Religion and Culture in the Process of Global Change: Portuguese Perspectives

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Table of Contents

Introduction

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The Portuguese situation and reality, especially where trajectories of modern believing are concerned, would seem to embody today what Charles Taylor has stated in regard way with regard to contem-porary western societies:

> In many parts of the Western world, churches are passing from the status of actual or at least historical establishment, as the default church of the majority, to a condition more like fragments of a diaspora. And in this way, they join the condition of Christians in many parts of the non-Western world where they have never been anything but a minority.[1]

Set within a widespread social process of "Decatholicization," Catholicism in Portugal is characterised by a strong cultural presence of Catholic institutions in society as a whole. This is particularly true of the presence of Catholic initiatives in the area of socialisation and in the contexts of greater social vulnerability, as well as in relation to the capacity for ritual-symbolic accompaniment in both individual and family life cycles. The continuing existence of a strong cultural presence and a limited experience of religious pluralism are conditions which come close to making of the Catholic Church in Portugal a "public service" of religion, almost what Grace Davie has called "vicarious religion" – a limited group of people keeping the practice going "for the others," thereby keeping alive a memory available for use in different situations. Denominational pluralism is largely concentrated in the two dimensions of the country most affected by both inward and

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[1] Charles Taylor, "The Church speaks to whom?," in Charles Taylor, José Casanova and George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People. Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), p. 23.

outward mobility, namely those who declare that they do not practise any form of religion and the internal multiplication of various forms of practising Catholicism itself.

Thus, in Portugal too, something similar to the believing diaspora referred to by Charles Taylor is taking place. In the picture of Portuguese modernity we are also encountering a certain fragmentation of this Catholic reference and, above all, of its spiritual and religious hegemony. This fragmentation, which on the one hand does indeed imply the erosion of the status of the Church of the majority *by default*, has, on the other hand, led to a dissemination of religious and Christian references in areas with which they would formerly have been less associated. Thus, there has come about a believing diaspora and, together with it, a spiritual diaspora. We are not witnessing the extinction of faith or of religion, but rather its survival in a more discreet way and, above all, its transfer to new addresses. All this would seem to be a new opportunity, opened by this "secular age," for the creativity of faith, spirituality and religious communities.

Hence, Portuguese society finds itself between its inheritance of a strong Catholic referential or identity and the contemporary pluralization of believing identities. This referential persists, even though subject to successive reformulations. The pluralization is clearly marked, even within the Catholic community itself. One becomes aware of a panorama of different forms of belonging which are socially visible but often invisible in the logic, the pattern and planning of the pastoral activity of Catholic institutions. To the extent to which there is no strategy for recognising these differences, some borderline forms of Catholicism could well accelerate a process of withdrawal. The ability to act pastorally thus depends on the ability to cope with the new articulations between the individual and the collective or ecclesial poles of the Christian faith. In the context of the appreciation of singularity, experience and autonomy, communities become poles of reference. To identify oneself "with reference to" means, on the one hand, to retain autonomy in the position one adopts and on the other to express a believing experience in a context of communitarian "detotalisation." This new situation is a challenge to theological languages.

Hence, one can say that Portuguese Catholicism is being practised today in the space between *the whole and the remnant.* Catholicism is

learning to rid itself of the idea that it still coincides with the whole of Portuguese society. As Taylor pointed out, it is growing accustomed to being a social and cultural minority, even if the majority of the population of Portugal still acknowledges itself as Catholic. In addition, as it looks at itself it increasingly sees itself as a body in which there coexist various and highly individualised forms of being Christian today. Nevertheless, the minority's consciousness of the situation need not yield place to a sectarian type of believing psychology. On the contrary, there are other ways of living as a minority in this "secular age." On a number of occasions, Benedict XVI, referring undoubtedly to the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, observed that Christians in the West should look upon themselves as a "creative minority." By following this path, Christianity perceives that it has returned to the secularity that was characteristic of its own roots, since it was born as a minority, and a creative minority at that. With the concept of a remnant, we wish to indicate precisely this: not the depressing sensation of an ecclesial withdrawal which would turn this remnant into a closed and isolated community, but a new condition of the Christian faith to be embraced without complexes of any kind. To recognise oneself as a creative remnant would seem to be the believing way of responding to the tremendous challenges represented by secular modernity. This rejects both the illusion of denying them and the temptation of declaring them to be anathema.

The reconfigurations of the believing pathways and their diasporas constitute the nucleus of this volume. An attempt is made here to reflect on the changes to which the believing experience is subjected today and to do so beginning from the Portuguese situation and reality. The pluralization of believing identities and of the various spiritual pathways is here interpreted in the light of the suggestive systematisation of the disjunctions between the Church and the world in the current "secular age" proposed by Taylor[2]. Against the background of Portu-

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[2] Gaps between: 1. Seekers vs Dwellers; 2. a modern sense of personal responsibility vs obedience due to Church institutions; 3. Historical or existential understanding of ethical and moral praxis vs an unchanging and universal morality built on natural law; 4. Completeness of Christian spirituality vs openness to other enriching spiritual experiences. See Charles Taylor, José Casanova, George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People.*

guese reality, these disjunctions are here reflected on as between the *whole* and the *remnant* and between *believing* and *belonging.* The structure of this volume in fact reflects this perspective:

Part One: The Whole and the Remnant

This pair of words is examined here, endeavouring to study in depth what it is that in our own day one can understand as a remnant in religious terms: a remnant of faith, an ecclesial remnant. The bases of Christianity (biblical, historical and theological) are studied here with a view to validating this category of remnant. Moving beyond a dialectical view of 'the whole and the remnant' proves to be decisive not only in order to interpret the situation of Christians in Portugal today, but also with a view to discovering its new place in this new context.

Part Two: Believing and Belonging

The rearrangement of the dynamics of ecclesial belonging are here viewed in social terms and reflected on in theological terms. The increased fluidity and plasticity of present-day patterns of believing is also apparent in a certain disjunction between believing and belonging. An attempt is made, therefore, to identify clearly the outlines of this disjunction and its reconfigurations in contemporary Portuguese society. This situation makes it necessary for theology to reflect on the development of forms which make it possible for these multiple and fragmented pathways to be welcomed ecclesially.

Part Three: New Spiritual Landscapes

In our own day, art is a place where a remnant of the sacred survives. For this reason, it is quite natural for this part to reflect on and to echo the current pluralization of spiritual ways and expressions. This makes it possible to learn something about the spiritual landscape of contemporary Portugal. In this third and last part, some Portuguese artistic expressions are reflected upon in order to see how they make apparent both the disjunctions of this "secular age" and the diversi-fication of spiritual concerns and expressions.

Disjunctions in a Secular Age (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012).

Part One
The Whole and the Remnant

1.

What Are We Talking About When We Are Talking About The Remnant?

José Tolentino Mendonça

In a literature that is as copious as it is heterogeneous, there can be no doubt as to how the question of religion is viewed in today's world. Its historic physiognomy and its more recognizable categories appear to be filled with considerable turbulence. The confessional area having become relativized, religion becomes an attractive open space for a wide-ranging scientific and cultural production in an apparently inexhaustible phenomenon of mediatisation, in which everyone has something to say whether they be sociologists, anthropologists, political theorists, philosophers, historians … At the same time, expressions which, when applied to religion, would have seemed utterly strange to the ears of people in earlier centuries, such as "restriction of fields,"[1] "reconfiguretion,"[2] "displacement for the intimate sphere,"[3] "change in social role"[4] "implicit religion,"[5] now speak volumes about the epochal process in which we find ourselves. This is a process which is clearly going to continue for a very long time, and which is not merely external in relation to religions. Even within, in the endogenous perception of its identity and practices, there has

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[1] T. Asad, *Formations of Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 21.

[2] D. Hervieu-Léger and F. Champion, *Vers un nouveau christianisme? Introduction à la sociologie du christianisme occidental* (Paris: Cerf, 1986), p. 277.

[3] M. Gauchet, "Ce que nous avons perdu avec la religion," *Revue du MAUSS*, vol. 22, 2 (2003), p. 314.

[4] R. Debray and M. Gauchet, "Du religieux, de sa permanence et de la possibilité d'en sortir. Un échange," *Le Débat*, vol. 127, 3 (2003), p. 6.

[5] See A. Nesti, P. Giannoni and S. Dianich, *La religione implicita. Sociologi e teologi a confronti* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1994).

been an equivalent reverberation.[6] To express the internal shock to the religious, Danièle Hervieu-Léger has resort to the expression "religion on the move,"[7] understanding it as the complex and diversified process of autorecomposition which is taking place in the universe of the religions (particularly in the Western Christian religious universe)

It is a climate dominated by a certain hesitation even in terminology. For example, the prefix 'post-' is widely and, in most cases, casually used to speak of post-religious, post-Christian societies, etc. There is even room for more extreme cases such as those who declare "one of these days it will be necessary for us to dispose of this fallacious term 'religion'."[8] In a hilarious scene in a Pedro Almodovar film ("La flor de mi secreto" – 1995), a writer of thrillers who was going through a phase of creative turbulence says: "It is not easy to dispose of a dead body." In the debate between Religion and Modernity, it is exactly this difficulty or, to be more precise, this radical impossibility of one pole excluding the other, that has been one of the most persistent signs, and perhaps even the greatest indicator of the future. And this even though, as Jean Séguy has written, not all the theories of secularization appear to have an adequate realization of this.[9]

The Turbulent Morphology of the World

Curiously enough, the expression "disenchantment of the world" (*entzauberung der welt*), coined by Max Weber as one of the keys to

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[6] Speaking of the arduous but necessary task of the theologian in the present context, John Milbank has written: "Yet today it can feel as if it is the theologian alone (as in another cultural sphere the artist, or the poet) who must perform this task of redeeming estrangement; the theologian alone who must perpetuate that original making strange which was the divine assumption of human flesh, not to confirm it as it was, but to show it again as it surprisingly is." J. Milbank, *The word made strange. Theology, Language, Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 1.

[7] See D. Hervieu-Léger, *Le pèlerin et le converti: la religion en mouvement* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999).

[8] The phrase was used by Régis Debray. R. Debray and M. Gauchet, "Du religieux, de sa permanence et de la possibilité d'en sortir. Un échange," p. 4.

[9] See J. Séguy, "Religion, modernité, sécularisation," *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, vol. 61 (1986), p. 184.

perceiving the destiny of the West, has for a long time fascinated other thinkers, though not without reservations on their part.[10] Weber accompanies his use of the expression with the adjective "growing" (*zunehmend*): the "disenchantment of the world" is something that is growing, something that is going on now, in a process with different intensities but completely irreversible. It represents the dismantling of the gnoseological regime linked to the magical and the mythical, and can be explained as follows: when magic ceases to have a technique of effective salvation in history, it is then that we find ourselves more and more in the disenchanted world, that is in a world where magic has become hermeneutically inactive. In *Weber's* opinion, the historic *motors* for overcoming the magic state were prophecy and science. And he declares: "The great historico-religious process of the disenchantment of the world began with the prophecies of ancient Judaism, in association with the scientific thinking of the Greeks."[11] Hence, there is a first disenchantment of the world which occurs through religion itself (which arranges and supplants the sacred in its wild state from magic) and another which takes place through the development and triumph of a scientific type of rationality.

Marcel Gauchet makes use of the syntagma "disenchantment of the world" for an impressive journey through the territory of modernity and sets it up as a kind of theoretical operator, redefining its contours more precisely. His political history of religion was in fact published in 1985 with precisely this title[12] (*"Le désenchantement du monde"*). In it, the "disenchantment" appears not only in association with the twilight of the magic mentality, in the strict Weberian sense, but also in association with what the author designates as "the emptying out of the reign of the invisible,"[13] in which he also includes religion.

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[10] Referring explicitly to the "disenchantment of the world," Paul Ricoeur, for example, felt it necessary to resist the darkening effect created by the great Weberian categories. See P. Ricoeur, *L'ideologie et l'utopie* (Paris: Seuil, 1997).

[11] M. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* I (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), pp. 94-95.

[12] M. Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

[13] Ibid., p. 10.

Gauchet's aim is not to proclaim the end of religion, but to describe the radical transformations in man's relationship with religions that are taking place in today's world. In his work, two fundamental theses are interwoven: the first of these is that, to the degree that modern Western societies have become predominantly political, in other words marked by the division between the authority wielding the power and the social body, they have also come to be regarded as societies which "have already given up religion." In fact, over time, religion (and Gauchet focuses his reflections primarily on the development of Christianity in the West) has been gradually losing its structuring role in the organization of societies at the level of mental outlooks as well as at the social and material level.

However, and this is his second thesis, it is clear that as societies become independent of the religious orbit, they do not cease to be marked by a religious outlook which always reappears with different typologies. Even though the politics of religion have been evaporating, an "inalienable subjective substratum of the religious phenomenon" remains unchanged, conceivably not in a traditional way and "in a re-cognised dogmatic content," but basically "as a personal experience."[14] In addition to this, Gauchet attributes a special role to Christianity which makes it "a religion for departing from religion." By establishing a lack of continuity with what Jaspers defined as "the axial epoch,"[15] Christianity "provided the decisive basis for the dynamic of earthly independence from which, basically, is derived the originality of the West.… Christianity engendered this world which contests it or which can move away from it."[16] Thus we see how the debate becomes more and more complex.

Clearly, Gauchet's thesis provoked and continues to provoke countless questions, and there were very sharp reactions and

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[14] M. Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde*, p. 393.

[15] A movement which occurred in the first millennium before Christ, when there developed more or less everywhere (in Palestine, in Greece, in India, in China, in Persia …) a new representation of the divine conceived of as radically transcendent. Cf. K. Jaspers, *Origine et sens de l'histoire* (Paris: Plon, 1954).

[16] M. Gauchet, *Un monde désenchanté?* (Paris: Les Éditions de l'Atelier, 2004), p. 144.

resistance[17] in both the French- and English-speaking theological worlds. Even Charles Taylor, in the preface to the American edition of "Le désenchantement du monde," criticized what seemed to him in Gauchet a reduction from the religious to the cultural. And he wrote: "But can the new departures in faith, of Buddha, of Jesus, or for that matter of St Francis or St Teresa, be understood simply in terms of the hunger for meaning? … A purely cultural account of religion would be like Hamlet without the Prince."[18] Nevertheless, unanimity appears to have been reached with Taylor's final comment: "No one interested in clarifying our thought about religion and the secular can afford to ignore this remarkable and original book."

Remnants of Religion

An unusual category appears in Gauchet's work which, in my opinion, has still not been given the attention it warrants, namely the idea of the Remnant. At first sight, it may seem to be no more than a sociological indicator describing the erosion of religious practice in Western societies, or a statistical *datum* which can be taken more or less as consensual, both outside and within the Churches.[19]

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[17] A wide-ranging and useful bibliography is to be found in D. Roussel, "Deux lectures théologiques du désenchantement du monde: Jean Richard et Pierre Gisel," in F. Nault (ed.), *Religion, Modernité et Démocratie en dialogue avec Marcel Gauchet* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2008), pp. 147-166.

[18] C. Taylor, "Foreword," in M. Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World. A Political History of Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. xiv-xv.

[19] In a historic debate with the philosopher Paolo Flores d'Arcais, which took place in the year 2000 in a theatre in Rome, the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger began by characterizing the present moment as a "crisis of religiosity" and asked: "Why is it that, today, this synthesis (between reason, faith and life) is no longer convincing? Why is it that, today, on the contrary, opinions arise that are contradictory and even reciprocally exclusive of rationality and Christianity? What has changed in rationality? What is it that has changed in Christianity?" J. Ratzinger and P.F. D'Arcais, *Existe Deus? Um confronto sobre verdade, fé e ateísmo* (Lisboa: Pedra Angular, 2000), p. 31.

The expression appears, at first in the singular, in "Le désenchantement du monde." In the course of expounding the dialectic between the decline of religion as a social function and its persistence at the personal level, the author speaks of "a conceivably inalienable remnant (or residue)."[20] But it is above all the plural form which becomes an expression which is particularly expressive of his thinking, even though the author chooses at once to list its uses as if taking the way it is used for granted. Marcel Gauchet describes here three "Remnants of Religion"[21] which, in his opinion, continue to function, either explicitly or implicitly, as a structural substratum of experience:

- *The experience of the* nondifferentiated

The dual pattern of the "I/Thou" relationship does not, of itself, produce faith, nor does it prolong the sacred, but it is the pattern which serves to support religious experience and *which was thematised most by it. The truth is that this pattern continues to be absolutely vital for us, in the relationship with ourselves and in our way-of-being-in-the-world. The experience we have of reality is that it is unattainable and always moves us on to another* reality. Our knowledge is always a part of the whole that it is possible to know. An elementary deduction from our contact with the real is the separation between what our eyes see and what is hidden from us, between the appearance and the truth, the perceptible and the intelligible, the immanent and the transcendent. Reality, both internal and external, unfolds over a multiplicity of planes, through a network of distinct objects, an accumulation of concrete differences. The need felt by human thought itself is to seek, beyond this, a unity and continuity defined by Gauchet as *nondifferentiated*.

- *The aesthetic experience*

And in the same way, we can say that the way we inhabit the real is not simply a neutral means of perceiving data. It is marked (and at times redeemed) by the virtuality of an aesthetic experience. For Marcel Gauchet, our capacity for emotion when confronted by the immense spectacle of things springs, in a fundamental and obscure way, from having been inscribed in our being, and it is thanks to this that we communicate with what, for millennia, was the sense of the sacred.

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[20] M. Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde*, p. 11.

[21] M. Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde*, p. 395.

This, which can undoubtedly provoke an interminable debate, is, for him, synthesized in a luminal way: "art – Gauchet wrote –, in the specific sense in which we moderns understand it, is the continuation of the sacred by other means."[22] And to demonstrate this kind of inherent *vestigia dei* he even has recourse to religious terminology in order to describe what is at stake in aesthetic experience: "it is the fracturing proximity of the invisible in the midst of the visible."[23]

It is certain that today the capturing of the real in the imagination has in effect turned into an end in itself what was, in fact, no more than a means in the context of a religious understanding of the world. There thus comes about an autonomous activity of exploring the perceptible in a whole range of registers and modulations. But we can still see the notes of an earlier reverberation, precisely in this never-ending attempt to splinter the screen of the surface, in deducing an inner transcendence which survives over and above appearances, in the unceasing displaying of the world as other than oneself.

- *The experience of the problem that we are for ourselves*

If there is one thing that expresses the awareness we are gaining of ourselves, it is that we constitute, above all for ourselves, an enigmatic object of thought. We are a question which comes before the answers that existentially (and historically) we actually find. Gauchet himself declares that: "we pay for the disappearance of religion with the difficulty of being ourselves."[24] In his opinion, we are now much more exposed to trepidation and fragility. Our societies have become psychically exhausting for individuals, and there would seem to be a lack of support for the difficult eternal questions which appear with increasing frequency: "Why me?"; "What to make of my life when I am alone in deciding?"; "Shall I in fact come to be like others?"; "Why has this – illness, accident, desertion – happened to me?"; "What is the point of living if we are destined to disappear without leaving a trace, as if, in others' eyes, we had never lived?."

It is up to each one to work out his or her own answers, conceivably in a greater ontological solitude than was the case in other periods in

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[22] Ibid., p. 400.

[23] Ibid., p. 399.

[24] M. Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde*, p. 406.

history. And, from this point of view, our contemporary culture balances between the 'disappearance in the mass' and the narcissistic rehabilitation, the exaggerated cult of the ego and the various (and often obscure) forms of evaporation of the self. Thus, what we perceive in this human pain is a remnant of religion which is never completely expiated, the pain of the paradoxical condition of being.

But Was Religion Not Always a Remnant?

In a curious essay on the future of Christianity, Marcel Gauchet recognized that the fracture that Modernity has inscribed in the religious phenomenon is certainly not a completely new problem. The world/transcendent, secular/spiritual, individual/institutional dialectic offers "a long history which is intermingled with that of Western Christianity itself."[25] But when it comes to citing examples, he does not go beyond the 11th century. Moreover, one of the most persistent criticisms of Gauchet's work from the theological point of view was precisely that he had failed to provide a more complete dialogue with the Christian[26] and biblical tradition. It was for this reason, too, that it seemed important to us to begin the present study at this point.

It is not the first time that the Jewish and Christian religions have been contrasted with the category of the Remnant. And better still, the question that needs to be asked, and that we do not wish to shirk, is whether at any time this has in fact ceased to be the case.

Fundamentally, where the religious is concerned, the great crisis of Modernity places us before a crisis of paradigms. One such paradigm that we try not to get rid of is the one which, in the Jewish and Christian tradition, makes the frontiers of the religious coincide with those of the nation (the Mosaic and Davidic ideal) or of the empire (the ideal of Constantine and then of Christianity in its various regimes). This is a model which reaches for and gives a privileged place to homogeneity. But in the history of the biblical tradition, in the Jewish as well as in the Christian canon, this is very far from being the only paradigm for the construction of religious experience in history. What Marcel Gauchet says about contemporaneity can also be said about biblical territory in

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[25] M. Gauchet, *Un monde désenchanté?*, p. 232.

[26] See, for example, Paul Valadier's position as presented in M. Gauchet, *Un monde désenchanté?*, pp. 46-47.

its key moments: Religion was always understood as Remnants of Religion.

The Remnant Constitutes a Theologically Major Topic

If there was one topic in particular which fascinated exegetes and historians of religion throughout the 20th century it was, surprisingly, that of the Remnant. To say the least, this is curious since, up to that time, this particular topic, though present, was never regarded as much more than marginal. The accepted idea today that the question of the Remnant constitutes a theologically major topic[27] denotes, in fact, a change in outlook, both hermeneutically and from the point of view of civilisation, a change which, to a considerable extent, has yet to be explained. What reasons can be suggested for this turn-around? We can begin by suggesting three, and allowing others to emerge as we go along:

1) One very general, but absolutely relevant reason, arises out of the fact that the 20th century represented a real 'golden century' in the field of biblical investigation. And this was true not only as regards the topic of the Remnant. It also proved possible to recover and reconsider many other similar topics in from investigative contexts.

