able to be generated by preponderant financing. Morality thus becomes not even a political effect of the human will, but a function of the dynamic of the economic system.

What then is the role of truth for morality? The above manifests that: it does indeed have an essential role. But in order that this be exercised, it is necessary that the related thinking be able to be exercised in terms that are not only negative and enslave us to the machine, whether of economic materialism or political voluntarism. Instead it must be positive and open to the real and full good, and thereby able to restore to the economic and political order their proper and full, even religious, significance. For this, several dimensions of truth are needed: the truth of being or metaphysical truth and the truth for man, that is, objective truth and the truth of our rightly oriented human subjectivity.

METAPHYSICAL TRUTH

Metaphysical truth concerns being, and is articulated in terms of being as that which is. While some would avoid this as being cold and abstract, the opposite is true. For what the mind does in generating this wisdom is to open its dimensions: nothing can be left out of its purview; hence, to work in metaphysical terms requires developing an intensively open mind. Whereas some would get an open society negatively by appealing to human fallibility and hence abstain from assertions, metaphysics does the opposite. It opens to the full range of contrary and contrasting types of realities. Moreover, it plunges in depth to existence as the heart of being, that is, to that which is act and activates all that is: Existence is the dynamic center of all.

Hence we should begin by asking not what being is, although we shall do this, but with the question of who being is. Being is primarily God Himself, being itself which, as Parmenides immediately noted, must be one, unchanging and eternal. Secondly, being is all else which can be only by standing in a relation of participation or sharing in the One, that is to God. Plato expressed this by the terms *mimesis* or image. When the Christian Fathers adapted this to understanding the effect of God's creation to be precisely the causing of the very existence or being of creatures, then the full power of the gospel message could be newly grasped. Man was indeed

the image of God and morally must always rise to this dignity in acting and being acted upon.

What then is the metaphysical truth about man? It is, first, that he is one, that is, to be undivided with, and un-reducible to, nonbeing. Heidegger suggested it well: man, especially as *Dasein* or conscious being is an eruption of being into time – we are and will not be denied. This must be the bottom line of any moral consideration.

Second, the metaphysical truth about man is that, as being, he is not only one but true. That is that man is not opaque, senseless or absurd as Sartre held, but open, indeed, is openness to intellect. This is echoed in the call for transparency in all dimensions of public life. Indeed, it is this which makes life to be public.

This has a number of other important implications for our topic of truth and morality in public life. First, life makes sense to the intellect. And if the divine is out of proportion to the human and thus never fully exhausted by human knowledge, this is due not to opacity on the part of God, but to the limits of the human. Human life is, however, proportionate to the human mind and hence must not be reduced to the economic calculi of profit or the political calculi of power and their related techniques and technologies. Rather as human affairs these must be dignified by a moral standard corresponding to the characteristics of God, rather than, as is commonly done, of matter. Specifically this is the relation of man and all creation to God as the origin, standard and goal.

This, in turn, has importance for the manner of our thinking. Since the beginning of modern times in order to assert total control, thought has taken an analytic turn. All is reduced to its minimum particles or atoms, seen simply as contrasting (or colliding) one with another: the basis of life becomes Hobbesian violence and its containment. When all is understood in terms reduced to the least common denominator, these minimal elements are then combined according to chaos theory for the laws of physical and chemistry.

Metaphysical truth contrasts to this in being synthetic, rather than analytic. It sees all in terms of the One from which all comes, in which all is related, and toward which all is directed. Such thinking is not unnatural. On the contrary, one is born and raised in the unity of a family and community. Unfortunately the educational process of one who would succeed in economic or political terms takes one out of this unity and trains – brainwashes – one to think only analytically. In these terms the morality of the public life can only be utilitarian; all and everyone becomes a means for profit and power. Morality done in these terms becomes the radically immoral reduction and abuse of the human person who in truth is the image of God.

Seen metaphysically, the opposite is true. Human persons are cast in an unsettled but dynamic stance in which morality is what can be seen to promote being and life as leading to the good through and through, i.e., to perfection, full realization or full fulfillment. The immoral seen as negating

or reducing this being is nihilism, seen as negating life and thus a culture of death.

OBJECTIVE TRUTH

Since Plato, Western thought has taken truth in an objective sense, i.e. conformity of the mind to being, or to that which is. This is an essential lesson for human hubris for it reflects the fact that man is not absolute and therefore that truth cannot be at the whimsy or disposition of our will. Rather we are limited beings in a world of great power and majesty. Hence, in order to act morally as really pursuing true goods, the mind needs to correspond to what is. For man, then, truth must be objective lest our actions be, not good as creative, but bad as destructive.