2) Another reason, which may well be the most fundamental, is related to the cartography of the topic in itself. The Remnant is a sufficiently enigmatic, transversal and wide-ranging concept to interest us, ranging as it does from the intricate history of its formation to the plasticity which it displays over time in a process which bears witness both to its persistence, but at the same time to a continual (and not always foreseeable) reinvention. The theological prominence which it came to have in both the Hebrew and the Christian Bible is related to the fact that it allows us to think of tensions which might seem irresolvable but which, at the same time, constitute nothing less than the essence of the biblical debate in both Testaments. We are faced with fundamental questions such as: if Israel is God's Chosen People, how can one explain the fact that so many painful and paradoxical vicissitudes in its history have so often called into question its very

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[27] J.W. Watts, "The Remnant Theme: A Survey of New Testament Research, 1921-1987," *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, vol. 15, 2(1988), p. 109.

existence? If Jesus of Nazareth is God's Messiah, how can one understand the fact that his coming did not bring about a greater and unanimous response, even within his own people?

3) But it may well be that some of the reasons which provoke, in our own day, this direct confrontation with the concept of the Remnant are to be found in that nucleus of imponderables which is to be sought not only in the articulated mathematics of a thought, but in the silent and inexplicable basis of this which consists in the various ways of expressing the human in the course of time. In a text on the modalities of conservation of ancient statuary, Marguerite Yourcenar[28] points out that, from the Renaissance onwards, the great collectors completely repaired all the gaps and damage suffered by any pieces that were recovered, since they found it difficult to live with lacunae and lack of continuity. It was a question of personal taste, certainly, but repre- sented also the overall outlook of a particular epoch. The present-day custom of displaying the fragment, the detail or the relic devoid of any support or prosthesis that might suggest a whole, also says something about a change that has come about in ourselves.

This multiplicity of motives clearly shows that our line of enquiry cannot be linear. For a start, the difficulties extend to the nature and state of the primary literary sources, whether biblical or extra-biblical. It should not be forgotten that the sources for a theory of the Remnant are texts (or archaeological records) the dating and nature of which remain uncertain. Equally uncertain, in many cases, is also exactly what the record says or means. In fact, important questions are raised about the stability of the text, the various editorial interventions, or even the identity of whoever wrote it. Clearly, this all calls for a constant and careful critical process. In addition, the historical physiognomy of the concept is extremely peculiar. The biblical category of the Remnant is one that is constantly changing. In other words, it emerges within an ongoing semantic mobility, taking on, historically, aspects and shades of meaning that are by no means always homogeneous, and may even be contradictory. Indeed, herein lies part of the fascination with the

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[28] See M. Yourcenar, *Essais et mémoires* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), pp. 314- 315.

concept. But there is one really pressing question: what are we talking about when we are talking about a Remnant?

The Debate over the Origin of the Concept

One question which was at one time hotly debated, but now seems to be less controversial, is the geography of the concept: when and in what context did the Remnant idea first emerge? Towards the end of the 1950's, Donald M. Warne was still claiming that "nothing, in the traces we have of the ancient Middle East, serves to show how exactly this concept arose in the Old Testament,"[29] thereby claiming that it was used exclusively in the Bible. Today, however, the consensus tends to be the other way. It is precisely in the human, mental and religious context of the Ancient Middle East that the most probable sources for the origin of this concept are to be found.[30] In fact, it is there that we find the theme of the Remnant mentioned for the first time, in a trans-national literary and diversified heritage which covers tales of survival, descriptions of the flood, political texts and myths, as well as hymns or prayers. Clearly we are dealing with a vast documentary source with the common theme of describing and reflecting on experiences of destruction/survival. We could therefore say that we have discovered the habitat for the emergence of this concept. But this is only the beginning of the story.

A conflict which needed to be resolved in the course of time was the one that set those who saw in the Remnant an idea originating in religious circles against those who sought its origin in a purely secular context.[31] An absolute separation of these two universes is not characteristic of the patterns of thought at that period, which was, in fact, much more uniform and undifferentiated in the ways it viewed

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[29] D.M. Warne, *The Origin, Development and Significance of the Concept of the Remnant in the Old Testament* (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Faculty of Divinity, University of Edinburgh, 1958), p. 24.

[30] See O. Carena, "L'idea del 'resto' come rivendicazione morale nei confronti del potere conquistatore," in Associazione Biblica Italiana, *La storiografia della Bibbia – Atti della XXVII Settimana Biblica* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1986), p. 55.

[31] See F. Dreyfus, "Reste d'Israël" in H. Cazelles and A. Feuillet, eds., *Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplément* X (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, Éditeurs, 1985), p. 418.

the various levels of causality. There is no human reality which was not then looked upon as basically religious in its nature or its significance. A primarily religious explanation for everything was sought, above all at times of crisis or catastrophe. A certain sensibility, which even today we readily perceive in the various forms of contemporary apocalyptic,[32] and which associates natural cataclysms with a divine punishment, shows us the impossibility of distinguishing between these planes. If, today, this seems inadequate even from the theological point of view,[33] the truth is that this vision is already present in the formulation of the religious in the ancient world, and also in the world of the Bible.

Insofar as the origin of the concept of the Remnant is concerned, two theories have proved to be seminal and have clearly marked all later investigation: the theory of Werner E. Müller,[34] who argues in favour of the term being political in origin (the Remnant would be related to the policy of annihilation practised by Assyrian rulers against conquered peoples) and the theory put forward by Gerhard Hasel[35] who, instead, argued in favour of a wider anthropological derivation: not one particular field (the political) but a multiplicity of fields (including the human, the existential and the religious). Nevertheless, the positive role played by authors such as Gressmann and Mowinckel must be duly acknowledged since it was they who saw in the idea of the Remnant a way of reconciling the catastrophic vision of the future on the one hand with an optimistic outlook on the other. In a work published in 1905, Hugo Gressmann, who was a very close disciple of Gunkel's, argued that the theme of the Remnant entered Israel through

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[32] In the systematic theorising of the concept of disaster that runs through the work of Paul Virilio, interesting connections can be established between the ancient world and the world of today. See, for example, P. Virilio, *L'Université du désastre* (Paris: Galilée, 2007).

[33] P. Ricoeur, *Le mal. Un défi à la philosophie et à la théologie* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2004), p. 56.

[34] W.E. Müller, *Die Vorstellung vom Rest im Alten Testament* (Inaugural-Diss., Borsdorf-Leipzig, 1939).

[35] G.F. Hasel, *The Remnant. The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972).

contact with the popular eschatology of Babylon, which was fundamentally an eschatonlogy of condemnation.[36] The Remnant bore witness to the fact that the implacable catastrophe, which reduced people to a pitiable state, was a divine punishment. However, the theme would come to be reworked by the biblical authors, and take on a positive colouring. Hence the dual nature of the concept: it would come to serve both as a way of describeing the punishment of decimation as well as, paradoxically, a way of portraying the possibility of looking to the future with confidence. Sigmund Mowinckel, another important champion of this train of thought, suggested the names of figures representing both poles of this dialectic. Amos, the first prophet who wrote is a sharp defender of the concept of condemnation; for him there is no "Remnant" that escapes the coming disaster. Isaiah of Jerusalem, for his part, was the first to view the "Remnant" theme positively.[37]

The Thesis That Favoured the Political Origin of the Term

Werner Müller's interest was in the secular and political use of the Remnant category. His research led him to the literatures of various peoples but it was among the Assyrians that he eventually located the original root of this category. This was a decision that proved to be, at the very least, methodologically fruitful and plausible from the historical point of view: on the one hand, it enabled him to work with a static object (the vocabulary used to express the Remnant in a specific context and period), while, on the other hand, to choose a subject (the Assyrian empire) which did in fact have an expansionist policy that brought it, between the 9th-7th centuries B.C., into contact with the small nearby kingdoms in the region, including the kingdom of Israel. The resultant contagion of ideas would thus explain how the idea eventually appeared in the lands of the Bible.

In the Assyrian tradition, the word for Remnant was, in most cases, the substantive *sittu* but also, less frequently, *rihtu* and other variants.

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[36] H. Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1905).

[37] See S. Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien II. Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie* (Amsterdam: P. Schippers, 1961), pp. 279-80.

What is apparent in these terms is a very common process: they begin by possessing a neutral and generic meaning which shifts and narrows progressively until it becomes a specific technical term. To begin with, "remnant" denoted generically whatever was left over from something (from the cereals that served as daily food to precious metals such as silver and gold), but was slowly evolving into a specific military term to describe the policy of the annihilation of enemies.[38] "Remnant" denoted the violent fate envisaged for enemy troops, its leaders, the population of enemy countries, its cities and possessions, etc.

According to Müller's thesis, the Remnant always appears dramatically in the light of the hypothesis of extermination, and one can detect three possible meanings: a) either it disappears quite suddenly; b) or it gradually loses its historic and symbolic meaning; c) or it can once again come to acquire a certain importance.[39] This third meaning will serve to explain the entire history of the Remnant in Israel, where more than once the survivors would come to constitute the nucleus for the renewal of the national project. Accordingly, this makes very clear the impact that the extrabiblical world has had on the world of the Bible.

Omar Carena, whose aim was to follow up and complete Müller's intuitions (remember that Carena was working in the 1930's, with the vision and the historiographic tools then available to him) added even more elements which helped considerably towards an understanding of the Assyrian conception of the Remnant. Perhaps the most important outcome of this was that their descriptions of the Remnant were always negative. Carena wrote: "the remnant is never described in positive terms, with any sign at all that presents it in a good light."[40] And, beginning with the royal Assyrian inscriptions, he lists a series of semantic traces of the term:[41] the Remnant is a demographic, political and military indicator; it is a discrediting attribute and always designates a group of losers; it refers without differentiation to both the dead and the living among the enemy, a fact which is clearly

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[38] W.E. Müller, *Die Vorstellung vom Rest im Alten Testament*, p. 27.

[39] Ibid., pp. 36-39.

[40] O. Carena, *Il Resto di Israele. Studio storicocomparativo delle iscrizioni reali assire e dei testi profetici sul tema del resto* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1985), p. 50.

[41] See Ibid., pp. 50-55.

significant. The enemy is portrayed in a desperate and morally reduced situation, a series of animal metaphors is used to emphasise this less-than-human quality of the vanquished.

The Assyrian records use the Remnant as a weapon in their ideological offensive, wielding it for very clear propaganda purposes, including descriptions of horrendously cruel punishments. The message persistently conveyed is that rebellion and flight are useless and only serve to make the persecution and ultimate defeat more brutal.

An Origin Linked with a Perception of the Pre-Cariousness of Existence?

Gerhard Hasel is the author of the most complete study of the concept of the Remnant both in general and in detail, while at the same time quite rightly studying the relationship between the biblical theme of the Remnant and the wider human and cultural context. It is thus clear that even though Hasel accepts the importance of Müller's analysis of the Assyrian texts,[42] he rejects the idea of a limited origin for the term. His analysis of Ugaritic, Hittite and Egyptian literature increasingly confirms for him the fact that the origin of the Remnant concept predates the Hebrew Bible. And the formulation that he comes up with is that the theme may well have always existed,[43] and is as ancient and intrinsic as the universal threats that have always loomed over the aspirations of human beings: "The Remnant concept originates in the problem of human existence, in connection with the struggle to find a response to the prospect of its own destruction."[44]

It is, therefore, between the themes of life and of death, and embedded in this debate (the most urgent, problematic and inconclusive of all debates) that the origin of the idea of the Remnant is to be sought. It expresses the idea that human life, when confronted by death, must continue, resisting, historically, often against its own hope. The Remnant serves to fight against the sentence of extinction, preserving

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[42] See G.F. Hasel, *The Remnant. The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah*, p. 378.

[43] See Ibid., p. 384.

[44] G.F. Hasel, *The Remnant. The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah*, p. 385.

the essential so that the flame can persist and light up again from among the ashes of human catastrophes, in an era when life was frequently relativised (either politically, or also due to the threat of natural disasters, the uncertainties of subsistence economies, etc.). But Hasel's work explains extremely clearly that the concept of the Remnant has more than one meaning: it both reveals the extreme precariousness of existence and at the same time sketches, as a possibility, the hoped-for gift of a future. The contexts play a vital role in understanding both these meanings.[45]

How the Remnant Became a Biblical Problem

There can be no doubt that the theme of the Remnant predated the biblical narrative and that it entered into it at different times and in different ways. It is also equally certain that the Bible constitutes a kind of laboratory for the Remnant theme which is reshaped in it with great originality. In fact, there is a theological investment[46] to which, up to now, little attention has been given, but which will eventually become the fundamental semantic sediment of the concept.

But, even now, it must be acknowledged that in the Biblical text, too, the theme springs from a problem. God created, chose and called to Himself a people, with which He established his infallible covenant. However, its interpretation over time is controversial, confused and far from serene since Grace does not do away with the transition to Judgement and catastrophe. Indeed, the Remnant motif points precisely to this crisis. It is an upheaval which now distinguishes between the true and the false, between what survives and what has been extinguished, between present and future. God's project is not frustrated, but the concept of the Remnant assures us that its implementation draws us towards the open and the unlooked-for.

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[45] Cf. G.F. Hasel, "Semantic values of derivatives of the Hebrew Root *š'r*," *Andrew University Seminar Studies*, vol.11 (1973), p. 169.

[46] Raymond Dillard has written, "Only in the Bible is the remnant motif organically brought into relation with the ongoing history of redemption in a unified and recapitulatory fashion." R.B. Dillard, "Remnant," in W.A. Elwell, *Encyclopedia of the Bible* II (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 1833.

If we were to illustrate all this with a text, the description of the Flood in Genesis 6-9 would be just what we need. It resonates with a literary patrimony that goes well beyond Israel's borders, but there is no doubt that it reflects, to a considerable extent, the peculiar diction of the biblical tradition in the way in which it handles the two basic principles of salvation and divine judgement. The description of Noah's adventure links the idea of a universal divine judgement with the experience of deliverance by a small nucleus, a remnant chosen by God to guarantee the recommencement of history. As R.E. Clements has written, this basic story will provide the model for Judaism's self-understanding and will have a direct follow-up in the Christian Church.[47] When the historic figure of the survivor solidifies into that of a champion in sociological and political terms, the ancient narrative traditions will be reinterpreted in this light.

The Remnant as a Theology of Integration

The concept of the Remnant draws us, too, into battle with Paul. The Remnant is a theme that runs right through the New Testament from Matthew to the Apocalypse.[48] And, as Ben F. Meyer has written: "If beginning from a revised state of the question, a close inspection of these more or less promising lines of evidence should make it clear that 'the remnant of Israel' represents one of the ways – and a basic one – in which Jesus did in fact conceive his salvific mission, we will have found at least one element of a more satisfactory resolution of the surface antinomy of eschatology and church as well as a denser, more intelligible context than we have had for the so-called 'central moments' in the founding of the church."[49] But the truth is that Paul only uses the term Remnant explicitly in chapters 9-11 of the Letter to the Romans, and we find that here we have to attach an unusual

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[47] See R.E. Clements, "šāʾar," in G.W. Andersoned et al., eds., *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* VII (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer), p. 948.

[48] See L.V. Meyer, *"Remnant,"* in D. N. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* V (New York and London: Doubleday, 1992), p. 671.

[49] B.F. Meyer, "Jesus and the Remnant of Israel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 85, 2 (1965), p. 130.

meaning to it.[50] For this reason, we need to take literally the words of Ronald E. Clements: "The Pauline use of the theme brings out its greatest originality, and is where we may hope to see something of the freshness of Paul's under-standing."[51]

Sociological studies of the network of Pauline communities have had the great merit of displaying the way in which they formed part of the socio-political set-up of the time, making clear both how they had become assimilated as well as their attempts to break away.[52] In addition, they have also helped us to see that our understanding of the Christian identity must not start from an essentialist perspective – as if all the members of the Christian communities, through having joined the Christian movement, had at once become characterised definitively and permanently by a common *ethos*; instead, we need to think in terms of both "process" and "change."[53] During the first decades, the Christian identity was going through a rhetorical, open, polyphonic construction in the process of sedimentation.

Paul's starting point is the Pharisaic model, centred on observance of the commandments. But to fulfil the Law during the time when he was a Pharisee and fulfil it when he had become a disciple of Christ was to do so in the light of two different systems. What makes Paul's case particularly fascinating is the fact that he internalises this debate, which becomes an inseparable part of his own life story, enhancing its highly dramatic nature. Not only does he not hide the fact of his belonging to various groupings but, in contexts of conflict, he has unequivocal

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[50] See F. Dreyfus, "Reste," in X. Léon-Dufour, ed., *Vocabulaire de Théologie Biblique* (Paris: Cerf, 1971), p. 1099.

[51] R.E. Clements, "'A Remnant chosen by Grace' (Romans 11:5): The Old Testament Background and Origin of the Remnant Concept," p. 118.

[52] See Wayne A. Meeks' monumental study: W.A. MEEKS, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983). And an assessment of its impact twenty-five years later: T.D. Still and David G. Horrell, eds., *After the First Urban Christians. The SocialScientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* (London: T& T Clark, 2009).

[53] B. Holmberg, "Understanding the First Hundred Years of Christian Identity," in B. Holmberg, ed., *Exploring Early Christian Identity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), p. 6.

recourse to these distinct identity markers both in order to outline his point of view and also in support of a plan of defence when he finds himself in risky situations. He both states "I am a Jew" (Acts 22,3) and declares his Roman citizenship (Acts 22, 27) or confesses his existential insertion into Christ (Acts 22, 4-21).

But this insertion into Christ turns into Paul's explanation. It is curious how he used the customary political vocabulary of belonging to describe his relationship with Christ. Contrary to its more normal usage (national, ethnic, familial ...) the formula "I am + of" (*egô eimi + genitive*), so typical of the organisation of social groupings, is going to be used to characterise the novelty of the relationship with Christ within the Church (1 Cor. 11-12). And this changes everything.

E.P. Sanders, for example, insists that what characterises Paul's thinking is his redefinition of election: "What sets Paul apart, however, is the denial of the decisiveness of the theophany on Mt. Sinai and the redefinition of election. This leads to a fundamental redefinition of what the law is which must be fulfilled as a consequence of election."[54] In his new model of existence, the Covenant itself takes on a new value which will henceforth rest on the centrality of Christ. Romano Penna shows that the term "Covenant" is not particularly important in Romans 9-11 (even though it is used rhetorically to describe an inclusive movement, emerging at the beginning and end of the section: 9,4 and 11,27). And the reason is that "in Paul's eyes, some new data inevitably altered the very idea of Covenant as traditionally held."[55] And the "new data" can be summed up as a single one: "there is only one basic factor which in the end makes problematic the traditional concept of Covenant..., and it is the figure of Christ: either in view of what he represents in relation to God himself, or in view of what he signifies for the identity of Christians."[56]

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[54] E.P. Sanders, "On the Question of Fulfilling the Law in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism," in E. Bammel, C.K. Barrett and W.D. Davies, eds., *Donum Gentilicium: New Testament Studies in Honour of David Daube* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 125.

[55] R. Penna, *Paolo e la Chiesa di Roma* (Brescia: Paideia, 2009), p. 135.

[56] Ibid., p. 137.

The way in which Paul lives his call is expressed in a new system of values; it is the happening, the insertion into Christ, which becomes the moving force and, as such, serves as the beginning of a new hermeneutic of Israel's past and a new way of doing things. Paul does indeed revert to the vocabulary of election, but only in order to effect within it change of meaning which is both delicate and pregnant with consequences.

Jean-Noël Aletti has commented: "By restricting election to the tiny Remnant, Paul clearly needed to show that this was how God had operated from the very beginning. But Paul's primary and exclusive intention is not to defend God. If God had selected a Remnant from the beginning, this was not to avoid the total failure of his plan for mankind [...] but, on the contrary, to bring this very plan to maturity by degrees until the fullness of time. There is nothing here that is fundamentally pessimistic; Paul sees everything dynamically and positively. [...] The Pauline soteriology is not catastrophic either in its *arché* or in its *telos*."[57] In deepening the theology of the Remnant, Paul is also translating it into a new grammar. In our view, Paul's aim in recuperating and reinventing the concept of the Remnant is to construct a theology of integration.

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[57] J.-N. Aletti, *La lettera ai Romani e la giustizia di Dio* (Roma: Borla, 1997), p. 169.

The Perception of "Remnant" in the Cross-Questioning of the Israelite Sages

LUÍSA MARIA ALMENDRA

This presentation starts from a reflection on Marcel Gauchet's description of what he called the three "remnants of Religion."[1] His emphasis on the *experience of the no differentiated* as one the greatest needs felt by human thought in seeking unity and continuity; on the sense of *the aesthetic experience* as the experience of the fractured proximity of the invisible in the midst of the visible, where persists an inner transcendence, over and above appearances; and finally on *the experience of the problem that we are for ourselves* as awareness we are gaining of ourselves, brings us to the inspiring issue not only about religion as a remnant but also the perception of this remnant in the cross-questioning of the Israelite sages well expressed in their writings.[2] In fact, no other biblical authors and writings confront the lack of support for the difficult eternal questions which appear with increasing

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[1] See Marcel Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde: Une histoire politique de la religion* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

[2] We are conscious that the biblical concept of "remnant" is wide-spread in the bible, mainly in historical and prophetical books. They apply this concept to those who survived the catastrophe and claim to be a salient remnant after the destruction by the Assyrian Empire during the 8th century. The subsequent destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonians in the 6th century underscored this theological significance of the concept of surviving remnant. The notion of a recognized status as 'remnant of Israel' served as basis of religious and social identity for the growing number of Jews who lived outside the territorial boundaries of the earlier kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Two factors were particularly influential in determining the meaning of the terminology associated with 'remnant' for post 587 B.C.E. Judaism: the emphasis on unqualified loyalty to God and to the Mosaic Torah, and the growing use of this written Torah as a sign of religious identity transcending political boundaries (for more specific details see J. Clements, "rav *šā'ar*," in *TDOT*, pp.272-286).

frequency: "Why me?" "What to make of my life when I am alone in deciding? "Shall I in fact come to be like others?" "Why has this – illness, accident, desertion – happened to me?" "What is the point of living if we will disappear without leaving a trace, as if, in others' eyes, we had never lived?"

In this context, our purpose is to link up with Marcel Gauchet's description and understanding that what we may say about contemporaneity can also be said about biblical territory in its key moments: *Religion was always understood as Remnants of Religion*. We will do it journeying through the writings of the Israelite sages, facing the singular and provocative challenge they conceal inside themselves.

To Uncover and Interpret God's Message Embed-Ded in the World

Many studies and words have tried to express the main concern of the Israelite sages. In fact, avoiding the main themes of Israel's faith and of its leading narratives, the thoughts and writings of these sages validated their thinking as a tremendous challenge to human life, within its existence in history. Recently, in the introduction to his book *Understanding Wisdom Literature*, D. Penchansky defined the main concern of the Israelites Sages to be how to argue that to be human one must ultimately take a stand on whether or not life makes sense, whether or not some religious or rational order establishes and unifies human existence.[3] Many old and recent studies have pursued the same understanding. For all, based on a resilient and compelling faith, the starting point of the Israelite sages is their right to address all human possible issues and questions.[4] In this sense, the thoughts and writings of these sages become unique and precious for the question of God and human being within the context of Biblical Revelation. They took and reflected on life and faith differently from the other Hebrew Bible authors, daring even to disagree with each other as well. As persistent

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[3] See D. Penchansky, *Understanding Wisdom Literature. Conflict and Dissonance in the Hebrew Text*, p. 1; Dianne Bergant, *Israel's Wisdom Literature. A liberation-Critical Reading*, p.12.

[4] See James. L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, p.10; Katharine Dell, *Seeking a Life That Matters. Wisdom for Today from the Book of Proverbs*, pp. 1-7; Samuel L. Adams, *Wisdom in Transition. Act and Consequence in Second Temple Instructions*, pp. 1-13.

worshippers of the Israelite God and strongly faithful to the great pillars of the faith of Israel, they believe themselves to be challenged to uncover and interpret God's message and meaning of human life embedded in the world. They believe that this message is available to a carefully observant person, waiting to be discovered. They test their convictions within a world of believers: human beings who believe that God is the great Creator responsible for human life and the entire world, in its organization, and everything within it. In this context, we can consider both the experience of how difficult defining this diversified and elusive concept is, and the fact that they never taught that life would ever be completed, understood or controlled, a first sign of their perception of an honest religious 'remnant'.

Responding to their main challenge, the sages regard the entire world as "a sacred text," upon which God has written important insights about the whole meaning of life. This conviction is the support of all the efforts of these sages. They can disagree as to whether God's embedded message is easy or difficult to read. However, in either case, they believe that wisdom comes to those who carefully observe the ways of nature and the complexities of human behavior. As some would say: "from the ant, they learn diligence," "from the lazy farmer they learn the origin of famine and suffering" and "from the innocent suffering or from the natural cycles of life they learn to question the sense of faith and life." Some sages learn their principles from their simple observations, and by applying those principles, anyone may lead a good, happy, and successful life. For other sages God had placed wisdom too deep to be mined, which makes the task of finding the meaning of life almost impossible. For them wisdom becomes something of which only God knows the ways (Jb 28), something that only God has (Sir 1:1) or that we just simply need to ask from God (Sb 9).[5]

Yet, the thoughts and teaching of these Israelite sages start an intellectual movement that, naturally, passed down its insights to

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[5] See Dianne Bergant, *Israel's Wisdom Literature*, p.12 ["In fact, they believed that the dimension of wisdom most desired, the wisdom that alone explains the universe and the inner working of life, is beyond human reach and resides with God alone"].

following generations. The historical events and their evaluation pressed every generation to improve this intellectual movement, sometimes even with counter explanations. The result was that, within the phenomena of religion and faith, emerged an ongoing dialogue and debate that built and gave to biblical wisdom a deep consistency. Some perennial problems gained the attention of the wisdom authors that they carried on through their writings, such as the incessant problem of evil or of the innocent suffering. Believing that a benevolent God governs the universe and observing that the innocent do in fact suffer, the sages begin to question the way God effectively governs creation. Their commitment to human observation as a genuine and important source of truth caused them to question their most basic assumptions about God, such as: "Was God too weak to address human concerns for justice and fairness? Did God care about human well-being?" Through different words, each sage tries to decipher and describe this searching. Many sages accept the traditional statements, but some dare to express doubt regarding God's goodness and reliability. This willingness to question goes hand in hand with the sage's commitment to observation. The new evidence required rethinking traditional basic principles. The sages examine for flaws traditions they learned from earlier wisdom writings, and they question the traditional and fundamental beliefs. They experience profoundly that without raising questions, mainly those fundamental or painful questions, human beings would never find the truth about human beings or God. This inquiring should never be confused with unfaithfulness or sin, rather it should be appreciated as constituting the heart of the wisdom enterprise. In fact, every modern reader and believer can eavesdrop upon these Israelite sages. However, in one way or other, one day we all will be compelled to take part, to provide our own answers to the deep and penetrating questions asked by the Israelite sages and their descendants. Their thoughts and writings remain in human history a 'remnant' of a crucial way of taking religion and life as the source of building and receiving true meaning.

Debating Traits of the Category of "Remnant"

It is quite easy to find expressions of wisdom in conflict with fundamental ideas found in the rest of the Bible. In fact, it is not only simple inquiring that encourages and sustains the rethinking of the

sense of life. It was extremely important for the Israelite sages to assume that wisdom writings tend to demonstrate that meaning is often produced at the site of contradiction and doubt. In fact, as D. Penchansky presents so remarkably, wisdom is not about boiling down the various texts into a few summative positions about the purpose of life, but rather about exploring and elucidating the contours of the fault lines in the text and seeing how they take hold.[6] Many have asked about the importance of this special way of the sage's inquiring, pressing the scholars to validate this searching as something intensely worthy of our attention, mainly because it is deeply rooted in crucial human questions. Sometimes this is expressed in piercing doubts that emerge from the depths of human experience, as to the meaning of existence (Pr 1-9), the possibility for happiness (Qo 5:17), the inevitability of death (Qo 7:1.26; 8:8). This inquiring also implies the marvelous and terrifying questions well synthetized in the book of Job (Jb 3-31). When we read carefully these writings, we are deeply touched by how fearless these sages were, and begin to catch a glimpse of how they stare boldly into the abyss and the darkness that surrounds humanity. In surprising and unexpected ways and words, their voices provide a guide on how to navigate through life, many times following ways of contradiction. In this sense, they were responsible for an extraordinary idea of remnant that goes further than social or political circumstances. The concept of religious 'remnant' assumes the configuration of a profound search for meaning that can come also through contradiction and doubt.

In fact, through the Israelite sages, contradiction and doubt became equivalent to deep faith and truthfulness. It is true that the sages approach their inquiry in a practical, down-to-earth manner, and trust their own observations and judgments. However, they admit to testing them in the heart of their faith. They seek to learn from other cultures, not limiting themselves to purely Israelite ideas, convinced that our world contains many cultures with linked destinies. Listening carefully to human life and the wonders of nature, the sages learn to live with the ambiguity of different points of view side by side. In a world where too many expressions of religion are intolerant of difference, the sages' exposure to different ideas makes them stronger. For them, raising

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[6] See D. Penchansky, *Understanding Wisdom Literature,* p. 9.

questions becomes a sacred duty, and to doubt becomes holy. They assume a divine obligation to question the claims of those in authority, and to reexamine widely-held religious ideas. They show us a positive and constructive way of carrying on the true 'remnant' of Israelite faith. Their constant and singular rethinking kept alive a 'remnant' of the most important pillars of biblical faith and revelation.

The Idea of 'Remnant' in the Ethics and Ethos Surveys

Although many scholars have regarded the writings of the Israelite sages as uniquely anthropocentric in character – as reflective of the human and pragmatic quest to secure wholeness and prosperity – some have noted that the biblical wisdom writings focus on creation theology, and thus find wisdom's theocentric side to provide the best entry point into the ethos of biblical wisdom.[7] As William P. Brown has noted, determining the precise relationship between these two sides of the same coin still challenges any interpreter who wants to grasp the full range and depth of the wisdom traditions.[8] In a certain sense, we assert that, from a discursive level, both sides denote complementary frames of reference. However, the anthropocentric framework is clearly primary. In fact, the words of the sages show that the knowledge of God cannot be divorced from the human knowledge of the self. We hear this accent in the beginning and ending of the book of Proverbs. In its parental discourse on proper conduct and attitude (Pr 1:8) and in the homage to the "woman" (Pr 31:10-31); also in the book of Qoheleth when the preacher (Qoheleth) recounts his personal experience in what is essentially a confession of failure (Qo 1-12), and

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[7] Among those who stress this anthropological or experiential side of wisdom are Gerhard von Rad in his earlier work of wisdom (Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1: 418-441). See John F. Priest, "Where is Wisdom to be placed?," pp. 281-88; *idem*, "Humanism, Skepticism, and Pessimism in Israel," pp. 311-326; Walter Brueggemann, *In Man we Trust*; W. Sibley Towner, "The Renewed Authority of Old Testament Wisdom for Contemporary Faith," pp. 132-137. One of the most important defenders of this position is Leo G. Perdue (Leo G. Perdue, "Cosmology and the Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition"].

[8] See William P. Brown, *Character in Crisis. A Fresh Approach to the wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 2-3.

through the entire book of Job, from his piercing cries of anguish to his final confession before God.

In all of these writings, the sages established a language of the self as a discerning tool, handled through words filled with choices, ambiguity, threat, and grace. These words and reflections are all linked together primarily by their discourse and secondarily by their actions. In William P. Brown's expression, some of these words "bare their souls, while others are relatively flat and dispassionate."[9] Through their discourse, each group of sages imparts certain values and perspectives that make for a vision of a normative character. Their tightly interwoven literary and moral character focuses on traditional virtues amid a perceived dissolute age, a fact that made some scholars assert that there was always a delicate balance of conservative and unorthodox traits.[10] Some characters demonstrate by personal example a candid development of character, others display their turgid "inner life," because their integrity has become an open question. These are fleshed out with ambiguity and conflict, life and blood, assuming a role in part to deconstruct, reform, or reconstruct the traditional contours. The nature of these characters depends on their involvement in a particular narrative. Some figures are profiled according to a certain coherence with the variety of proverbial and instructional sayings, embodying prudent behavior and wise attitudes. They recall the life of one who is experienced and successful with the intricacies of the moral life. They assume the role of the silent persons, who avoid speaking rashly, and diffuse conflict. They appear through all the Book of Proverbs in the recommended attitudes of self-control, judiciousness in speech and fidelity. Others, as Job, for all its heavy and turgid discourse, emerge basically as a story of one person's vindication or transformation of character. Qoheleth's brand of Skepticism stems from something more basic, namely from a heightened degree of self-consciousness. By stepping out of the character that traditional wisdom forged, Qoheleth is able to cast into question the profile of traditional character, namely the unquestioned appropriation of the accumulated

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[9] See Ibid., p. 16.

[10] See Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character; Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, pp. 19-20.

wisdom of the past. He is able to construct a new character fashioned for the most part without the wisdom of the past.

Like Job, Qoheleth places enough weight on his own experience, disputing the truths of the inherited tradition. However, their strong "introspective reporting," their style, confers a strong value on the role of the individual and personal intellect to build moral and religious consciousness of human life. Although his efforts struck out on finding the paths, leading ultimately to dead ends, it was his failed pursuit of knowledge and wisdom that afforded Qoheleth a view of the world and the human condition in their absurd totalities. This view does not make him condemn his life; rather he commends unqualified accept-ance of the absurd life in all of its vicissitudes and fleeting moments of joy. Qoheleth returns to life changed and fashioned from a humble and grateful acceptance of the joy one receives from the hand of God. Most unexpected is that, by exploring the depths of failure and despair, Qoheleth espouses a radical openness to life, a life lived without pretensions, an exploration without delusions of grandeur. In Michael V. Fox words, "Qoheleths's brand of *carpe diem*, of exhausting the fleeting moments of enjoyment, comes from a profound realization of one's finitude to the world and to God, the Inscrutable."[11]

This constitutes an interesting mark of 'remnant' in the *ethics and ethos*" within the words and writings of the Israelite sages. It is a mark that surpass the profiles of trivial hopes. It is more than a persuasive speech to those who, with great and ambitious plans for success, were ripe for disillusionment. It is a thought that affirms an understanding that every human being who looks for meaning in life has to deal with a personal struggle, a struggle that needs to overcome the perceived lack of effectiveness and progress that can bring one to the brink of burnout and despair.[12] Qoheleth points out how it is so easy to fall into the trap of pinning one's hopes on the human capacity to fulfil dreams and goals. Faith and meaning cannot ultimately depend on human effort, result, work and gain. Within the question of meaning, one thing remains: the fervent desire to live and work despite the absurdities and contradictions of life. The noble and honorable goals are sculpted to

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[11] See Michael V. Fox, *Qoheleth and His Contradictions*, pp. 75-76.

[12] See William P. Brown, *Character in Crisis*, p. 149.

everyday simple pleasures, received in gratitude. This is what brings true joy that accompanies one's life at every step. Goals and objectives are indispensable to human life. However, true faith calls each human being to be attentive to the danger that lies in attaching personal fulfillment to the end result. God alone knows what the result might hold. This horizon of being constitutes a remarkable mark of a 'remnant' in ethics and ethos surveys of the Israelite sages.

Open Topics about the Perception of "Remnant"

Considering what has been said, one of the most attractive topics of 'remnant' that remains open is the way faith can deepen through 'conflict and dissonance'. In fact, taking the whole of the writings of the Israelite sages, it is remarkable how the sages take strong, adversarial positions against each other. The writings are clear evidence that these sages were neither passive nor tolerant in their debate. Some scholars dare to define these writings as a site of conflict. The disagreement among the sages produced conflict, hostility and strong opposition, and they wrote about that. One must be very attentive to hear their voices by which they made sure they would be heard by future generations. This disagreement brings in a dissonance that can irritate a sensitive ear, mainly, when different parts of the text cannot easily be fitted together. One textual example of this dissonance is the narrative connection of Job's attitude to his misfortunes in the first two chapters of the book with his intense crying in chapter three.

Many attempts have been made to smooth out texts, in order to prove that the texts, properly understood, were harmonious all along. Many efforts have been made to make the writings of the Israelite sages speak with a single voice.[13] However, as the musician or composer teaches us that dissonance is a vital part of a musical piece, and shows us how some of the greatest musical compositions show new ways to understand dissonance, in the same way we should face conflict and dissonance in the words of these sages. Sometimes we find these conflicting ideas in the mouths of the characters in narratives (in the book of Job, for instance), or patched together in a simple book, as Qoheleth. Other times later books challenge ideas put forth in earlier books (as Wisdom of Solomon challenges Ecclesiastes). Together with

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[13] See D. Penchansky, *Understanding Wisdom Literature,* pp. 6-7.

these conflicting ideas, the contradictions are also a very interesting means of exploring meaning. Many examples could be found, such as the way the author of Proverbs enjoins readers to trust completely in God and the author of the book of Job suggests that God might not be worthy of that trust.

Another open topic that we can submit is their perception of life and faith as a permanent challenge of joyful perseverance. Their writings have left us one of the deepest intuitions within the biblical revelation: to learn not to dwell or even count on what can be achieved. The human believer is called to live and work, cry out for justice and right relationships, minister to others, feel the breeze when it comes, accept the support and fellowship of others, with the only certainty being that within the greatest inscrutable and absurd reality, God's mercy is to be found. It is in this sense that William P. Brown assumes that each of the wisdom books does not conclude with the self in a species of limbo, detached from its point of departure.[14] For instance, Proverbs' departure from the silent son concludes with a return to family life: the obedient son learned his way through the normality and abnormality of competing voices that vie for his attention and allegiance; the husband establishes himself in the end as one who has found the ideal spouse, raising the ideal family. Similarly, Job ends his story back within the family fold. But, rather than a reconstruction of his earlier family, Job's new family is a profoundly innovative one. Surprisingly, his new daughters are described as 'women of excellence', over-shadowing the spouse of the end of Proverbs. Job also returns a different man with a reconfigured family and a new vison of his own life and of his relationship with God. Qoheleth also makes his return to the vicissitudes of everyday existence. Nevertheless, without satisfying answers, he reinvests himself by focusing on life's fleeting, yet redemptive moments of joy and work. His character is reconstructed receiving them as gift, rather than as earned gain. This explains why we can assess the Israelite sages as profound believers and as those who gave new meaning to the traditional idea of 'remnant' in Israel. In fact, they did not defend the religion as a 'remnant': rather they struggled, through uncommon and multifaceted ways, to bring the very meaning

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[14] See William P. Brown, *Character in Crisis*, p. 154.

of a religious 'remnant' alive and consistent. Although they never used the word 'remnant', they attempted to find meaning in life and in faith. Their words will remain as a permanent invitation, as religious 'remnant', a religion that should always ask not only if a human being believes, but how one believes; not only if a human being is faithful, but how one remains faithful.

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The Remnant before the Whole:
The Setting of Fundamental Theology

DOMINGOS TERRA

The concept 'remnant' belongs to biblical thought and is frequently mentioned in the prophetic writings. It indicates the portion of the community – "the remnant of Israel," for instance – that will be saved by God. But the meaning of this concept is sometimes extrapolated in order to make it indicate a particular reality of today: the increasing minority condition of Christianity in the midst of modern societies. It is from this perspective that we keep in mind the binomial remnant-whole throughout the present text. We know that the Christianity did not always see itself as a minority in the ground where it lived in the past. Despite that, we may use the mentioned binomial to reflect upon the relationship that permanently had to exist between Christianity and the human collectivity where it was situated. It is therefore normal that we enunciate different equations of such relationship throughout the present text.

Defending Itself before the Whole

In the first centuries of Christianity, it was a minority in the context of the Roman Empire. It had to face the criticism and even the explicit attack from sectors such as the pagans, the Jews and the philosophers. In these conditions, Christianity could not think primarily of having a consistent influence on the dominant worldview of the Roman Empire. On the contrary, it needed to defend itself in the face of a hostile environment. This explains the appearance of a type of Christian literature which became known as 'apologias'. Some of them included the word "*Contra*" or "*Adversus*"[1] in their title.

The language of these apologias followed the model of the court case. Their main concern was to counter the adversaries of Christian faith. In their defensive effort, they functioned as a sort of shield against

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[1] Marcel Neusch, *Les traces de Dieu. Éléments de théologie fondamentale* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2004), p. 39.

the attacks directed to such faith. They signified a closing of ranks of the recently born Christianity in order to secure itself through the force of argumentation. The intention of the apologias was to show the reason to exist of the new faith in the face of the objections directed to it.[2] They needed to basically answer the following question: "How to defend the depreciated, unknown Christianity, whose quick expansion throughout the Empire raises the concern of public opinion and gives rise to reactions of rejection from everywhere?"[3] This basic intention of the apologias did not contradict their importance also as a missionary attempt to gain new followers for Christianity among those in the collectivity exterior to it. In being forced to explain itself, Christianity had the opportunity to make itself known to others. But the main concern of the apologias had to be to ensure the survival as well as the purity of identity of the new faith. This may be explained by the fact that such faith saw itself in the midst of a hostile environment right after it was born. The Christianity needed to think of existing first of all.

In fact, the official sociology of the Roman Empire conceived humanity as the juxtaposition of two groups. It allowed no more than two identities inside borders. On the one hand, there were the pagans, a sector that might include Greeks, Romans and ex-Barbarians. On the other hand, there were the Jews whose legitimacy had been recognized. There seems to be here a dichotomy outlined simply as 'we and the others'. The pagan authors used to mention the tripartite scheme *genus primum* (pagans), *genus alterum* (Jews) and *genus tertium* (Christians). It was a scheme conceived in a way that led easily to its own rejection. The official sociology of the Roman Empire did not give room for a third group. The Christians were, of course, zealous in affirming the original character of the religion they represented. But this would turn against them, since they were accused of putting themselves outside the framework officially recognized in the Empire. The right to exist was therefore denied to them as Christians.[4]

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[2] Ibid., p. 40.

[3] Charles Munier, "L'apologétique chrétienne et les autorités impériales (IIe-IIIe siècles)," *Connaissance des Pères de l'Église*, 41 (1991), p. 11.

[4] Marcel Simon, *La civilisation de l'Antiquité et le Christianisme* (Paris: Arthaud, 1972), pp. 172-173.

Tending to Cover the Whole

The Roman emperor Constantine legally recognized Christianity in 313, by issuing the Edict of Milan. Christianity passed then from persecuted to be tolerated. Later on, with the emperor Theodosius I, paganism was almost outlawed and the road opened for Christianity to affirm itself as the official religion of the Empire. Besides, after the fall of this Empire in the West in 476, the conversion of the Barbarians made it possible for Christianity to spread in Europe. This was a time of alliance between Christianity and the political powers, which gave rise to a situation in which the latter depended, to a great extent, upon the former. What came to be known as medieval Christendom was then reached. In this context, the Christian faith was strong enough to leave its mark on all sectors of human life and groups. This was a time when every human activity submitted to what Christianity stated. The several fields of the temporal life were conceived as having to contribute to the spiritual goal proclaimed by the Church. As a matter of fact, customs, institutions and laws were determined by Christianity. People lived in a Christian atmosphere independently from the options they made as individuals.[5] The collective life was organized in such a way that the Christianity tended to treat the world as an extension of itself.

In this structure of the collective life, the task of Christian faith seemed to be simplified. It did not need to defend itself for survival, since it had conquered the influence over what sets the configuration of people's existence. Besides, the Christian faith did not probably have a strong sense of having to go outwards in order to serve in a space that did not belong to it. It saw itself as already entitled to cover all the ground of human existence and collectivities. The 'otherness' for Christianity, when publicly felt, was quickly considered as the strange or rebellious. Its destiny was set to be marginalization, defeat and even elimination. Furthermore, the Christian faith did not need to study the sectors of reality in which it wished to be actively present. Since it did not recognize their exteriority to itself, their interpretation in a Christian way was considered as obvious. They were simply expected to submit

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[5] Gabriel Jacquemet, "Chrétienté," *Catholicisme*: *Hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, vol. II (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1950), p. 1085.

to what Christianity determined. Finally, the Christian faith did not need to justify itself as a free choice among other possible ways of conducting life. It took itself for granted. Every discussion of matters concerning human existence, both on the individual and the social levels, admitted the Christian faith as the evident point of departure for reasoning.