There are two examples of this in public life which I would like to cite. Again one is in the economic, the other in the political order. The first is the issue of justice especially in relation to the economic base of one's life. The work of Joseph Kaulemu of Zimbabwe, *The Struggles after the Struggle*, redescribes their dilemma. The colonials wanted to seize the land and exploit it. In doing this they set up a legal structure which not only dispossessed the native inhabitants but refused them the education they would need in order ever to regain possession of it. At the time of independence, in order to pursue peace, it was agreed not to redress this injustice by land distribution. Yet this very objective injustice or untruth made it impossible to forge a lasting peace, and the situation has followed a devolving spiral ever since, for, without proportionate sharing in the land, real fulfillment, that is the realization of the well-being of population, is impossible.

A parallel example can be cited in the political order. Everywhere it would seem, corruption is a major problem. It is not only an unjust (untrue) enrichment, but an abusive twisting of the social structure of human cooperation and service into a means of exploitation and thereby the suppression of active and responsible human cooperation.

Consequently, in order not to subject the good and not to corrupt morality, but rather to promote human progress, the objective patterns of untruth, injustice and corruption which everywhere are culturally embedding must be not just willed away, but corrected objectively, that is, according to the reality which is outside of, or over against (ob-ject) ourselves as agents.

SUBJECTIVITY AND TRUTH

Yet it must be noted that the problem is not only one of objective truth and its structures, i.e., of what is given, but also the subjective reality of our mind and heart whereby we determine what we will do with the objective reality. This, above all, is the key to moral life; it is where truth meets goodness. For it would be radically insufficient to think of being as

simply intelligible or true, as manifesting itself to an inert and uninterested mind or soul. On the contrary, as being manifests itself to a limited soul, by that very fact it promises to perfect and fulfill it in all its hopes and desires. It is that promise which exerts an attractive force on the human person to the extent of the power of the being that it is.

This precisely is being as good, and it is this dynamic attraction of the good that is the field, indeed the very heart, of morality. This attraction of the good is manifest through desire when sought, and happiness when achieved. It is also temptation when sought by evil means or for evil ends.

This is the field of truth and goodness, of truth and morality. It is a dynamic creative field, in which we are placed by creation. Were it not for our failure to live up to its promise it would be a Garden of Paradise. But, of course, we have failed and find ourselves in the midst of a life or death struggle to attempt to realize the good in the midst of temptations of evil so strong that they ricochets back even to truth. This attempts to turn one from justice to injustice and from truth to falsehood, from good to evil. We must then look at this struggle to live in the world in a way that is moral.

In crossing this divide from the objective to that of subjectivity we are on a delicate and dangerous journey. In order to construct a new and greater European or global context for all of humankind we must recognize that it is not an object already there – a given – but a construct of human ingenuity and generosity. The same must be true of the dialogue of cultures required for a global world. Without ignoring the essential economic and political work required, none of this work would ever be begun without extraordinary vision and will, mind and heart, on the part of whole peoples.

Yet this attention to subjectivity must not absorb one into a solipsistic subjectivism wherein one losses touch with the reality of the other. Nor must the desire to be relevant becomes a relativism whereby once again we lose touch with the good we seek for the other, the community and the global whole, i.e., with anything beyond the present set of relations.

Attention to subjectivity has roots in the Eastern traditions, e.g., of the Vedas and the Gita or of Shankara and the Ramanayana and in the West, e.g., in the thought of St. Augustine. For more modern roots, most turn to René Descartes and the foundation of his metaphysics upon the *ego cogitans*. But Gabriel Marcel rightly notes that while this was a subject Descartes saw, it still as an epistemological object and source of objective knowledge. Where subjectivity would appear to have been definitively advanced in modern thought was with Kant who saw the categories of the mind and the structures of reality to be not so much objectively given as shaped or informed by the mind's constructive effort in its reception at the different levels of sense and intellect. The world was not simply given as object, but was also constructed by the subject. It was not yet the time to carry out the implications of this position for the work of different minds working in very different geographical and social circumstances, but the road to this had been opened.

In the 20th century there arose a number of controlled approaches to this interior conscious life of the subject. This was found in the writings of a Pascal after Descartes and a Kierkegaard after Kant and Hegel, but they did not develop the technical apparatus to establish and defend this dimension of human life in the face of modern rationalism, where only the clear and distinct, the universal and the necessary, or the empirical could survive.