Intervening as a Portion of the Whole

Contrary to the medieval Christendom, modern times have witnessed the ability of human rationality to follow its path out of the influence of the Christian statements and worldview. This means that Christianity stops functioning as a unifying force of all human knowing and doing. In fact, the modern times show new developments in philosophy and in science. With the increasing discoveries and conquests, they also bring other continents to the knowledge of those living in the European territory. As a consequence, Christianity is no longer able to determine every matter concerning the life of people's and collectivities'. The world has become a much larger space for those living in the geography traditionally occupied by Christianity. Thus one learns that it is only a part within such world. Christianity is led to become even aware that it no longer controls all that happens in the societies of the western hemisphere.

But the fact that Christianity does not influence entirely human existence and the known world does not make it lose its interest in what becomes exterior to its direct control. As a matter of fact, the Christian faith and therefore the Church may not ignore all that, being part of the modern societies and the humankind in general, does not belong to them. They are inevitably face to face with what is exterior to them. However, such a situation does not need to be seen as an inconvenient imposition upon the Christian faith and the Church. To be face to face with what is exterior has to do with their own definition. This way, the Christian faith and the Church find themselves in a dialectical position. On the one hand, they can no longer wish to go back to the organization of human existence proper to the medieval Christendom any more. They must respect the differences of conceiving and practicing human life. On the other hand, the Christian faith and the Church understand themselves as having to do something in what is exterior to them. They

see themselves as having the mission to act in all fields of human existence and in the world in general.

Such self-understanding of the Christian faith and of the Church is clearly stated in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council. It appears more precisely in its chapter four whose title is "the role of the Church in the modern world." In fact, this official document declares that the Church "serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family."[6] Likewise, it affirms that "the Church does not only communicate divine life to men but in some way casts the reflected light of that life over the entire earth."[7] All this vocabulary suggests the Christian faith's and the Church's engagement in the world. It should be an engagement involving both interpreting and doing. The Christian faith and the Church read all that concerns human existence according to their own viewpoint and then act upon such existence. It is an attitude in which they are thought as having something that does not exist outside them. They are therefore expected to share their richness with this outward space, making up for the lack that they find there.

To talk about the role of the Church in the world suggests that something of the former should pass to the latter. But this does not exclude that something of the latter needs to pass to the former as well. In fact, it seems hard to imagine that the Church can intervene in the world without receiving any kind of input from this. Of course the Church is convinced that it has a treasure that all that is external to it does not yet have: the Christian message announcing God's given salvation through Jesus Christ. The Church knows therefore that it must communicate such treasure wherever it is not yet known. However, the Church is also aware that it needs some information from the different areas of human existence and portions of the world in order to communicate its message in a way that is understandable to them. The already mentioned pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* shows precisely this awareness. It says: "With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is the task of the entire People of God, especially pastors and

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[6] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1964, no. 40.

[7] Ibid.

theologians, to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the divine word, so that revealed truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood and set forth to greater advantage."[8]

In any case, the first idea that comes to mind when talking of the Church's intervention in the different areas of human existence and portions of the world is that the Church gives to these something that they should accept. To talk of playing an appropriate role in the external space spontaneously suggests that one must be open to it and allow being affected by it. The openness and permeability is firstly required of the reality being the destination of such role. Only in a second moment does this characteristic seem to be required of the agent of this role. Talking of the Church's intervention in the outward space spontaneously suggests that the former speaks and the latter listens, the former does and the latter complies with what is done.

As a matter of fact, all we have said until now supposes a certain understanding of the face to face between the Christian faith and therefore the Church, on the one hand, and the different areas of human existence and portions of the world, on the other hand. The former are thought to have the strength to influence the latter. Their presence is expected to have a weight that allows them to appear as providers rather than as receivers. Of course this may not totally exclude the idea of the Christian faith's and the Church' permeability before what is exterior to them. But such permeability seems to stay in second place.

Proposing Itself to the Whole

The contemporary times show that the presence of the Christian faith and of the Church does not have the weight of the past. There is a greater conscience of the diversity of the world where we live. The globalization led to a greater recognition of the other world religions in the western hemisphere itself. Besides, our modern societies became strongly pluralistic. By not accepting any kind of religious or ideological control that might make them homogeneous, they appear now as collectiveties including multiple collectivities. This means that the Christian faith became one reality among others in the democratic framework of such societies. It tends to appear now even as a minority

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[8] Ibid., no. 44.

within them. The Christian faith is no longer considered as the only way of providing meaning to human life in those societies. It becomes one way among others. This means that it is seen as an object of free choice. As a consequence, the Christian faith is today an embracing, life option that cannot be taken for granted. It is subject to questioning from other universes of meaning that exist in our modern societies too. It is within a set of different ways of orienting human life which compete with one another. In a word, it is obliged to justify itself.[9]

On the other hand, the Christian faith and therefore the Church may not give up their "mission of questioning"[10] every sector of human life and every collectivity of humankind. They keep on seeing themselves as committed to helping every human being reach his or her full self-realization. They cannot stop looking to the different human situations and problems according to the worldview that derives from God's self-revelation. We can notice, therefore, that there is a process of questioning taking place in two directions. The different sectors of human life as well as the different collectivities raise questions to the Christian faith and the Church. They constitute a challenge to these by inviting them to show which answers they have for the major concerns of human beings. At the same time, the Christian faith and the Church understand themselves as having the mission to shed light on human situations and problems, in order to lead the common people and particularly the decision-makers to look at them in a new way.

Since the Christian faith and the Church have to accomplish their mission as a minority in the midst of our modern societies and of the world in general, they need to overcome two attitudes. Neither can their role towards what is exterior to them be thought as a simple 'give what is to be received', nor are they able to question the different sectors of human existence by simply 'saying what is to be listened'. Now the Christian faith and the Church must understand themselves as clearly permeable to what is exterior to them. This new perception is witnessed

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[9] Hans Waldenfels, *Manuel de théologie fondamentale*, translated by Olivier Depré (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), p. 538.

[10] Conseil des Conférences Épiscopales d'Europe, *La religion, fait privé et réalité publique. La place de l'Église dans les sociétés pluralistes* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), p. 74.

in the famous document of the French bishops, called "To propose the Christian faith in the present society: Letter to the Catholics of France," that came out in 1996.[11] The structure of this document corresponds to a reflection with three steps. Firstly, the bishops try to understand the situation in which the French Catholics find themselves as part of the society where they live. Secondly, they intend to go deeper into the heart of the Christian faith; they wish to see more profoundly what this faith consists in. Thirdly, they try to form a Church that is able to propose such faith in the social and cultural conditions where it now exists.[12] All this process means that the Christian faith and the Church cannot accomplish their mission in the multiple collectivities and the world in general without knowing first how to do it. This implies the study of the mentioned conditions before acting in the midst of them.

In this new process, the Christian faith and the Church continue to understand themselves as having something to give to the world. But 'to give' is now definitely not seen as the first moment of the role they play in this world. 'To give' is preceded by a 'receiving'. The Christian faith and the Church have much to learn from the ground of human existence surrounding them before acting upon it. Thus the dynamics enunciated before as 'give what is to be received' may now be formulated as 'receive in order to better give what is to be received'. In other words, something needs to pass from the world to the Church before something may pass from the latter to the former. It is this new proceeding, explicitly introduced in the face to face between the Christianity and the world, that leads the French bishops to say: "The crisis the Church goes through today is due, to a large extent, to the repercussion of a set of social and cultural mutations, both fast and deep, on the Church itself and the life of its members."[13]

The sense of the urgency of the Church's mission in the multiple fields of human existence and in the world in general should not prevent taking the necessary time for a clear understanding of where and how such mission should be carried out. There is no doubt that this

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[11] Conférence des Évêques de France, *Proposer la foi dans la société actuelle III. Lettre aux catholiques de France* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997).

[12] Ibid., p. 16.

[13] Ibid., p. 22.

new concern makes the Church's mission more complex. But it seems also clear that it makes such mission more efficient. In fact, it is not enough to be actively present in the midst of the human experiences and contexts. It is necessary to find the appropriate way of being present and acting in these. It may even happen that the Church's reflection that must precede its action requires a lot of effort and expertise. The French bishops recognize this when they affirm: "Throughout its history, especially in Europe, the Church finds itself quite profoundly attached to the ancient equilibrium and the world's figure that fades away. Not only was it well integrated into such figure, but also it had largely contributed to its formation, whereas the world's figure to be constructed now escapes us."[14] The bishops are saying here that the study of the social and cultural environment may challenge ways of thinking deeply rooted in the members of the Church, particularly in those having more responsibility to conduct its life and action. This reminds that the accomplishment of the Church's mission requires a conversion of the ones engaged in it.

It is now clear that the Christian faith and the Church need to listen to the different human collectivities and the world in general before they address their word to them. But it should be underlined that the specificity of this word may never be called into question. There is no doubt that the concrete social and cultural context needs to be taken into account when such word is addressed. But this word has a foundation which should never be forgotten. In fact, the Christian faith and therefore the Church's proclamation must be always rooted in the Holy Scripture and the Christian Tradition. These both constitute the guiding references of the Christian faith. They both derive from the same source: the Christ event. Such event is obviously the mandatory norm for the Christian faith and the Church's proclamation, independently from the social and cultural setting where they find themselves. Then both the Scripture and the Tradition play a normative role in the configuration of the Christian faith and message throughout history.

Having made this clear, one may now ask which role has precisely the social and cultural setting in the configuration of the Christian faith and message. One can immediately guess that the concrete human

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[14] Ibid.

experience, in which the Christian faith must become incarnate, may not weigh in that configuration as heavily as do Scripture and Tradition. In fact, while the position of the Scripture and the Tradition is one of normativeness, the position of the concrete human experience in one of mediation.[15] This means that the word the Church addresses to the different social and cultural contexts must be guided by the Scripture and the Tradition, while acquiring a particular formulation through a set of significant elements belonging to such context. The fidelity to both the Scripture and the Tradition – the two forms that make the Christ event present to us throughout history – may not be put into question when the Christian faith and message takes shape in the conditions set by the "conceptual horizon and field of ques-tioning"[16] of the mentioned context.

The structure of the Christian faith's presence particularly in our modern, pluralistic societies seems now all clear. The Christian faith is no longer everything in these societies. It is only a part within them. It has even frequently become a minority sector in the democratic framework of such societies. Therefore, the Christian faith should not dream of going back to the privileged position of past times. It must accept its new condition within democracy and have a realistic perception of its own influence on societies that follow the democratic rules. The Christian faith and therefore the Church may even be in a situation where they are confronted with the problem of their own relevance in those societies. But neither can they accept being erased from the ground where the collective life of human beings is determined. In fact, the Christian faith is aware of being a matter that does not concern only the private life of those who embraced it. It proclaims its public dimension and wishes to take its responsibility in the public ground of human collectivities. In a word, the Christian faith – and therefore the Church – "remains missionary, that is, turned to everybody and opened to everybody, because of Jesus' call, when he

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[15] Pedro Rubens, *Discerner la foi dans des contextes religieux ambigus. Enjeux d'une théologie du croire* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2004), pp. 382, 384.

[16] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: an experiment in Christology*, translated by Hubert Hoskins (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 62.

asks his disciples to be 'light to the world, salt of the earth'."[17] This means that even when the Christian faith becomes a minority in our modern, pluralistic societies, it may not renounce being "for everybody."[18] It may not abandon this prerogative that is an intrinsic part of its own vocation.

Legitimating Itself in the Midst of the Whole

We have witnessed an evolution in the attitude of the Christian faith with regard to its position in the ground of human existence normally considered exterior to itself. In fact, we have seen that the Christian faith is turned away from the situation proper to the medieval Christendom. We have noticed that it is now not so secure about the role to play in the different areas of human existence and in the world in general, compared to the past. We have even observed that the Christian faith is willing to deepen its own identity, in order to discern the way of being adequately present in the social and cultural conditions where it must live today. Now we are going to see that it is waking up to the need for a further step with regard to its position in the midst of the multiple contexts of human existence. In fact, the Christian faith is today aware that it has to justify itself before the challenges that the different contexts of human experience and the world in general address to it.

We have just enunciated here the task that concerns the area of theology usually called 'fundamental theology': to justify the Christian faith in whatever situation seems necessary. This task consists in showing the reason to exist of the God who is discovered, embraced and proclaimed by Christians. It is obvious that such task cannot be accomplished in an abstract way. It must take into account the challenges issued by a particular, social and cultural context to the Christian faith. In fact, theology today can no longer simply understand the Christian faith: *fides quaerens intellectum*. It must reach this goal according to the mentioned challenges.[19] To find the legitimacy of the Christian faith is an exercise which must be done in concrete

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[17] Conférence des Évêques de France, *Proposer la foi dans la société actuelle III*, p. 35.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Neusch, *Les traces de Dieu*, p. 33.

conditions. These constitute precisely the point of departure of questions raised to the Christian faith. As a consequence, the answers given by this faith in order to justify itself depend, to a great extent, on those conditions. Of course, they need to be formulated on the grounds of both the Holy Scripture and the Christian tradition, since it is through these that we have access to the only source of Christian faith: the Christ event. But the content and the form of such answers are connected with the content and the form of the historical context's questions logically preceding them.

We can see that the task of exposing the legitimacy of the Christian faith lacks any single, concrete configuration. To affirm the reason to exist of such faith may take multiple forms. In fact, the challenges issued by the social and cultural context to the Christian faith are diverse. For instance, if this context stresses the exercise of rationality in explaining things important to human existence, it will be necessary to expose the rational basis of the Christian faith. On the other hand, if such context underlines the affective side in valuing what concerns human existence, it will be necessary to enhance the affective dynamics involved in Christian faith. Still, if this faith has to cohabit clearly with the other world religions, it will be necessary to engage in dialogue with them without forgetting to stress the singular elements such faith contains. Moreover, if the Christian faith faces a widespread attitude of indifference towards itself, it will be necessary to emphasize the relevance of that faith for human beings today. And so on.

The way of acting of fundamental theology in justifying Christian faith is therefore multiple. This explains the difficulty to assign this theological subject a well-defined, particular place within the whole of theology. The goal of fundamental theology is clear, but the proceedings to reach it are varied. Any new challenge issued to the Christian faith will lead fundamental theology to act in a new way. In fact, its mission depends always on the newly raised questions through which the different human experiences and collectivities confront the Christian faith. Fundamental theology is thus obliged to work in different directions. A good characterization of this area of theology could be as follows: "the risk of the dialogue."[20] The word 'risk' does

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

not mean 'danger' here. It rather suggests the possibility of something happening in a way that is hard to predict. In fact, fundamental theology has not a private ground where it might enclose itself in order to feel secure. It must always go out in order to grasp the challenges issued to the Christian faith, since it is by definition aware of being responsible for this. The dialogue is the rule in the proceeding of fundamental theology. But the direction such dialogue takes and the outcome it opens cannot be determined in advance.

Fundamental theology acts in the border between two realities: the Christian faith and the Church, on the one hand, and everything that is usually included in the concept 'world', on the other hand. Fundamental theology must operate wherever the encounter between the two takes place. Since such encounter varies in space and time, the ground where fundamental theology is invited to work may always change. By being situated on the border we have just mentioned, fundamental theology takes care of border concerns the Christian faith has to deal with in its journey in the midst of human history. Fundamental theology needs therefore to listen to the voices of two sides. In fact, there is no doubt that it must pay attention to what both the Holy Scripture and the Christian tradition say. But it must also notice the multiple and evolving human longings, by being close to the realities people live, particularly those that are painful.[21] The word produced by fundamental theology will result from listening simultaneously to the two voices just mentioned. It is by carrying out the dialogue between them that it will be able to say something new and relevant for a concrete situation.

Fundamental theology needs to pay attention to the realities lived by human beings, because it is not possible to justify the Christian faith while ignoring them. They are realities that influence not only the way one lives. They also weigh in the way one thinks and, therefore, sees oneself. The effort of justifying the Christian faith has always an addressee showing already a particular self-understanding induced by the experience one goes through and the context where one finds oneself. This means that such effort will not succeed without awareness of this self-understanding. In this effort, fundamental theology should

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[21] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

produce a speech proving relevant according to such self-understanding. This implies that the fundamental theology needs to resort to philosophy. In fact, this discipline involves the reflection on the prominent ideas of a collectivity that contribute to configure the mindset of the individuals belonging to it. Philosophy operates regardless of God being discovered or not. This means that it is already present wherever theology starts operating.[22] Therefore, to justify the Christian faith in a particular context – theological task – requires looking at the social and cultural elements that shape the openings as well as the resistances to such faith in that context – philosophical task.

With the help of philosophy, fundamental theology must operate as the ongoing dialogue between the Holy Scripture and the Christian tradition, on the one hand, and the historically situated, human experience, on the other hand. Since the latter is diversified in space and evolves in time, the former can never cease to be taken as its interlocutor. In fact, the living stream of the Christian faith, already with twenty centuries of history, must always show up before the multiple configurations of the human experience. Otherwise, it will become irrelevant. We have already seen that the legitimation of Christian faith is a task needing to adapt to the circumstances where it must occur. It can obviously consist in answering questions directly raised to such faith. But it may also be a modest effort to appear, an effort to be visible with its own fecundity, when many people do not even notice its existence. There will be certainly times when the Christian faith is explicitly challenged to reveal its credentials. This means that it effectively calls people's attention, raises their interest and perhaps makes them think differently. But there will be also times when people are convinced that the Christian faith is not important for human existence. People may feel that a person functions effectively without resorting to such faith. In this case, we have probably the conditions requiring a further equation of the relationship between the remnant and the whole we have been talking about throughout this text. Such

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[22] Karl Rahner, "Philosophy and Theology," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, translated by Karl-H and Boniface Kruger (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1969), p. 76.

equation would appear as one step more in the sequence of equations already enunciated in the text.

We see therefore that the Christian faith may be explicitly requested to justify itself or not. But it is in the interest of such faith to take the initiative of justifying itself even when it is not requested to do so. As a matter of fact, the world or at least a significant part of it today is frequently willing to live without acknowledging the Christian faith. But the world will eventually make its historical journey with the Christian faith, if this decides and does what is necessary to walk with it. This means that the Christian faith and therefore the Church should never cease risking dialogue with the multiple configurations of the human experience in today's world. The availability to take such risk requires self-confidence and courage. But it is what needs to be done in order to get doors opened between the remnant that the Christian faith and the Church represent today and the whole where both must continue to live.

Conclusion: The Living Memory of Christian Faith

The historical journey the Christian faith is called to make in the midst of the human ground where it lives may be understood as a succession of different equations of the relationship between such faith and this ground. They are therefore equations that may be thought according to the scheme 'remnant-whole'. We have enunciated explicitly five: defending itself before the whole, tending to cover the whole, intervening as a portion of the whole, proposing itself to the whole and legitimating itself in the midst of the whole. These equations represent different phases of the historical journey of Christian faith. We may distinguish them through suggestive verbs indicating different concerns of such faith. In the first equation, referring to the time of the persecution in the Roman Empire, we find that the Christian faith struggles 'to be'. In the second equation, referring to the medieval Christendom, we see that the Christian faith basically wants 'to stay'. In the third equation, referring to the relationship between the Church and the world stated by the Second Vatican Council, we notice that the Christian faith wants 'to do'. In the fourth equation, referring to the presence of the Christian faith in our modern, pluralistic societies, we see that such faith mainly seeks 'being chosen'. In the fifth equation, referring to the exposure of the Christian faith to permanent

questioning, we find that such faith makes an effort 'to be understood'. In the end of our present study, we have even pointed to a sixth equation, referring to the presence of the Christian faith in the midst of the unawareness about its existence. Here we have suggested that such faith should try 'to appear' and 'be present'.

We did not intend to enunciate all possible equations of the relationship between the Christian faith and the human ground where it must live. Other equations could probably be thought of, when we look at the historical journey of Christianity until the present. The five we have enunciated, together with the sixth we have pointed to, already gave a good idea of how the basic attitude of the Christian faith evolved in accordance with the changing, social and cultural conditions where it is present. We could eventually think that the appearance of a new equation of the relationship between the Christian faith and the human ground where it lives eliminates the one that functioned right before it. But this is not what happens exactly. It is true that a moment comes when a new equation proves to be more adequate to explain the mentioned relationship. It starts then being the one positioned in the foreground of the Church's collective consciousness. However, the preceding equation that left the foreground does not disappear from such consciousness.[23] It simply loses relevance from the moment that it becomes less effective.

We may say that all the equations we reflected upon regarding the relationship between the Christian faith and the human ground where it lives remain in the patrimony of such faith. They are kept in its living memory. In fact, the Christian faith today shows signs of behaving according to each of those equations depending on the circumstances it goes through. In some situations, that faith struggles to defend itself because of being explicitly attacked. In some others, it tries to preserve what it has institutionally achieved. In some others, it is basically focused on serving the community where it is present. In some others, it works hard to purpose itself to the free choice of the individuals. Still in some others, it seeks to justify itself in the midst of criticism or lack

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[23] Hans Küng, *Une théologie pour le troisième millénaire. Pour un nouveau départ œcuménique*, translated by Joseph Feisthauer (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), p. 214.

of interest. We could say that the Christian faith and therefore the Church are ready to use all the know-how they have acquired throughout their historical journey until today. Of the five equations we have enunciated regarding the relationship between the Christian faith and the human ground where it lives, the simultaneous use of the last three seems more visible. This might be explained by the fact that they came to be in the short period of fifty years, that is, since the Second Vatican Council, due to the acceleration of history. These three equations are practically contemporary.

It should not surprise that new equations of the relationship between the Christian faith and the human ground where it lives come to be in the future. The already mentioned acceleration of history seems to make that highly probable. It is in this rhythm of change that the fundamental theology must be permanently active. From the moment that the Christian faith has to justify itself, such theological discipline cannot stop taking on its responsibility. It must be able to respond to the ongoing challenges raised to the Christian faith, by permanently placing itself in the border zone between this faith and the larger ground of human existence.

Part Two
Believing and Belonging

Reconfigurations of Portuguese Catholicism: Detraditionalization and Decompaction of Identities

ALFREDO TEIXEIRA

When we look for a religious portrait of Portuguese society in the mid-1900s, we discover that features of a strong religious traditionalism still linger. In this context, a good amount of practices have local and regional anchorage. It could be said that representations of the Christian God undertake diverse cultural shaping, in the context of a "God of our land." However, the paths of change, through processes of detraditionalization and individualization, accelerate with an increased political democratization since 1974, with the integration of post-colonial population flows and their integration in the European community. At the beginning of the 21st century, the Catholic identity continues to have a strong presence in Portuguese society, but with different reconfiguretions of belief and belonging, and giving body to a very diverse landscape.

Detraditionalization and the Religion of the Portuguese

An investigation published in 1983, by Pierre Sanchis, about Portuguese *romarias*, showed how these festive practices were a place of tensions and exchange between a religiousness of local and regional nature (called "popular religion") and more institutionalized forms of religion of a more universal nature (called "official religion").[1] The work of Moisés Espírito Santo explores this contrast. In his point of view, the peasant religion is not genuinely Christian. It is a synthesis of diverse religious systems juxtaposed according to the group's needs.[2]

The crossing of this religious substratum – with specificities in Hispanic Christianity – finds cultural expression in what different

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[1] Cf. Pierre Sanchis, *Arraial, festa de um povo: as romarias portuguesas* (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1983).

[2] Cf. Moisés Espírito Santo, *Religião popular portuguesa* (Lisboa: Regra do Jogo, 1994).

investigational contexts have called "parish civilization."[3] We recall that there the Church was the main instrument of territory, almost always a geographical center, but most of all, the symbolic center, a central emblem of the representation of the population's identity as a moral community. The relationship between parish priest and parishioners was established in the scope of spatial proximity, which allowed for easy access to rituals, preaching and religious instruction; it was a center to intercede for favorable conditions for farming and for a good harvest and also to save people, animals and objects from evil through blessing; as a community, the parish gathered not only those living in the land of the living, but also enabled the management of mediation that reconnects the living and the dead in a believers' lineage that is continually celebrated. This shared religiousness found, in Christian memory, the genealogical, narrative and ritual resources required for its expression and its process of transmission – especially through diverse ritual and devotional mediations. In turn, the Catholic institutional habitat found, in this shared sociability, a place for its cultural rooting.

With this condition, Catholic institutions had a preponderant role in the processes of social reproduction and in the constitution of normative models with strong incidence in family civilities and moralities.[4] A certain social immobility associated to this "parish civilization" is favored by certain specifically Portuguese problems. It is necessary to keep in mind that, in the mid-1900s, Portuguese society was very rural and had an elevated rate of illiteracy. In the census carried out at the beginning of the 1950s, 40.4% of those surveyed declared they could

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[3] The use of the category "parish civilization" is particularly influenced by Lambert's investigation: cf. Yves Lambert, *Dieu change en Bretagne: La religion à Limerzel de 1900 à nos jours* (Paris: Cerf, 1985). See also: Olivier Bobineau, *Dieu change en Paroisse: une comparaison francoallemande* (Rennes: Publications Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), pp. 13-15; Alfredo Teixeira, *"Entre a exigência e a ternura": Uma antropologia do habitat institucional católico* (Lisboa: Paulinas, 2005), pp. 176-183.

[4] Cf. Raúl Iturra, *A religião como teoria da reprodução social* (Lisboa: Fim de Século, 2001).

not read. Even in cities such as Lisbon and Oporto, the numbers were high – 17.7% and 20% respectively.[5]

In this context, the political and Catholic institutions became concentric.[6] The image of a peasant society was the place for resignation of many codes of conservation of a line of belief. Yet this "Portugal-village" also served the interests of an ideology that legitimized authoritarian forms of social control. The symbolic correlation between the "village" and the "nation" befitted the enclosure that the Salazar regime sustained. Moisés de Lemos Martins, in *O olho de Deus no discurso salazarista* (1990), showed how a certain Catholic morality was appropriate, as a spiritual foundation, for Salazar's disciplinary power.[7] The family and the corporate dynamics were decisive places for this political work of "patriotism-making." As President of the Board of Ministers between 1933 and 1968, António Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) recognized that the adherence "to the principles of one religion and to the dictates of one morality, let us say the Catholic uniformity of the Country," had been, throughout the centuries, "one of the most powerful factors of unity and cohesion of the Portuguese Nation."[8] Thence it was in his best interest to "take advantage of the religious feature as a stabilizing element of society and to reintegrate the Nation in the historical line of its moral unity."[9] The Salazar reasoning based on the syllogism "Portuguese, therefore Catholic" was at the service of a battle for the symbolic fabrication of a "Portuguese world."

The phenomenon of the "apparitions of Fatima" (1917) had a particular influence in the transformation of the Portuguese religiousness, shared and local. A transformation began that would deepen the gap

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[5] Cf. Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *IX Recenseamento geral da população* II (Lisboa, 1950), pp. 204-217

[6] Cf. Mário Ferreira Lages, "A religiosidade popular na segunda metade do século XX" (Manuel Braga da Cruz & Natália Correia Guedes, eds., *A Igreja e a cultura contemporânea em Portugal, 1950-2000*, Lisboa: Universidade Católica Editora), pp. 379-383.

[7] Cf. Moisés de Lemos Martins, *O olho de Deus no discurso salazarista* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1990).

[8] António de Oliveira Salazar, *Discursos IV* (Coimbra: Coimbra Editora, 1951), p. 371.

[9] *Ibidem*, 372-373.

between the traditional practices of *romaria* and the pilgrimages to ecclesiastically approved sanctuaries, according to a logic that goes beyond the local and regional scale.[10] The regulatory initiatives of practices in Fatima point toward a modification of paradigm concerning the pilgrimage format. From the onset, the orientations given to the pilgrim accentuate the penitential sense of the practices, the imperative of conversion, and the search for a therapeutic answer to the evils "of soul and of body," but they are disconnected from the social dynamic characteristic of the *romaria*, where the religious expressions present themselves as markedly syncretic.[11]

In the perspective of the historian António Matos Ferreira, the 1930s can be seen as a period of the incorporation of Fatima into the dynamics of Catholicism in Portugal.[12] Fatima became the center of pilgrimage, calling on individual conversion and giving body to a religiousness of the masses. Fatima touches on some of the most central practices in the repertoire of Catholic devotion, such as the rosary, Eucharistic adoration and pilgrimage. However, this happens under the horizon of an institutional regulation that would seek to keep this hierophantic place from being absorbed by the local or regional *romaria* dynamic. In this sense, the phenomenon of Fatima affirms itself in the field of detraditionalization of the religiousness of the Portuguese. This happens in two ways, which paradoxically call to a religious modernity: on one hand, a concentration on the narrative of the apparitions in a "message" – privileging the doctrinal and ideological dimensions, in detriment to the miraculous plot; on the other hand, centralizing that

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[10] Cf. Pedro Penteado, "Para uma história dos santuários portugueses," *Piedade popular: sociabilidades, representações, espiritualidades: Actas do Colóquio Internacional, 20-23 de Novembro de 1998* (Lisboa: Terramar, Centro de História e Cultura & História das Ideias da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa), pp. 43-55; Lages, "A religiosidade popular na segunda metade do século XX," pp. 381-387

[11] Cf. Alfredo Teixeira, "Catolicismo – entre o território e a rede," Idem (ed.), *Identidades religiosas em Portugal: ensaio interdisciplinar* (Lisboa: Paulinas, 2012), pp. 157-173.

[12] Cf. António Matos Ferreira, "Catolicismo (movimento católico e Fátima)," Carlos A. Moreira Azevedo & Luciano Cristino (eds.), *Enciclopédia de Fátima* (Estoril: Princípia, 2007), p. 91.

message in a call to individual conversion, which accompanies the itineraries of individualization and subjectivity characteristic of that religious modernity.[13]

This compromise between tradition and religious modernity, with the authorized mediation of the Catholic institution, should be considered in the interpretation of the phenomenon of the expansion of the phenomenon "Fatima." In the interpretation of the sociologist Policarpo Lopes, Fatima became a place for observation of the features of religious modernity by allowing for a new field of integration of traditional practices, till now "sedentary," tied to local and regional structures, and now made fragile by new mobility and other ways of building collective identity. If, in the sedentary regime an identity was represented in symbols of local communities, particularly in the patron saints, in the new context of mobility and deterritorialization, these symbols are substituted by others of national character.[14]

The deepening of this religious deterritorialization can be seen on a regional scale, in the 1960s and 1970s. In his study on the northeastern region of the country, Alto Minho, where indicators of strong traditional anchorage of religion prevail, José da Silva Lima showed how "emigration," the "factory" and the "city" introduced dynamics of change in the production of the festive event, in the pluralization of the biographical itineraries and in the symbolic configuration of the cosmic and social support. Be it by confrontation with exogenous models, received through emigration, be it by new networks of industrial sociability, the representations of the "God of our land" suffered heavy erosion. The experience of urban cultures would demand, in this way, new forms of religious community. We were facing the end of the era of a compact, local territorialism, a social framework in which it was possible to immediately find each person, object or event in a stable network of local meaning. The dynamics of individualization, pluralization and multiplication of belonging were

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[13] Cf. Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Le pèlerin et le converti: la religion en mouvement* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999).

[14] Cf. Policarpo Lopes, *Para uma sociologia do catolicismo: entre a depressão de sentido da modernidade e a experimentação pósmoderna* (Lisboa: Letras e Conceitos Lda., Rei dos Livros, 2010), p. 177.

underway in Portuguese society. The process of establishing a democratic regime with the April Revolution would be, in this context, a facilitating event and accelerator of this transformation. The process of dissolving religious traditions on the local level would reconfigure itself, mainly as a movement toward dissolving the Catholic character of the country.

Societal Decatholization

In order to read these transformations, let us briefly pause on the "Study on Freedom and Religion," carried out in 1973, promoted by the Portuguese Institute of Public Opinion and Market Studies and coordinated by Luís de França.[15] This was one of the first sociographic studies, at a national level, about the values and religious behaviors of the Portuguese. This investigation has a particular characteristic: the fact that it was carried out before the Revolution of the 25th of April of 1974. The sample, created through the quota method, based on the 1960 Census, has the following characteristics: those surveyed are older than 20 years of age, have at least primary education and reside in places with more than 10,000 inhabitants.[16] Thus, the design of this sample has particular importance for understanding the relative weight of those who present themselves as Catholics.

Note that this study sought to identify the tendencies of Portuguese society in that which concerns these regions of information: attitudes about religious freedom, about the Concordat between the Portuguese State and the Holy See, about Religious Education and about the different kinds of freedom that various religious groups asked for.[17] Keeping in mind the categories used in the study, the framework of religious positions presented itself in 1973 with great categorical diversity, even if with scarce representation for religious minorities (*vide* Table 1).

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[15] Cf. Luís de França, *Estudo sobre liberdade e religião em Portugal* (Lisboa: Instituto Português de Opinião Pública e Estudos de Mercado & Moraes Editores, 1973).

[16] Cf. *ibidem*, p. 189.

[17] Cf. *ibidem*, p. 8.

Table 1: Categories of religious identification (1973)

Religious position	%
Catholics	84,6
Presbyterians	0,1
Baptists	0,4
Pentecostals	0,4
Other denominations	0,6
7th Day Adventists	0,5
Jehovah's Witnesses	0,2
Other religions	0,1
Indifferent	8,9
Atheist or agnostic	3,7
Did not answer	0,5

In 1973, the religious diversity of Portuguese society, regarding organized religions, was concentrated in Protestant groups, including Evangelicals (e.g. Presbyterians, Methodists, Darbist Brothers, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Pentecostals). For this reason, there are few surveyed that do not fit in with the mentioned denominations and that include themselves in the category of "other religions" (0,1%).

In this 1973 study, "almost half of those that call themselves Catholics only rarely or never (45,2% is the sum of both categories) participate in acts of worship."[18] At the same time, a large part of Catholics (42,8%) goes to mass once a week – this Catholic practice was more habitual than it is currently.[19]

The greater group of people that, in this study, identify themselves with organized religions, mainly with Catholicism (84,6%), is opposed to the group without religion – which, in turn, is distributed into two categories: those that are "indifferent" (8,9%) and those of "atheists or agnostics" (3,7%). If we sum up all the values obtained from these two

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 28.

[19] Cf. Alfredo Teixeira, "A eclesiosfera católica: pertença diferenciada," *Didaskalia* 43 (2013) 157-204.

categories, we find that an important percentage of the Portuguese population represented (12,6%), in 1973, does not identify itself with any kind of religious belonging – with accentuated prevalence in the youth and educated.[20]

In this study, the issue of freedom focuses particularly on the topics which came from the Concordat relationship between the Portuguese State and the Holy See. It is important to retain some conclusions observed because in them we discover the most important change taking place, which pertains to the normative role of religions. It is important to stress that, pertaining to the content of a necessary revision of the Concordat, the interest of the respondents falls upon the alteration of the regime that regulated marriage and divorce for Catholic spouses. The unanimity on this point contrasts with the dis-interest for other issues, such as chaplaincies, concessions, exemptions, etc. It is also worth mentioning the interest among youth for a change in the regime of exclusivity that benefitted the teaching of moral and Catholic religion in schools. In this way, the "average Portuguese" rejects in the Concordat two social controls in the Catholic Church: the ideological, carried out through religious education, and the ethical-sexual, carried out through instituting the indissolubility of Catholic marriage.[21] The findings of this study point to a view of events that leads to the withdrawal of that Concordat clause as an expression of individual freedom. In the destructtion of that link between the secular and religious spheres, the dynamics of emancipation of individuals from devices of social control has a more important role than the attitudes which challenge the privileged situation of Catholic institu-tions. In this way the process of societal decatholicization is accelerated.

The results of this survey point to a social dynamic that leads to new articulations of secular and religious fields, while safeguarding individual freedom, going beyond the traditional models of social "totemization" through religious representations and institutions. However, this imperative for change is within Catholicism. Recall that the reception of Vatican Council II was underway, in the local Portuguese Churches, in the context of *aggiornamento*, which not only

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[20] Cf. França, *Estudo sobre liberdade e religião em Portugal*, pp. 25-26.

[21] Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 66-75, 91-93.

remodeled the way the Catholic Church represented herself, but also her place in the public square. This flow of council ideas would be decisive to fuel the growing challenges to many of the dictatorship's aspects – especially those which had direct bearing on questions of peace and development, topics which had become central in the more recent Roman magisterium.[22] In this context, the tensions which arise in the process of democratization of the country do not primarily concern issues of the regime, but problems which refer to the order of shared values in the construction of society. And, in this arena, the Catholic Church no longer has sole moral authority. In this communicative space, she will have to use the necessary means to make her voice heard – now, one voice among others. This was a necessary lesson.[23]

Catholic "Exculturation"?

In its own frame of modernity, Portuguese society has seen tears and repairs in its religious fabric. In the last forty years, the dynamics of pluralization resulted in an increase in non-religious identity, to the affirmation of the universe of minority religious belonging, and to the unpacking of the Catholic identity. Based on data from two surveys – "Catholicism and Culture in Contemporary Portuguese Society (1999)"[24] and "Religious Identities in Portugal: representations, values

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[22] Cf. Teresa Líbano Monteiro, "A Igreja Católica e o 25 de Abril," *Communio* 12 (1995) 364-377; Luís Salgado de Matos, "Para uma tipologia do relacionamento entre o Estado e a Igreja," António Matos Ferreira & Luís Salgado de Matos (eds.), *Interações do Estado e das Igrejas: Instituições e Homens* (Lisboa: ICS, 2013), pp. 25-105; Paulo Fontes, "D. António Ribeiro e o seu tempo (1928-1998)," *ibidem,* pp. 201-239; Teresa Clímaco Leitão, "A Igreja Católica e os partidos democratas-cristãos na revolução em Portugal (1974-1975)," *ibidem*, pp. 143-167.
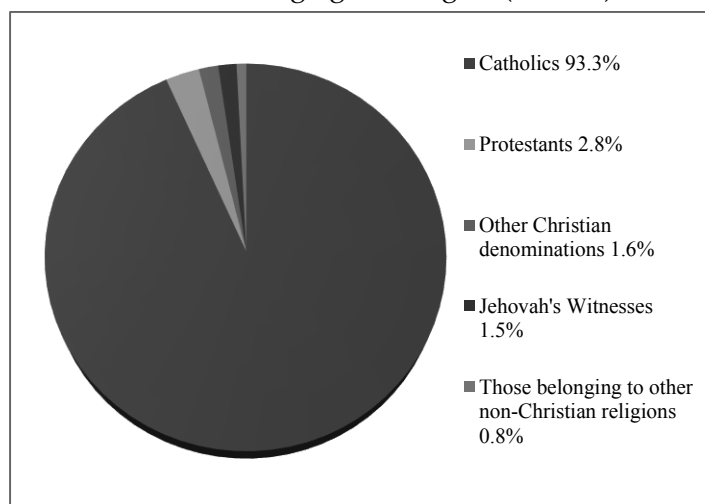
[23] Cf. Helena Vilaça & Maria João Oliveira, "Portrait du catholicisme au Portugal," Alfonso Pérez-Agote (ed.), *Portraits du catholicisme: une comparaison européenne* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), pp. 209-253.

[24] Cf. M. L. Marinho Antunes, "Catolicismo e cultura na sociedade portuguesa contemporânea," Manuel Braga da Cruz & Natália Correia Guedes (eds.), *A Igreja e a cultura contemporânea em Portugal, 1950-2000* (Lisboa: Universidade Católica Editora, 2000), pp. 437-456.

and practices (2011-12)"[25] – it is possible to describe the Catholic identity from a double perspective: its differentiation from other religious positions, and its internal pluralization (considering the rhythms of Sunday practice and customs of inclusion in communities).

The relative position of Catholics can be observed from two points of view. When looking from the point of view of believers who belong to a religion, Catholics make up 93,3% of the population. When looking from the point of view of those that self-represent themselves as believers, their relative weight decreases to 88,5% (*vide* Chart 1 and Chart 2)

Chart 1: Percentage of distribution taking into account the range of believers belonging to a religion (2011-12)

- Catholics 93.3%
- Protestants 2.8%
- Other Christian denominations 1.6%
- Jehovah's Witnesses 1.5%
- Those belonging to other non-Christian religions 0.8%

Taking into account the elevated comparability of the categories mentioned, in 1999 and 2011-12, it is possible to make a chart which allows for the comparative reading of the distribution of the population which declares itself as belonging to a religion (*vide* Table 2).

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[25] Cf. Alfredo Teixeira (ed.), *Crer e pertencer: a sociedade portuguesa no início do século XXI*, *Didaskalia* 43 (2013).

Chart 2: Percentage of distribution taking into account the range of
believers belonging to or not belonging to a religion (2011-12)
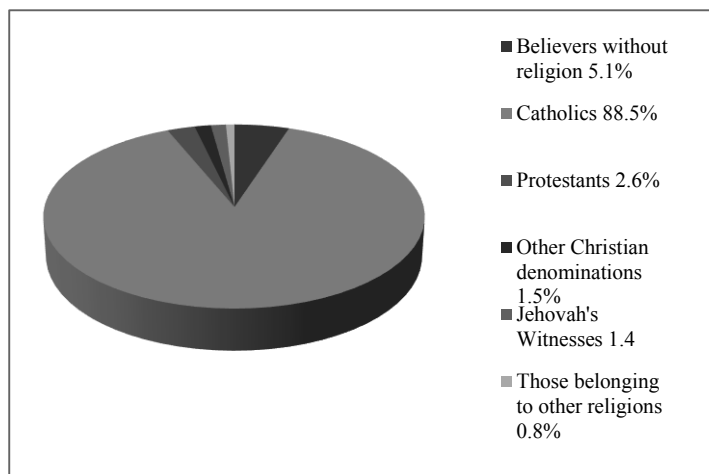
Table 2: Comparative chart concerning the population with religion,
1999-2011

Believers who belong to a religion	1999 %	2011 %
Catholic	97.0	93.3
Protestant	0.3	2.8
Jehovah's Witness	1.0	1.5
Other Christian denominations	1.5	1.6
Non-Christian religions	0.2	0.8

A relative decrease in the number of those who declare themselves
Catholic can be seen, as well as an increase in percentage concerning
other religious positions, with particular weight for the protestant
universe (mainly Evangelical). The relative decrease of the Catholic
population becomes more evident in the following chart, using more
comprehensive categories of religious position (*vide* Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison between the Catholic population and those
belonging to another denomination or without religion

Religious position	1999 %	2011 %
Catholic	86.9	79.5
Other religion	2.7	5.7
Without religion	8.2	14.2
Ns/Nr	2.2	0.6
Total	100	100

For those without religion, all of the categories show an increase in percentage between 1999 and 2011: indifferent, 1,7% < 3,2%: agnostic, 1,7% < 2,2%; atheist, 2,7% < 4,1%; believer without religion, 2,1% < 4,6%. The categories "Protestants (including Evangelicals)" and "believer without religion" are those that show greatest relative growth. Globally, the relative growth of those without religion in relation to the number of Catholics is more pronounced than the increase in number of those belonging to other religious denominations. This is particularly relevant in the case of the category "believers without religion." This category seeks to answer the complexity of articulations between believing and belonging. A hypothesis can be formed in which the introduction of this category prevents, by other means, the fostering, by inertia, of a Catholic over-representation.

In this survey, the range of those "without religion" can be characterized by the differentiation of believers and non-believers (vide Chart 3). In the sphere of goals that are sought here, it is important to verify at which point this set, beyond the more diffusive religious categories, can be read as a Catholic periphery, whose ties of belonging are very tenuous, although not very far from ties of Catholic socialization. Note that 51.4% of the believers "without religion" baptized their children and a significant part of this group facilitated opportunities of religious socialization for their children – in the catechetical context (37,5%) or in a school context (18,9%). However, 68,4% of "believers without religion" acknowledge never or almost never participating in religious acts of worship and 19,2% do so once or twice a year. The

closeness of more formalized religious dynamics is associated especially to trajectories of childhood and youth socialization, which might be a trace of the metamorphosis of a Catholic memory together with a religious ethos with educational purposes.[26] The information on subsistence, in the history of those "without religion," of some decisions which approached the field of institutionalized religion must be made compatible, however, with the fact that 48% of "believers without religion" declared having changed religious position through-out their lives. If we look at these as a universe, we can observe that in 58.5% of cases the trajectory of change is described by the disaffection for any religions whatsoever. This quick characterization allows for an indexing of the exploratory validity of the hypothesis in which the growth of this position should be correlated with the decrease percentage of Catholics (vide Chart 3).