In fact it could be said that only in sounding the limits of objectivity was the mind catapulted into the realm of subjectivity. Thus, Wittgenstein's classic effort in his early *Tractatus logico philosophicus* reduced the work of the mind simply to picturing the objective terrain before one. As this could not attend to the working of the mind itself in relating the picture to the external world, subjectivity was relegated to the margins and rendered 'unutterable'. Later, in teaching children, he came to recognize the role of human intentionality to be not only inevitable but central. In his later *Philosophical Investigations*, this came to play the central role.

Similarly Edmund Husserl, when he attempted to find solid foundations for mathematics, even simple arithmetic, was forced to recognize the interior work of the mind not merely as a Freudian psychological dynamic, but as a truly different manner of being. He had been introduced to this by Franz Brentano who, in turn, drew it from his long Catholic tradition stretching back to Aristotle.

Things moved rapidly thereafter. Husserl's successor, Martin Heidegger, evolved this recognition of intentionality to a whole theory of truth and being in terms of the conscious human being (*Dasein*) in his *Being and Time*. In turn, Heidegger's student, Karl Rahner, articulated a theology in these terms, classically in his *Spirit in the World*, and in the Second Vatican Council, especially in its document *The Church in the World*. Thus the unique reality and contribution of subjectivity came to be seen and lived as being and life is unveiled or emerges in human consciousness, as it operates in time or history.

This union of subjectivity noted in Husserl with objective truth, and especially with the metaphysical truth that opens to the divine, suggests a powerful vision for the future, namely, that of the human intellect in its dynamic search for absolute divine truth and goodness, or love. Each person and people, and each in their own way, are attuned to the divine and resonate thereto when it encounters an image thereof. Each is thus inevitably guided thereto. This takes deep confidence, indeed deep faith.

For public life this is the essential. It takes great faith today to trust that God's active providence will draw the people as a whole in their complex decision making to himself. This is true of all religions as they are challenged to guide their people through contemporary changes. Will they have that confidence?

The intensive recent work in hermeneutics, notably in the line of H.G. Gadamer, provides a structured manner of understanding this

relationship. With his predecessor, Martin Heidegger, he sees being as emerging into time via the human person, now seen as family, neighborhood and people. This is done through the exercise of their creative freedom, whereby they shape their cultural tradition by setting a pattern of values or preferences and of virtues as the developed competencies or strengths to pursue these values in a stable manner. Over time this is handed down not as history which includes all that happened, but as culture or what is life giving and provides a way of cultivating the soul (culture). For Gadamer culture as the pattern of values and virtues of a people is then the ultimate community of human striving. Indeed, he would claim that in the end we might better say, not that it belongs to us, but that as intentional beings we belong to it.

Iqbal would note, however, that philosophy remains too abstract and sees truth too much at a distance. Religion in contrast is close and personal.

> The aspiration of religion soars higher than that of philosophy. Philosophy is an intellectual view of things; and as such, does not care to go beyond a concept which can reduce all the rich variety of experience to a system. It sees Reality from a distance as it were. Religion seeks a closer contact with Reality. The one is theory; the other is living experiences, association, intimacy. In order to achieve this intimacy thought must rise higher than itself, and find its fulfillment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer – one of the last words on the lips of the Prophet of Islam[1].
>
> Metaphysics is displaced by psychology, and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the ultimate reality. It is here that religion becomes a matter of personal assimilation of life and power; and the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness[2].

In religion we are engaged by the Holy Spirit who, as God, always holds the initiative. Our life as we face its many challenges is a dialogical interchange in which the Spirit inspires and energizes, while we respond. Through this interchange a cultural tradition is formed.

Hence, Samuel P. Huntington in his *Clash of Civilizations and the Making of a New World Order* noted that each civilization is based in a

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[1] Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religions*, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy and Institute of Islamic Culture, 1984), 143.

[2] *Ibid.*, 48-49.

great religion, while each great religion founds its corresponding civilization. And we find in human life a series of paradigmatic personalities according to which the cultures of the peoples of the world are shaped: a Jesus or Buddha, a Mohammed or Confucius. In consequence, John Paul II said often that the full truth of man was to be found in Christ, and John XXIII convoked the second Vatican Council with the expressed purpose of restoring the face of humankind in the image of Christ.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy
Washington DC, USA

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THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH
IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life.* Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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