Chart 3: Those not belonging to a religion

- Non-believers 67.5%
- Believers without religion 32.5%
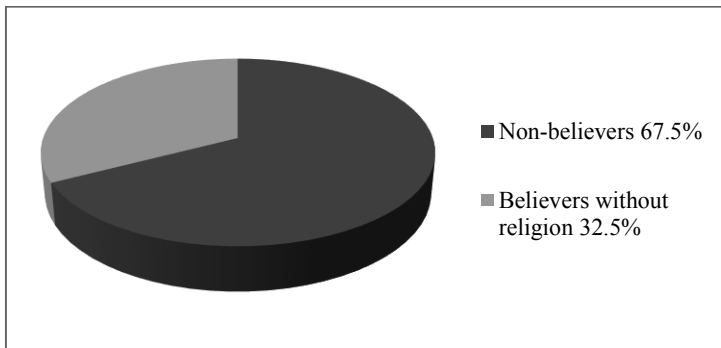
The data indicates the weight of a primary Catholic socialization and point to the conservation of a cultural Catholicism throughout the course of identities. In this context it is not easy to document a clear "exculturation" of Catholicism.[27] The indicators of the presence of Catholic instruction and ritual are very substantial (*vide* Chart 4). The

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[26] Cf. Micheline Milot, *Une religion à transmettre? Le choix des parents: Essai d'analyse culturelle* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1991).

[27] Cf. Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Catholicisme, la fin d'un monde* (Paris: Bayard, 2003), pp. 90-131; Olivier Roy, *La sainte ignorance: Le temps de la religion sans culture* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), pp. 39-80.

Chart shows a strong presence of indicators of Catholic socialization in Portuguese society, in decreasing order, from Baptism to Confirmation. In other words, the acknowledgment of a strong presence of devices of primary socialization should add to the evidence that participation in identifying rituals diminishes throughout adolescence until young adult age – the practice of Catholic marriage, in conjunction with other social functions, cannot be read in this perspective of socialization.[28]

Chart 4: Acts performed in the Catholic Church (2011-12)
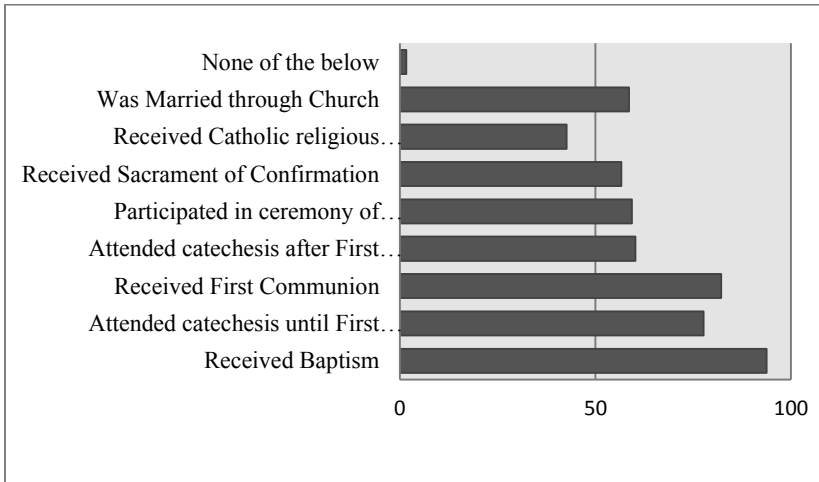
The persistence of the cultural influence of the Roman Catholic Church allows for it to continue to be one of the most important symbolic goods (both moral and religious) in Portuguese society, but that does not necessarily reinforce the means of organization in the schemes of Catholic belonging. It can explain, for example, the attention that continues to be given to the intervention of the Churches in the public sphere.[29] The historical Churches can continue to be seen as

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[28] Cf. Alfredo Teixeira, "*Casar pela Igreja*: pedagogia paroquial e terciarização dos estilos de vida," *Theologica* 41 (2006) 75-96.

[29] Debates on the concept of public religion should be included in this issue: cf. Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994), pp. 86-88; see also: Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Charles

depositories of the most important symbolic-religious capital, but not in an "exclusive" way."[30] One should not forget that the plasticity which characterizes the "inclusive" religious attitudes (available to integrate exogenous symbolic references in their believer's mind) does not appear as pure indeterminism. On the contrary, it is achieved in the frame of an imaginative coherence which has the tradition that organized the religious socialization of the individual as its residual cradle – a type of loyalty with the "mother" religious tradition. The individuals remain connected to the Church in which they were socialized, regardless of the evolution of their own beliefs. Experience can engender resistance to rules imposed by a tradition, but it also lives off of the need to refer to a stable, symbolic system. The data from the sociological survey should be interpreted in the same way, which shows that the Churches continue to be represented based on social functions, a fact which challenges the idea of "privatization of religion." The results of the survey confirm the persistence of the understanding which associates Churches to humanitarian aid.[31] The representations of the religious include, therefore, the social relevance of those very Churches, which does not mean, however, that the capacity to be the matrix of social order is necessarily attributed to them.

Decompaction of Catholic Identity

The sociographic and ethnographic data of the investigations carried out in the last two decades, in the societies of the North Atlantic, point to an accentuated individualization of religion: the decrease in the inclusive capacity of religious institutions, corresponding to a growing autonomy of the individual toward symbolic systems of existential orientation. Take, for example, the data studied by Manuel Luís Marinho Antunes. This survey used the self-classification method for the categories "practicing" and "non-practicing." Increasing to more than 60%, the number of those surveyed who present themselves as

Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

[30] Cf. Alfredo Teixeira, *"Não sabemos já donde a luz mana": ensaio sobre as identidades religiosas* (Lisboa: Paulinas, 2004), pp. 78-85.

[31] Cf. Roland Campiche, "La religion, une affaire privée?," Olivier Fatio et al., *Pour sortir l'oecuménisme du purgatoire* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1993), pp. 49-66.

"practicing Catholics" is not validated by the results of the surveys of Sunday practices. In fact, in using this method of self-classification, the category "practicing" was available for multiple and modular recompositions. With this survey it was not possible to identify the outline of this diversity. The results, however, when compared with others, affirm that the category of "practicing" has undergone individual reinterpretations, not coinciding with the boundaries currently defined by Catholic institutions, or considered by classical sociology regarding Catholicism. This is the territory which favors current dislocations between believing and belonging (*vide* Table 4 and 5).

Table 4: Composition of the percentage of Catholics and those surveyed of another religious denomination who consider themselves "practicing" or "not practicing" (1999)[32]

Self-classification	Catholic	Of another religious denomination
Practicing	61.1	84.4
Non-practicing	38.9	15.6

In the 2011-2012 survey, the question about religious practice which uses the method of self-classification shows that believers belonging to a religion tend to largely self-represent themselves as practicing.

It is in Catholic areas that the percentages of those who self-classify themselves as practicing and non-practicing approach each other, even if there remains a preponderance of those practicing (56,1%). The observation of these numbers should take into account two axes for interpretation: a) on one hand, what is socially described as the "practice" of each religious denomination can be very different; b) on the other hand, in the context of ample enlargement of individual autonomy as opposed to institutions, believers shape what gives content to that practice in a more autonomous way.

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[32] Cf. Antunes, "Catolicismo e cultura," p. 441.

Table 5: Distribution of believers without religion according to the self-classification of practicing/non-practicing

Believers belonging to a religion		(IF A BELIEVER AND HAS A RELIGION) Do you consider yourself practicing or not of your religion?		
		Practicing	Non-practicing	Total
Catholic	N	1701	1330	3031
	%	56.1%	43.9%	100.0%
Protestants (includes Evangelicals)	N	76	14	90
	%	84.4%	15.6%	100.0%
Other Christians	N	31	21	52
	%	59.6%	40.4%	100.0%
Jehovah's Witnesses	N	36	12	48
	%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Those belonging to non-Christian religions	N	21	5	26
	%	80.8%	19.2%	100.0%
Total	N	1865	1382	3247

Therefore, it is necessary to take into account that the "practice," even if it describes itself according to the outlines of expected institutional objectivity (presence at Sunday mass), presents new characteristics nowadays. Other than the formed positions of "practicing" and non-practicing," the phenomenon of "irregularity" created a new soil for investigation. In his comparative study, the Spanish sociologist Millán Arroyo Menéndez, based on data available on international networks of investigation, showed how irregularity in practice became a social phenomenon of great importance for the study of Catholic identity in Portugal[33] (*vide* Chart 6).

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[33] Cf. Millán Arroyo Menéndez, "Religiosidade e valores em Portugal: comparação com a Espanha e a Europa católica," *Análise Social* 42 (2007) 757-787.

Chart 6: Evolution of presence at mass according to data per sample[34]
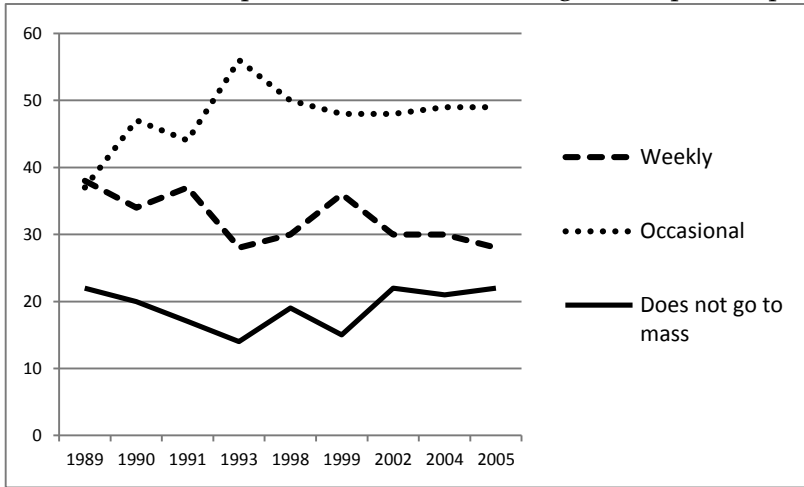
The curves' behavior allows us to observe that the percentage of the population that does not go to mass remains globally stable. In contrast, the curve of weekly practice presents continual erosion. The curve of occasional practice has a behavior of symmetrical tendency, when compared with that of weekly practice. As the Spanish sociologist highlighted, the fundamental alteration, considering the Portuguese population in global terms, is not the relative increase of those that never go to mass, but instead the increase of the number of those who define themselves as occasionally practicing. This category describes irregularities of diverse indentations, but globally can also signal the process of individualization of belief, given that the irregularity is the consequence of a certain emancipation of the individual from the religious institution: going to mass regularly – according to diverse profiles – means shaping practice to the personal logic of the practitioner, even if in the context of an interfamily religiousness[35].

This irregularity has been indistinguishably bonded into categories which do not allow the reading of internal diversification of the feelings and practices which translate the modes of belonging. The data from

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[34] Cf. *ibidem,* p. 762. The data gathered has diverse sources: for the years 1990 and 1999 *EVS* measurements were used; for the years 2002 and 2004, that of ESS; and for the remaining, Euro barometer data was used.

[35] Cf. Teixeira, *"Entre a exigência e a ternura,"* pp. 175-210.

the 2011-12 survey allows for the stratification of Catholics based on indicators of presence in Sunday mass, and also considering the enrollment or not in community-based activities, group or associative – here there is a characterization of the "visible religion"[36]. The categories used do not seek semantic innovation. Privilege is given to those that already have an established history and are close to a certain understanding found among Catholic leaders in the area.

When this survey looked to stratify the answers of Catholics based on Sunday mass attendance, parish integration and belonging to ecclesial movements, it was understood that the main information to gather was more about belonging to the Catholic Church and less about a rigorous quantification of Sunday attendance – recall that 34,6% identify themselves as weekly practitioners (nuclear Catholics) and, according to available numbers, 49,1% of Catholics can be included in a shared set in which the smallest common denominator expresses itself in going to mass once a month. This diversity of behavior regarding Sunday mass attendance has a strong correlation with other indicators of denominational belonging. Globally, this internal differentiation among Catholics results in a difficult articulation between believing and belonging. It is often referred to, in social investigation, as the remarkable empirical distance between what is ethnographically observed and the results obtained from a casual sample, concerning Catholic Sunday practice. This has been observed in different national contexts. It necessarily implies that what those surveyed meant to say on questions about regularity of practice must be pursued[37]. Taking into account the Catholic world, the question of

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[36] This is paraphrased from Roland J. Campiche, *Le religion visible: pratiques et croyances en Suisse* (Lausanne : Presses Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes, 2010). It is possible to assume, in this publication, a particular dialogue with the classical perspective of Thomas Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society (*New York: Macmillan, 1967).

[37] This observation has been the object of sociological investigation in the USA. In 1993, a team of investigators highlighted the "contradiction between poll-based reports of Church participation and denominational reality": C. Kirk Hadaway, et. al., "What the Polls Do not Show: A Closer Look at US Church Attendance," *American Sociological Review* 58 (1993)

mass attendance allowed for the detection of a diversity which is not simply described by the disjunction practicing/non-practicing (*vide* Table 6).

Table 6: Frequency of participation in mass (2011-12)

How often do you go to mass?	N	%	Valid %
Never	308	8.0	10.3
Rarely or less than once a year	467	12.2	15.6
1-2 times a year	287	7.5	9.6
3-6 times a year	310	8.1	10.4
7-11 times a year	151	3.9	5.1
1-2 times a month	467	12.2	15.6
Every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation	884	23.1	29.5
More than once a week	118	3.1	4.0
Total	2994	78.0	100.0
Missing Ns/Nr	58	1.5	
System	785	20.5	
Total	843	22.0	
Total	3837	100.0	

In trying to find a model that includes the diversity of behaviors based on this "visible religion," a categorical chart was made that seeks to describe the Catholic "ecclesiosphere" based on circles of approximation or detachment with respect to a nuclear Catholicism – that in

741-752.   The detection of this problem can demand the elaboration of other measurement models: Kirk Hadaway, et al., "How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week? An Alternative Approach to Measurement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44 (2005) 307-322. These irregularities of measurements have been studied in other national contexts: Chistophe Monnot, "Mesurer la pratique religieuse: Différents mesures, différent taux? Analyse comparative à partir de la Suisse," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 158 (2012) 137-156; Marco Marzano, *Quel che resta dei cattolici: inchiesta sulla crisi della chiesa in Italia* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2012), pp. 25-86.

which the articulation of believing and belonging presents itself as socially more cohesive (*vide* Table 7).

Table 7: Typological characterization of Catholics according to practice

Catholics according to "practice"	Aggregated indicators, concerning the question: "How often do you go to mass?"
Nominal Catholic	Never
Occasional practicing Catholic	Rarely or less than once a year 1-2 times a year
Irregular practicing Catholic	3-6 times a year 7-11 times a year
Regular practicing Catholic[38]	1-2 times a month
Observant Catholic	Every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation More than once a week
Militant Catholic	Those to whom "observant practice" is added to belonging to a movement in the Catholic Church or who carry out a parish activity

From observing this data in this categorical chart, it is clear that there is a vast distribution of behavior (*vide* Table 8). The most numerous group is constituted by occasional practitioners (25,2%), but immediately followed by observant (23,6%). Note that the group that is less represented in terms of percentage is the nominal (10,3%). Among those that present indicators of "practice," the militants – who present

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[38] Note that the category "regular" describes here a social regularity, in the landscape of lifestyles in Portuguese society. Evidently, this does not refer to the "rule" of the institution. The category seeks to socially characterize the differences, and does not promote any type of remodeling in criteria of institutional conformity. We are looking at a place of individual shaping of forms of institutional connection.

a more marked profile of inclusion in the Catholic community – are presented as less numerous (11%). If we take the minimum common denominator for the generic definition of "practicing Catholic," attendance at least once a month – an option that is present in different contexts of investigation of the "practice" in Christian churches – a number of 49,1% is obtained, in the case of having as a reference the sum of those who identified themselves as Catholics in this sample, and 38,4% in relation to the total of the sample. The relative number of Catholics who say they go to mass, at least every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, are presented as enhanced in this study – 34,6%[39].

Table 8: *Catholics according to "practice"* (2011-12)

Catholics, according to practice	N	%
Nominal Catholic	308	10.3
Occasional practicing Catholic	754	25.2
Irregular practicing Catholic	462	15.4
Regular practicing Catholic	434	14.5
Observant Catholic	708	23.6
Militant Catholic	329	11.0
Total	2994	100.0

The object of the question does not totally coincide, but if we observe the results of the survey about weekend practices, we notice a number of another order: 17,2% of Catholics say that they went to mass (or a religious act of worship) last weekend. The presence of this gap points to the need to understand what those surveyed really mean to say when they choose a certain level of Sunday attendance. The data that are gathered here reinforce the hypothesis that the answers of many Catholics correspond more to the description of a feeling of belonging, rather than to the thoroughness of a measurement of Sunday practice.

[39] In the study, already referred to, by M. Arroyo Menéndez, the listed values are always equal to or higher than 30%, up to 38%, with the exception of the years 1993 and 2005, with the value of 28% of weekly practice– cf. *supra* Chart 6.

This analysis points to a decrease in the regulatory power of the institution, but also signals the possibility of maintenance of different levels of inclusion, in a more ample spectrum of individual autonomy. A more detailed analysis of the data, by type of Catholic, shows a great homogeneity of behavior in each class of identification, describing a movement of most inclusion, from the nominal Catholic to the militant Catholic. Taking into account its centrality in Portuguese society, Fatima can be a test of context for this hypothesis (*vide* Chart 8).

Chart 8: Trips to Fatima according to types of Catholics (2011-12)
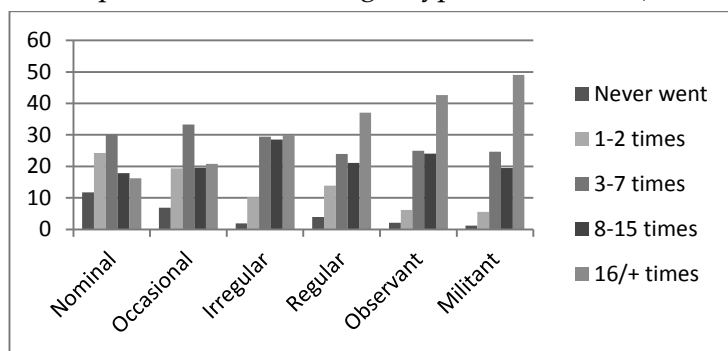
It should be noted that the frequency of trips to Fatima has a strong correlation with the model of Catholic differentiation. Fatima has almost become a gauge for the social expression of Catholic inclusion. This polarity does not exclusively depend on the dynamics of pilgrimage, or of other chosen practices. Precisely because Fatima has developed different pastoral dynamics in the Catholic field, the frequency of trips to Fatima increases to the extent that we near the more nuclear circle that describes the "ecclesiosphere"[40].

Epilogue

The results of the surveys do not allow for proof of an "exculturation" of Catholicism in Portuguese society. Instead, one should speak of a "societal process of decatholization" according to an

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[40] Cf. Alfredo Teixeira, "Catolicismo – entre o território e a rede," pp. 149-173.

expression from Jean-Paul Willaime[41]. Catholic institutions are not, in fact, a sacred canopy for a social structure. However, Portuguese Catholicism characterizes itself by a strong cultural inclusion in Portuguese society. In particular, through the presence of Catholic social initiatives, and because of symbolic-rituals embracing both the individual and family circles of life. These places of strong inclusion suffer, however, from vast remodeling. As an institution in Portuguese society, the Roman Catholic Church is, most likely, that which brings the greatest socializing strength. Yet this condition coexists with the phenomenon of pluralization of believers' identities in view of religion. Moreover, social differentiation is internal to Catholicism, thus favoring a recomposition of the landscape of differentiated belonging. Forming an "ecclesiosphere" – from the nuclear circles to the more peripheral circles of identification, Portuguese Catholicism reveals a strong cultural inclusion in Portuguese society. This inclusion does not translate into a compact Catholicism, but reveals a pluriverse of belonging – socially visible, but oftentimes invisible to the logic of pastoral action in Catholic institutions.

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[41] Cf. Jean-Paul Willaime, *Europe et religions: les enjeux du XXIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2004).

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Requirements snd Possible Options for a Plural Integration at a Time of "Transition"

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Signs of "erosion" (one can also say "fragmentation" or "disintergration") have begun to appear in the understanding and practice of Catholic identity in Portugal, as compared with the behaviours traditionally considered central to this identity. This obliges us to reflect on those ecclesiological criteria which make possible a more realistic, wide-ranging and coherent analysis of current phenomena and help to clarify more realistic and credible pastoral options. At a "critical" moment in the reception of Vatican Council II – a moment marked by attitudes of intentional, ostensible or even deliberate indifference – and in an ecclesial situation which is experiencing the consequences and challenges of an epochal transformation at various levels[1], so-called "Catholic" practice in Portugal proves to be, from various points of view, marked by the signs of a "time of transition." This "transition" shows itself in the concomitance of signs of secularisation, new forms of religiosity and of Catholic expressions which are either traditional or in the process of renewal.

1. In this overall situation, one calls into question above all a monolithic vision of Catholicism which is unable to perceive and take on board a diversity of faith journeys and personal histories. In this perspective, little value is attached to, if they are not ignored completely, the interpretations and consequences inherent in the growing evidence of processes of "individualisation" of belief/ believing, to the detriment of a communitarian (institutional) way of living the Christian faith and its demands.

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[1] In this connection, see P. Hünermann, "Kriterien für die Rezeption des II. Vatikanischen Konzils," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, 191 (2011), pp. 126-147; Ch. Theobald, "La recomposition du catholicisme européen en débat. Prospective d'un théologien," *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 44 (2013), pp. 481-517.

Truth to tell, it is important to recognise that the reality of the Church, as regards the patterns of belief and the attitudes of its members, was always more varied than was generally thought. This diversity, although apparent in different proportions as compared with other aspects of the world, and to a considerable extent focused on behaviours characterised as "anomalous" or even "illegal," has also been present in the Catholic scene in Portugal. But the evolution that has come about in recent decades has been marked by indications of a clearly new situation as regards the sense of belonging, the way of identifying with the Church and the ways in which many people conceive their Catholic identity.

In spite of a variety of motivations – from the desire for personal autonomy to the difficulty in assuming the doctrinal-moral attitudes proposed by the Church; from the indifference induced by a progressively secular(ist) environment to the disintegration of the concrete ecclesial reality as compared with the social and cultural conditions of the modern world; from the consequences of personal ways of living contrary to the ecclesial norm to the perception of the limited mental and structural mobility of the ecclesial institution, etc. – the plurality of situations of involvement, of ways of constructing one's own religious identity, above all among the younger generation, is a factor which cannot but challenge the Church as a whole and in its concrete communitarian configurations. The overall reality, which is undoubtedly complex can no longer be seen as merely a passing moment, relativised as a "utopia" of a possible future return to the basic tenets of "Christianity" and lived in ignorance of the intellectual, existential and practical distance that many Christians experience in relation to the ecclesial context in which they live.

2. Indicating a new awareness of all this, Vatican II found a telling starting point in paragraphs 13 to 17 of *Lumen Gentium*. It was here that it presented the Church's Catholic vocation ("All [men] are called to belong to the People of God" – nº 13) in a perspective of concentric circles, in widely differing situations of relationship/proximity [the Latin verbs used are significant[2]] to the Church of Jesus Christ. In the

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[2] The verbs used are "*incorporare*" (nº 14); "*coniungere*" (nº 15); "*ordinare*" (nº 16).

same order of ideas, it is clear that "full incorporation" of Catholics in the Church is not brought about merely by their full acceptance of the various institutional/sacramental elements, but presupposes and requires also an attitude of openness and fidelity to the "Spirit of Christ" (n⁰ 14). Thus it is clear that, however indispensable the institutional/sacramental elements may be, they can never be absolutised, because they do not reach to the full that fundamental centre of each one's particular relationship to the Mystery of God in the unrepeatable history of life.

In this same context, *Lumen Gentium* recognises that the universal saving love of God is in no way confined to ecclesial interventions or to mere categorical expressions of a religious nature (LG n⁰ 16). Moreover, in other passages of the Council documents [cf. LG 8 and 15; *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n⁰ 3], there is explicit acknowledgement of the fact that there are "elements of sanctification and of truth" outside the visible confines of the (Roman) Catholic Church. It is thereby suggested that the Catholic identity can only be expressed and accomplished in a spirit of openness in the face of values beyond its visible confines and in an attitude of dialogue in relation to the different and diverse paths taken in the course of history by humanity as a whole and by each individual in the context of his or her life.

Seen in this light, it is clear that the Church as "universal sacrament of salvation" is not confined to the socially constituted ecclesial community and perceived within clearly defined boundaries. On the contrary, it is a much broader concept, and certainly also much less clearly defined, opening itself to all those who, by means of a just life that is pleasing to God, welcome the saving love of God[3] present and active in the world through the Holy Spirit (who is the Spirit of Jesus and of the Father).

On this basis and to the extent that, in spite of the persistence of pockets of opposition, Christianity's socio-cultural situation, the spirit of the Counter Reformation, the ideological resistance to modernity, the illusion that to a significant extent "Church" and "Society" will come

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[3] See, in this context, M. Kehl, "Kirche als "Dienstleistungs-organisation"? Theologische Überlegungen," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 218 (2000), pp. 394ff.

to coincide, a new understanding of the Catholic identity becomes possible on the basis of the existence of multiple ways of living the faith. The multiplicity of existential situations and of personal compromises, the diversified expressions of the sense of belonging and of the search for the religious/spiritual dimension of life, the individualisation of ways of living and the desire for autonomy at various levels (including the religious one), these and other aspects reverberate against one another in the many-sided picture that the ecclesial communities inevitably present. On account of, and as a condition for, a credible pastoral response by the Church as a whole and by concrete ecclesial communities in particular, there is the capacity to live and practise an open relational identity, overcoming all narrow criteria in defining the concept of "belonging" to the Church and marked by a creative pastoral concern in the search for fidelity to its mission.

3. In this context a key element of theological discernment is the conviction that the criteria of the Kingdom of God and those used by the Church in defining her frontiers do not coincide either immediately or totally. The authenticity and truth of each individual's way of relating to God cannot be measured by the traditionally simple norms of assessing one's belonging to the ecclesial community, by the application of mere institutional, visible, ecclesiastical criteria. These traditional points of reference are important and, to a certain extent, indispensable in the process of public acknowledgement of one's own personal confession of faith and of a deepening awareness and growth in belief, but they cannot be used as data immediately available for judging each one's personal relationship with the Mystery of God.

In this perspective, the various levels and expressions of belief cease to be purely negative realities (as compared with a merely conceptual and in fact non-existent "ideal"), but require above all to be considered as challenges which must be acknowledged in their reality and perceived as being a form of questioning and a call for changes that are seen to be necessary. Within these presuppositions, the category of "partial belonging to the Church" should not be seen as being entirely negative. If this "partial belonging" is already meaningful (which is inevitable) in relation to the way in which the Catholic, fully integrated in the Church, feels, analyses and is called upon to live out his or her relationship with the concrete Church to which he or she belongs, it can

(indeed must) be much more meaningful in those situations of belief/belonging in which factors of a real distancing, whether justifiable or not, may have come about.

It is never overdoing it to insist that here we are faced with a demand for the deepest respect for the person's freedom of conscience, a concept which, considering that it is rooted in the Gospel, in the most consistent ecclesial tradition and the Council's declaration of religious freedom, the Church cannot but affirm, deepen and promote within her own reality. The search for truth can only happen in a manner that is appropriate to the dignity of the human person, that is, freely, and this applies both to the believer and the unbeliever (cf. *Dignitatis Humanae, nº 2).*

4. Our reflection on all these aspects makes clear the need for a broader pastoral attitude, simultaneously both all-embracing and specific in the face of different rhythms, aware of situations both of greater closeness or greater distancing, ready to accept each one's approach to things in the impenetrable encounter of his or her conscience with the Mystery of God by which he or she is being challenged, is called to follow and willing to undertake. One is often struggling with general principles and abstract truths without paying due attention to the real situation of people and of the contexts, presuppositions and conditioning that are part of their personal life story. Ultimately, we are here dealing with the need to be fully aware of the way one has travelled in the faith and lived in the Church.

Nevertheless, this different pastoral vision/attitude is possible only if we fully understand that, however valid the juridico-canonical criteria may be at the level of principles, they are not enough to give consistent and credible replies to the daily reality that the ecclesial communities and their representatives encounter. It is frequently forgotten that the current juridico-canonical regime is still very much influenced by the presuppositions of a predominant Church "comfortably" ensconced in the general society surrounding it. This fact and the inadequate awareness of it make difficulties for the pastoral creativity of Christian communities in the concrete manifestation of what is truly decisive in the identity of the Christian and do not provide space for the inalienable responsibility of the pastoral agents whose

task it is to make decisions in the concrete circumstances of a wide variety of situations.

Clearly, the opening up of Catholic communities to the wide range of ways of living and individual expressions of living the faith has its risks, is liable to be misinterpreted and in any case requires both maturity and a sense of responsibility on the part of those at the centre of ecclesial life. But today's challenges call for an increased maturity in the ability to look anew at the ways in which individuals express their Christian faith. In a context strongly marked by the individualistic construction of one's Christian identity, the Christian message can be understood and become concrete only as a proposal and an invitation to be presented under the clear sign of freedom and a deliberate choice. From this point of view nº 92 of *Gaudium et Spes* can be seen as programmatic: "Let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is doubtful, and charity in everything."

5. In these new circumstances, the capacity to make explicit and concrete its mission as conveyer of the saving gift of God to humanity through the Sacraments is decisive for the credibility of the Church and of its Christian witness. In other words, the Church understands itself not simply as an "institution of salvation," as "the (exclusive) place" for salvation (which all must enter if they wish to be saved) but primarily and decisively as a sign and instrument of the saving, freeing, love of God, concretised fully and definitively, and potentially universally, in Jesus Christ.

Thus in its acceptance of this Conciliar vision, the Church adopts a renewed recognition that it is not an end in itself but a relational value and a mediating reality in the service of the Kingdom of God. This calls for overcoming ecclesio-centric narrowness (even more of the temptation to "ecclesiasticize" Christianity[4]), knowing that all talk of the Church and all ecclesial activity must be subordinated to the absolute priority of the true proclamation of God and his definitive love for humanity in Jesus Christ and in the power of his Spirit. What is at stake, as a spiritual attitude adopted as a community and as an

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[4] See J. Martín Velasco, "La sal y la luz. Dos dimensiones de la presencia de las comunidades cristianas en la sociedad," *Sal Terrae*, 100 (2012), p. 305.

adequate Christology in pastoral work, is a purified sense of a transparency of service in the life of the Church and in the signals it portrays.

From this requirement emerges the question of the conditions in which the Church's strictly "sacramental" expressions can and must be performed. This question often manifests itself also in an inevitable tension between what people are asking for and what the Church is called upon to portray and offer. In this field of pastoral action, what is at stake is the crucial question of the ability of the Church to be open to widely different situations and to be truly "sacrament." Instead of looking upon itself or appearing to be the mistress of all, the Church must be "an expression" of simple but authentic welcome, of understanding, of service in discerning peoples' reason for believing and of assistance in following a route leading to growing maturity in the faith.

6. The "erosion" referred to at the beginning of this reflection also occurs in the doctrinal dimension of the faith. From this point of view, the manifest multiplicity becomes apparent as a multi-faceted and complex reality expressed in contradictory ways. As is well known, what is being asked for nowadays in many quarters (well beyond Catholic Church circles but also within them) are simple and linear expressions of faith, of the essence of truth and promise of salvation that are as direct and practical as possible. These expressions of religious belief, attractive in a world which has become very complex in many of its globalised aspects, coincide with the emergence of phenomena of identity brought on by the search for security and expressed in desires to return to the past in ways of living the faith. On the other hand, and within the increased longing for greater personal autonomy in the way of living one's faith already referred to, the growth in selective personal choices contrary to the faith taught by the Church continues, thereby widening the gap between the teaching of the Church and what many Catholics think and are prepared to accept.

In this context, there is need for an ecclesial awareness that is much more sensitive to the way in which Church teaching is presented. Alongside the urgent need to understand why particular doctrinal or moral teachings are not accepted by people who claim to be "Catholic," there is the need to question oneself concerning the reasonability and credibility of religious teaching received from tradition and the most

appropriate way of expressing the truth of faith in new cultural situations[5].

In this connection, recognising that there is a need to distinguish between the substance of the faith and the formulations used to present this faith in the course of time[6], an awareness of the fact that there exists, and this at various levels, a "hierarchy of truths" of faith to be taken into account, becomes increasingly clear and important for the teaching of the Church and the spiritual life of believers. To recognise that one must take this "hierarchy of truths" into account in current declarations of the magisterium, in catechetics and sermons, in the various forms of education in the faith and dialogue with those who establish contact with the ecclesial community, and to endeavour to translate this "hierarchy of truths" into what this means for Christian practice, all this is a task of major, even decisive, importance.

At the concrete level of Christian communities, these questions call for creativity and the persistence of a pastoral approach capable of offering diverse teachings that are theologically consistent and pedagogically adequate for formation in the faith. In this context it is also important to recognise that to promote the growth of "believing individualities" does not necessarily mean giving in to the current spirit of individualism. Rather, it means making available pathways leading to the maturing of deep personal convictions without which the believer will have difficulty in developing his or her potentialities or may even, sooner or later, find it difficult to survive. The indispensable way forward for the future will be through the activity of "believing subjects" who truly share responsibility in the life of the Church and possess a critical conscience. These are men and women of conviction and independent in their quality as people involved in various worldly tasks, capable of giving reasons for their hope in word and deed, conscious of an identity received both as a gift and a task to be made

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[5] See A. Fossion, "La nécessaire révision des représentations religieuses aujourd'hui," *Lumen Vitae*, 65 (2010), pp. 365-382.

[6] See John XIII, "Gaudet Mater Ecclesia," *Acta Synodalia Sacrossancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, (Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970), Volume I, Period I, Part I, pp. 166-175. *Gaudium et Spes*, nº 62.

explicit in their own personality in the widely diverse situations of daily life[7].

7. It goes without saying that the question of the configuration of communities of Christian life is involved in all of this and is one of its most sensitive aspects. There is wide recognition of the fact that, as opposed to the relationships defined by territory, there has been a steady increase in the significance, particularly in the increasingly common conditions of urban living, of various kinds of social networks by means of which people decide on the frequency and depth of their participation, as well as the modalities and content which they intend to give to their life of belief. Here we are faced with ongoing changes that call for greater attention to the concrete nature of particular situations and a greater degree of pastoral malleability. Failing this, one may well be setting up processes of erosion and distancing, unjustifiable limitations on people's ability to come to terms with the Christian challenge and Catholic identity, whatever the reply they may actually give at some future date.

In the context of these social, cultural and religious changes, the territorial Christian community has not lost its referential and existential significance in the lives of many Christians. But they are being asked for a purer sense of their own limitations, a self-critical awareness regarding their day-to-day activity, an attitude of creative availability when faced with the transformations that are taking place and constitute a challenge in all aspects of their lives.

In this awareness, what must predominate is an understanding of their own place and a structuring of their behaviour which, as against the temptation simply to "indoctrinate," favours the readiness to welcome and listen as the way of dialogue, a spiritual attitude, a pastoral option of being close to people. At the same time there is a need to offer initiatives and places open to various groups of people, to endeavour to provide somewhere where there can be an exchange of experiences and the discussion of ideas, to promote initiatives and

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[7] See, along the same lines, J. Famerée, "Le catholicisme ou la tentation de l'intégralisme," *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 44 (2013), p. 382. J. Silva Soler, "A crise da Igreja Católica: alguns dados empíricos e perspectivas teológicas," *Perspectiva Teológica*, 126 (2013), p. 226.

events that can challenge people where they are. Similarly, the pastoral priorities that are available and the analysis that one makes of them, the quality of the formation of the most important pastoral agents, the transparency of the service that one is able to convey in the particular milieu, the quality and diversity of the forms of proclamation and celebration of the faith are all of decisive importance.

8. To conclude, it is important to reflect in particular on the current "celebratory practice" both as regards the celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and in relation to other existentially significant occasions in people's lives (the celebration of the Sacraments, funerals, etc.).The diversity and the different degrees of behaviour on the part of those who regard themselves as "Catholics" are indications of a progressive relativisation or even loss of meaning in relation to traditional forms of Catholic celebration that form part of the structure of their identity. This alerts us to the need for a careful analysis of the various aspects (sociological, cultural, specifically ecclesial, etc.) that are involved, in order to perceive more clearly the reasons and conditioning (many "external" but also "internal") leading to the discrepancies and withdrawals that take place. It is obvious, for example, that the "Sunday" of olden days no longer exists, having become involved in the new reality of the "weekend," in the process of urbanisation, in people's greater mobility, in new opportunities in the fields of leisure and sport and in a different attitude towards these realities.

In this situation, other possibilities of prayer and celebration of the faith can and must be made available and renewed, viewing realistically the differentiations that exist in the life styles and believing experience of individuals and groups. Creative experiences and different ways of doing things are here indispensable. Only secondary importance needs to be given to the question of the number of people who take up these proposals, while privileging above all the quality of what is made available. Some openings can be seen as desirable possibilities: privileging small groups with the mystagogical power of the liturgy in a deepening and maturing of the faith; promoting the possibility of celebrating the faith during the week in different places and in (more) familiar locations; avoiding routine, for example by means of celebrations for specific groups of people; promoting the existence and creation of opportunities for silent prayer; encouraging

the constant search for good quality celebrations, beginning with respect for the elementary rules of behaviour and communication; not to be afraid of raising the pressing question of the different ministries and how they are carried out.

Given the breadth and depth of the factors here discussed, one should not entertain the hope – nor is this the decisive question – for a significant turn-around, at least in the short or medium term, in the reduction in the practice of Sunday worship, nor for a significant increase in the number of those "practising with some regularity." But – and here we have the chief question and task – in a movement of spiritual renewal and of structural reforms, the Christian community will be better able to cooperate with the responsibility of a multiple integration of people in their particular ways of life and will manifest with more power and credibility nuclear signs of their identity and mission.

Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in Modern Times: A Critical Dialogue with Gilbert K. Chesterton and Eduardo Lourenço

ALEXANDRE PALMA

The modern pluralization of spiritualities seems to comprise also a pluralization of creeds. The content of belief is nowadays very much submitted to the same social and cultural forces that pushed spirituality to ever more individualized forms. This means that we are faced not only with a disjunction between spiritual paths open to different inspirations and practices and the spiritual tradition represented by Christianity,[1] but also with a disjunction between more individualized creeds and the faith proposed and proclaimed by the Church. This other disjunction can be described, using more classical terms, as a *disjunction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy*. This is not something totally new to the Christian tradition. On the contrary, this tension has accompanied her since its beginnings. But, if in previous times orthodoxy constituted a reference to all, even to those who somehow did not followed it rigorously, today the situation seems to be quite different. Apart from some very mobile Church groups (often small), it seems that there is not a great nostalgia for a unified and a unifying *orthodoxy*, just as there is no great interest for a single spiritual path. The modern western believer seems, instead, ready not only to compose his own spirituality, but also his own orthodoxy. That is why this tension or disjunction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and the transit from the one to other, might be an important topic to consider while reflecting on *faith in a secular age*.

Therefore, it is my purpose to point out the tension between *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy* as something that can help us interpret the present stage of (some) Western cultures and, particularly, of

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[1] See Charles Taylor, José Casanova and George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012).

Portuguese society regarding the issue of faith. In order to do so, I will be interacting with the thought of the British author Gilbert K. Chesterton (1874-1936) and with the thought of Portuguese contemporary philosopher Eduardo Lourenço (1923). The first tried to rehabilitate the notion of orthodoxy at the beginning of the Twentieth century, while the second, just a few decades later, took a stand in defense of heterodoxy or, to be more precise, of *heterodoxies* – the title of his most important works.[2] The transit from societies built around certain orthodoxy to societies where several heterodoxies coexist is a major aspect of the cultural and social developments of modern Western societies. The thought of Eduardo Lourenço witnesses to this transit within the Portuguese contemporary social and cultural development.

Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy: Notion and Transit

The notions of *orthodoxy* and of its counterpart *heterodoxy* have a very ancient background. We can see their roots in authors such as Homer, Herodotus, Plato or Aristotle. This is certainly true, at least of the use of the Greek word that is at their origin: *dóxa* – meaning an opinion, but also used with the sense of expectation, supposition or good fame.[3]

It was, however, their religious use (mainly by Christians) that most determined their sense today. Appealing to the right opinion, belief or idea (*orthos*: meaning right + *dóxa*: meaning opinion, belief, idea) became a way of spreading some religious convictions and a way of pointing out some religious errors. False opinions or ideas were isolated as *heterodoxy*, meaning now not just a different opinion (as in previous uses of the word and as the etymology suggests), but meaning, above all, wrong or false opinions (with the sense of *pseudoxía*). In this context, the defense and proposal of *orthodoxy* had an undeniable effect: it helped to build a more unified community, which had not just a religious effect but played also a relevant social, political and cultural

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[2] See Eduardo Lourenço, *Heterodoxias. Obras Completas* I (Lisboa: Gulbenkian, 2011) – includes the works: *Heterodoxia I*, 1949; *Heterodoxia II*, 1967; *Heterodoxia III*, 2010.

[3] See G. Kittel, "Dóxa," *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento* II (Brescia: Paideia, 1966), 1348-1357.

role. It was not just a matter of promoting the right ideas, but also of promoting the same ideas. Here *orthodoxy* became also *homodoxy* – *hómos*: the same + *doxía*: opinion.

This, somehow, set the general framework of Western civilization and culture for long centuries. Obviously there was always real internal diversity – a religious diversity, a spiritual diversity, a social diversity, a theological or a philosophical diversity. These diversities, however, were somehow regulated by a certain *orthodoxy*, that set the cultural standard and kept societies and religious communities united and cohesive. There was a religious orthodoxy to be followed (a creed); there was a social authority clearly recognizable (the monarch or the pope); there was a theological and philosophical canon to be reflected upon (commentary was, for example, a methodology intensively followed in the Middle Ages). Although several opinions were possible (several heterodoxies, in this context), a cultural orthodoxy seemed to be clear to all and respected as such. This orthodoxy guarantied unity on the religious, cultural and social tissue.

Modernity, however, began changing this situation. With it Western societies began a slow but effective process of intensifying the fragmentation of this (more or less) unified religious, cultural and social fabric. The emancipation of the individual (the modern subject) resulted in an ever more personal or individual way of determining what to believe; how a society is constituted; the direction to take in spiritual life. This fragmentation can be seen as the *emancipation of heterodoxies*. Heterodoxy (that is, the diversity of opinions or perspectives) tends, slowly and not without contradiction, to assume the role of a new social and cultural framework.

Gilbert K. Chesterton: An Apology of Orthodoxy

Gilbert K. Chesterton was definitely a modern author that valued this tension between *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy*. He was, on one hand, a countercultural author. In a time when *heterodoxies* were emerging, he took a position in defense of *orthodoxy*. But, on the other hand, such a stand is a typical modern phenomenon. In fact, to rehabilitate the notion of orthodoxy, Chesterton proposes his position as a personal perspective, perhaps in opposition to the main stream social and cultural paradigms at the time. His *orthodoxy* was one of the several

opinions of the time, so one of the many *heterodoxies* of the time. Consequently, Chesterton might be seen as a *heretic of heterodoxy*.

In 1905 he published a book entitled *Heretics*, where he criticized several relevant figures of the British literary scene of the time.[4] In 1908 he published another book – unsurprisingly entitled *Orthodoxy* – where he proposed *orthodoxy* as the sole truly modern view. There's an obvious connection between these two works, where the second is a more mature meditation on the relation between *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy*.[5]

In the first book, Chesterton immediately describes the modern transit from *orthodoxy to heterodoxy* in these lively and ironical terms:

> Nothing more strangely indicates an enormous and silent evil of modern society than the extraordinary use which is made nowadays of the word "orthodox." In former days the heretic was proud of not being a heretic. It was the kingdoms of the world and the police and the judges who were heretics. He was orthodox. He had no pride in having rebelled against them; they had rebelled against him. […] The man was proud of being orthodox, was proud of being right. […] But a few modern phrases have made him boast of it [of being a heretic]. He says, with a conscious laugh, "I suppose I am very heretical," and looks round for applause. The word "heresy" not only means no longer being wrong; it practically means being clear-headed and courageous. The word "orthodoxy" not only no longer means being right; it practically means being wrong. All this can mean one thing, and one thing only. It means that people care less for whether they are philosophically right. For obviously a man ought to

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confess himself crazy before he confesses himself heretical.[6]

From this quote it is obvious how the classic philosophical question about the truth, for Chesterton, is still very much alive. The disjunction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy is seen within the disjunction between right and wrong, between true and false. For Chesterton it is inconceivable that anyone should be proud of being heretical, a notion that to him means being wrong. That is why the heretics of the past persisted in their heresy only by being convinced that they were right (even if they were mistaken). Chesterton denounces a modern overturn of this ancient relation between orthodoxy and heterodoxy: the first now means being old fashioned and therefore wrong; the second means being free and therefore right. For him, a cultural legitimation of all heresies seems to be unsustainable, because it fails to find the truth. That is why he fights for a rehabilitation of orthodoxy.

This apology of orthodoxy has a lot to do with his conversion to Catholicism, as he himself recognizes in *Orthodoxy*.[7] This explains why the theme is also presented in this autobiographical way:

> I did, like all other solemn little boys, try to be in advance of the age. Like them I tried to be some ten minutes in advance of the truth. And I found that I was eighteen hundred years behind it. I did strain my voice with a painfully juvenile exaggeration in uttering my truths. And I was punished in the fittest and funniest way, for I have kept my truths: but I have discovered, not that they were not truths, but simply that they were not mine. When I fancied that I stood alone I was really in the ridiculous position of being backed up by all Christendom. It may be, Heaven forgive me, that I did try to be original; but I only

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[6] Gilbert K. Chesterton, *Heretics* (London and New York: John Lane Co, 1909), pp. 11-12.

[7] "When the word *orthodoxy* is used here it means the Apostles' Creed, as understood by everybody calling himself Christian until a very short time ago and the general historic conduct of those who held such a creed" (Gilbert K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 13).

succeeded in inventing all by myself an inferior copy of the existing traditions of civilized religion.[8]

With these strong words, Chesterton not only describes his personal experience, but, above all, he exposes the wrong assumptions and the false presumptions of a certain Modernity: the juvenile presumetion of being original by being the first to arrive at the truth, when in fact that was already accomplished by past generations; the individualistic presumption of finding the truth alone, when in fact one is always backed and surrounded by others in that path. It was Modernity itself that, for Chesterton, invented an inferior copy of what already existed. That is why he challenged it by implicitly questioning if Modernity was really all that modern.

Chesterton, however, seems to understand quite well that this shift from orthodoxy to heterodoxy cannot be challenged only through logical arguments. On the contrary, orthodoxy also needs to be presented as a more attractive reality; as a more stimulating path in life. This must also be taken into account, in order to persuade the Modern spirit:

> This is the thrilling romance of orthodoxy. People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum, and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy. It was sanity: and to be sane is more dramatic than to be mad. […] It is easy to be a madman: it is easy to be a heretic. It is always easy to let the age have its head; the difficult thing is to keep one's own. It is always easy to be a modernist; as it is easy to be a snob. To have fallen into any of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect set along the historic path of Christendom – that would indeed have been simple.[9]

For Chesterton, it seems that only orthodoxy has the drama that Modernity expects to find in the search for the truth. Orthodoxy is not,

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[8] Ibid., p. 12.
[9] Ibid., pp. 99-100.

as sometimes seems to be perceived, a static and easy way to get there. On the contrary, orthodoxy, when considered in its history, is a much more adventurous path than heterodoxy. It is harder to come to terms with others (past and present) than to do it all on your own. According to Chesterton, if it is this kind of truth a modern spirit is looking for, then he ought to look for it in orthodoxy rather than in heterodoxy.

In sum, why is orthodoxy, according to Chesterton, more defensible than heterodoxy?

i.   For *logical reasons*: even if different opinions or heterodoxies do coexist (and do have to coexist in modern plural societies and religious communities), that cannot mean the abdication of searching and getting to orthodoxy. Heresy can only make sense if one is convinced of being correct, and therefore, of being orthodox (even if it is not quite so). Therefore, orthodoxy remains the horizon towards which one should aim in looking for truth;

ii. For *historical reasons*: to Chesterton, Modernity is not all that new. On the contrary, she revisits very ancient truths, even when presenting them as originals. This implies that a shared search for truth like orthodoxy is (shared with others and shared with past generations) is much more in line with reality than the individualistic perspective somehow present in heterodoxy;

iii. For *biographical reasons*: for motives that have to do with Chesterton's own biography, mainly related to his discovery of the Catholic tradition and dogma. He saw in the Church struggle for an orthodox way of thinking and presenting faith the most achieved human effort in search of truth.

Eduardo Lourenço: A Cultural Reinterpretation of Heterodoxy

Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço has also used this vocabulary to describe the present stage of Western modern societies and, specially, of the Portuguese contemporary cultural reality. But he does not limit himself to the role of a neutral interpreter or of an external observer. Instead, faced with the social and cultural tension between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, Eduardo Lourenço commited himself to heterodoxy. As he recognized, his proposal of heterodoxy was an

action, not just a speculation; it was a declaration against "the spirit of orthodoxy at the time common to the triumphant ideologies."[10]

One can only truly understand how and why he came to this position if the Portuguese contemporary religious, social, political and cultural context is considered. One might say that Portuguese society, according to Eduardo Lourenço, was (during a substantial part of the Twentieth Century) culturally divided between two major ortho-doxies: on one side, a traditional Catholicism that determined more popular levels of Portuguese society and somehow helped to support the political establishment of the time; and, on the other, Marxism which influenced some cultural elites and inspired a certain political resistance. When Eduardo Lourenço pursued the idea of heterodoxy, he did so as a reaction against these two orthodoxies; as a refusal to belong to either of them. In a way, he tried to open a third path,[11] but this meant to be heterodox to those two main orthodoxies.[12] This is how and why he arrived at the notion and reality of heterodoxy.

In this parallel reading of Chesterton and Eduardo Lourenço, it is interesting to notice how Chesterton's defense of orthodoxy had to do with his conversion to Catholicism (in a cultural environment where Catholicism was a minority), while Eduardo Lourenço's defense of heterodoxy had to do with his detachment from Catholicism (in a cultural environment where Catholicism still is a majority).[13] These very different biographical paths (almost opposite ones), produced very different perspectives on this relation between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

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[10] Eduardo Lourenço, *Heterodoxias*, p. 197.

[11] See Ibid., p, 33.

[12] See Ibid., 200: "[In the 40's] Catholicism and Marxism were, to many, fascinating references, but they excluded themselves. Several times, the persons fascinated by Marxism were exfascinated by Catholicism and this transit was, in itself, a drama. The Marxist conversion was a Catholic "deconversion" that meant, in almost every case, something was found in Marxism that Catholicism could not offer."

[13] Eduardo Lourenço never really refused Catholicism as such, but he explicitly described how he "separated himself from that light of his childhood" that was the Catholic faith and practice (See Ibid., pp. 210-211).

But what is, according to the Portuguese author, heterodoxy? Why does it describe better these modern times? Why does it propose a more valid attitude towards life? Summing it up in a word, I could say that heterodoxy means freedom, that is, the possibility of finding and pursuing one's own path, determined not just by the cultural tradition and the social context, but by the personal ability to build one's own way. To follow orthodoxy (regardless of what that orthodoxy might be) is to follow the footsteps of others, is to walk a road set by others. To follow heterodoxy is to assume the risk of opening one's own way to the truth. That's why Eduardo Lourenço does not only speak about heterodoxy (singular), but mainly about *heterodoxies* (plural), because each individual builds his own heterodoxy. One might say that heterodoxy is a personal, individual or particular form of orthodoxy; a personal, individual or particular form of getting to the truth; and, perhaps, even a personal, individual or particular form of truth. Eduardo Lourenço is quite clear in this regard:

> Heterodoxy, as the refusal of only one path to the human spirit in theoretical and practical terms, is the expression of human liberty to all men, to whom the truth of the human situation is the nonexistence of only one path. Therefore, a heterodox is a free man by definition, because he agrees with his own heterodoxy.[14]

> Heterodoxy is not the contrary of orthodoxy, neither of nihilism, but the steady movement of thinking about both. It is the humble purpose of not accepting just one way (simply because it presents itself as the only way), neither of refusing them all (simply because we do not know which one of them is the better one).[15]

> Heterodoxy is the humility of spirit in light of the inexhaustible divinity of truth. Let us resist the illusion of thinking that everything can be flooded with light. In that case, we would cease to see. Let us refuse […] the temptation of unity at all cost […]. In terms of knowledge

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[14] Ibid., p. 186.
[15] Ibid., p. 31.

and in terms of action, in philosophy and in politics, man is a divided reality. The respect for this division is Heterodoxy.[16]

Heterodoxy does not mean here any absolute refusal of truth. That is why heterodoxy is not the exact contrary of orthodoxy,[17] but an escape from the dilemma between orthodoxy (as the possession of truth) and nihilism (as the disenchanted dismissal to even raise the question of truth). Heterodoxy, in the thought of Eduardo Lourenço, is what makes it possible to actively and personally look for the truth. According to him, what is really new (and what really promotes heterodoxy) is this denial or refusal of the existence of only one path; the conscience that no orthodoxy can have the monopoly of the human spirit: "Heterodoxy is the absolute conscience of the historical plurality of all orthodoxies."[18] It is no longer just the verification of a fact (there always existed several opinions and, therefore, several heterodoxies), but it is the social and cultural legitimation of this fact. In previous times, perhaps, even among a conflict of opinions, there was still nostalgia for a unified view, like orthodoxy. In modern times this nostalgia seems to have been lost or, at the least, seems to have lost its strength. To this it might be added that there seems to be a need of experiencing personally that something is, in fact, true. Therefore, the plurality of heterodoxies does not mean, necessarily, the plurality of truths. It simply means that each individual must assume personally the hard task of reaching the "right opinion."

The fundamental problem of all orthodoxies is the temptation to grab truth in such a way that truth seems to be reduced to an object. This is, following the thought of Eduardo Lourenço, why the modern spirit, or the spirit of heterodoxy, reacts against all orthodoxies. It reacts to the "temptation of transforming the nostalgia of the Absolute by possessing it."[19] The way heterodoxy deals with that human search for

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[16] Ibid., p. 35.

[17] Heterodoxy might even coincide with orthodoxy, when the personal paths come together as one, when these paths lead to the same conclusions proposed by religious or political communities.

[18] Ibid., p. 34.

[19] Ibid., p. 204.

the truth is different. "Heterodoxy – he says – takes truth, takes the love for it, only as a direction of action and never as a reality to be owned."[20] There's an openness in heterodoxy that seems absent in orthodoxy and that seems to be much more in line with the modern *ethos*.

But heterodoxy is not an easy choice. On the contrary, "the confession of heterodoxy can only have as its reward a well-earned and deserved solitude and silence."[21] This is a relevant and unavoidable element of the heterodox choice for a freer and a more individual way to search for the truth. Our author is really sensitive to this issue. For him this was personally felt, when he publicly detached himself from the great Portuguese orthodoxies of his time. In an existentialist way, he recognizes that "the only content of heterodoxy is refusal – a war not only against this or that, but also against ourselves."[22] This solitude is a significant feature of Modernity as a time of heresies.

In sum, according to Eduardo Lourenço, what is heterodoxy and what does it imply?

i.   *Freedom to search for the truth*: sustained by the conscience of the historical contingency and plurality of all orthodoxies, heterodoxy is personal liberty in the pursuit of truth;

ii. Plurality of ways to get there: heterodoxy is the committed defense of this plurality of ways, the committed refusal of any monopoly in the search for truth;

iii. Path in which one faces solitude: its setback is the solitude it entails, the loneliness, the loss of a company, of a community in such a journey.

Orthodoxy Vs Heterodoxy: A Hermeneutical Key of Modernity

As suggested previously, the disjunction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy might offer a hermeneutic key for present times. The somewhat artificial dialogue promoted here between these two very different authors can be seen as a version of a dialogue or a tension present (at least) in some societies and cultures today, such as in Portugal. The present time can be described as a time of heterodoxies. The cultural and historical development of these cultures can be

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[20] Ibid., p. 34.
[21] Ibid., p. 212.
[22] Ibid., p. 199.

described as a complex transit from orthodoxy to heterodoxy; a transit from a cultural and social refusal of heterodoxies to their legitimation.

With the help of Chesterton's contribution, it seems clear that this does not imply the total disappearance of orthodoxy or the total abdication of the search for truth. It means only that orthodoxy is now one view among many others. It means that no opinion has automatically the upper hand over the others, as Eduardo Lourenço recognized in the contemporary Portuguese scenario. So, orthodoxy still exists, but as one of the many heterodoxies that have to live together in the social public sphere and in the cultural debate. Eduardo Lourenço is also very explicit in this regard, when he insists that heterodoxy is not the opposite of orthodoxy. There is no contradiction between them neither at a theoretical level nor at an existential level. Heterodoxy is able to welcome orthodoxy within itself.

In conclusion, what can we then say about orthodoxy and heterodoxy as a key to interpreting and understanding some aspects of such modern Western cultures as the Portuguese?

i. The impossibility of homodoxia, that is, the impossibility of one imposed unified opinion or view about the truth, about life, about the world, but also about God, Church, religion and spirituality. This aspect is particularly underlined by authors like Eduardo Lourenço. On one hand, the notion that everything is somehow subject to historical influences weakens the belief that one truth or opinion can play a unifying and hegemonic role. On the other hand, the institutions that represent such orthodoxies are no longer able to establish the general social and cultural framework. The ever more plural and personal spiritual paths are just one manifestation of this fact. A unified imposed spirituality, just like a unified imposed opinion, seems today almost impossible.

ii. The difficulty of pseudodoxia, that is, it has become harder to denounce one assertion or opinion as wrong. In principle, that is still possible, but, in reality, this detachment from the orthodox paradigm tends to open a social and cultural space where very different ideas coexist and, in some cases, compete. Modern heterodoxy is, as we saw, a third path, a path that takes the issue beyond a simple dualistic opposition between right and wrong. And Western Modernity seems

to live this question in a rather paradoxical manner: on the one hand, it cannot simply abandon the pursuit of the correct idea or opinion; but, on the other, one can admit very different truths or, at least, very different kinds of truth (overcoming, in this way, the simple and strict opposition right-wrong). The correct opinion or idea is now assumed in a much more dynamic way, or, to put it in Eduardo Lourenço's exact words, as "a direction of action and never as a reality to be owned." The notion of heterodoxy returns then to its origins, meaning again a "different opinion" and no longer a "wrong opinion (*pseudodoxia*)."

iii. Heterodoxy as solitary freedom. The emancipation of heterodoxy is just an expression of the intense search for freedom that has determined the recent past of the Western cultures. It is the extension of such an ideal (liberty) to the question of truth. Heterodoxy (apparently) offers the social and cultural conditions for a freer and more personal pursuit of truth. This positive side has, however, a high price as with this individualization comes also solitude. And this solitude seems to have penetrated the psychology of Western societies, as can be seen in contemporary Portugal.[23] If orthodoxy, in previous times, worked as an instrument that served religious, social and cultural cohesion, it is no great surprise that heterodoxy is both an expression and a promoter of a more fragmented society and culture, and inevitably, also of a more diversified spirituality. Even its tendency for a critical approach to inherited contributions reinforces this solitude, because then present generations are more likely to be detached and isolated from past ones.

It was not the intention here to describe, in an exhaustive manner, the complexity of these modern times nor of the Portuguese contemporary situation, but, instead, to choose an angle of analysis that seems able to describe some of its religious, social and cultural dynamics, namely the *disjunction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy* somehow embodied in the thoughts and biographies of Chesterton and Eduardo Lourenço.

I think, it is possible to envisage a relation between this emancipation of heterodoxies and the notion of *remnant*. Under the orthodox paradigm, the *whole* seemed to be the only valid religious, social and cultural reference. The coexistence of several heterodoxies cherishes,

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[23] Visible, perhaps, in a diminished capacity for common enterprises.

instead, the *remnants*, the smaller realities, the particular perspectives, the more personal experiences. Heterodoxy and *remnant* are quite close.

There's also an obvious relation between this transit from orthodoxy to heterodoxies and from a more homogenous spiritual proposal to ever more plural spiritual experiences. Both are effects of the same search for a more personalized religious experience. The pluralization of spiritualties might be described as the *emancipation of heterodoxical spiritualities*. At its base is the same claim for personal freedom; the same conscience of the historical contingency of all established spiritual proposals. In this sense, the *disjunction orthodoxy-heterodoxy* is also quite close to *disjunction spirituality-spiritualties*.

That is why the disjunction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy can serve as an hermeneutic key to interpret the contemporary developments of faith in a secular age.

Part Three
New Spiritual Landscapes

7.

Ecce. Credo:
Two Concepts of the Theory of Art

PAULO PIRES DO VALE

Introduction

1. In this study I shall investigate the relevance of two concepts that are habitually associated with the theory of religious art: '*Ecce' [Behold']* and '*Credo*' [*I believe].*

I am not here interested in reflecting on the relationship between contemporary art and religion, the sacred or the spiritual, but rather to perceive the relevance of an *attitude of faith* in an artistic context, a reflection which will owe as much to the philosophy of art as to epistemology and theology. In this way, I shall endeavour to reflect on the relationship with works habitually regarded as "natural"; it is this seeming naturalness that needs to be called into question.

Is it necessary to believe in order to see? Is *believing* essential for an aesthetic experience? Is *conviction* a themeless concept in the philosophy of art? Is belief an attitude that is relevant to the relationship between the recipient and the artistic object? And how does this belief come about?

Thus, this essay will begin with the various ways of presenting the work of art and arousing belief by means of the presentation of something as a work and how this presentation transforms the object. 'Transubstantiating' is what Marcel Duchamp would call it.

2. How do we recognise a stroll, a fall, a shared meal, common objects of rubbish, a phrase written on a wall, a conversation, an empty room, another room full of rubbish, a heap of wrapped sweets in the corner of a room, a fluorescent lamp, a skin cut, instructions to someone to do something, a book ... as works of art? Common gestures or objects that are no different from others, but are perceived or interpreted in another system, in a register or programme that marks them out: namely the artistic.

A quick answer, and one that has been very common in recent decades, was the institutionalist theory with its tautological circularity: a work of art is, as George Dickie has written: "1) an artefact 2) upon which some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the art world) has conferred the status of candidate for appreciation."[1]

The reception is determined by the institution, the place, the system and medium (the gallery, the museum, the collection, criticism, the theory, the academy, the curatorship, the market, art reviews ...). In fact, the institutionalist theory is not interested in the subjective reception, the individual personal experience, nor even the individual aesthetic experience, but only in the fact that the object is classified as artistic: if this is within the "art world," it is a work of art. It is a contextual theory in which the designation "art" is the identification of a status, as it were a certificate. And from this we get a difference between the act of classification as such (art – not art) and the assessment of its value (good or bad art).

3. Before Dickie, Arthur C. Danto had already recognised the importance of the invisible context and setting in determining the visible: "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an art world."[2] Danto was not thinking so much about institutional questions as about knowledge of the theory and history of art. A work is an "interpreted object": it is this setting (theoretical, historical, institutional) which makes it possible to distinguish between two objects, without there being anything which visually or perceptively distinguishes them, and to identify one of the objects as art and the other not.

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[1] George Dickie, *Aesthetics. An Introduction* (Indianapolis, IN: Pegasus, 1971), p. 101.

[2] Arthur C. Danto, "The Artworld," *Journal of Philosophy*, 61 – October (1964), pp. 571–584.

Is art a matter of *de facto* or *de jure?* Is it a problem of the milieu, of "an aesthetic aristocracy,"[3] with the rules and legislation of an independent state, with the power of consecration held by some members?

4. In 1969, Seth Siegelaub organized an exhibition (*Untitled, Campus Wide*) on the campus of Simon Fraser University, in Burnaby, in which works by Douglas Huebler, Jan Dibetts, Kosuth, Sol Le Witt, Weiner, Robert Barry and others were spread out across the campus, but without any accompanying identification. There was nothing to identify them, no plate with the name of the artist and the title of the work, no auxiliary documentation. Only when the exhibition was over was the catalogue published with all the information.

How to identify a work as a work of art? For centuries it seems to have been quite simple: a sculpture in stone, wood or bronze, a painting on canvas or wood. But, in the case of this exhibition, which exhibited artists belonging to the artistic milieu of the 1960's, how many of those who viewed the works recognized them as such?

We are thus approaching the need for an *"Ecce"* which identifies them, points them out, and attaches meaning to them. In the case of Siegelaub's exhibition, the catalogue with all the information is the hermeneutic key and certification of the work – the *'Ecce'*. Or is the work as such capable of doing this for itself?

5. What is it that establishes the difference between two entirely identical objects, with no perceptible difference between them, one of which is artistic and the other not?

Is the distinction located in the object (performance or gesture), in the intention of the artist, in the way it is presented or is it in the recipient/viewer? These are some of the questions that we owe to the work, both practical and theoretical, of Duchamp, reread in the *pop* context by Danto.

In this study, I shall suggest, on the one hand, that it is in the (poïetic) presentation of the work that we have to begin: a presentation

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[3] See Pascal Durand, "De Duchamp à Mallarmé. Un suspens de la croyance," in Daniel Bilous, ed., *Mallarmé, et après? – Fortunes d'une œuvre* (Noesis Editions, 2006), pp.143-168.

accompanied by an *Ecce*! *Behold: this is art*. A word of creative authority? So is the presentation part of the creative gesture, of the *poïesis?* Not something external to the object, then, but a power inherent in it?

To begin with, I shall question this presentation: the poïetic point of view, the making of something. A making that calls for an acknowledgement produced by the spectator. "Faittoi croire," urged Robert Bresson[4] – which, as we shall see, is not restricted to the effects of narrative strategies. Secondly, I shall reflect on the reception: to accept or believe in the object will imply a "suspension of disbelief," a "poetic faith" (Coleridge). Belief, or disbelief, is called for when faced with something that is presented as being credible or not, deserving to be believed or not. And there is a difference between an ingenuous and blind credulousness and the judgement called for from the recipient.

6. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. 12, 3). In the case of art, which *spirit* enables us to recognise an object as a work of art?

So now I am going to contradict the Heideggerian dictum: "Belief has no place in thought."[5] I shall even ask: Is art a question of faith? Do we still belong to a theocratic or theological regime of art?

Ecce! [Behold!]: *Credo*! [I Believe!]

1. *Behold! [Ecce!]* The grammatical classification of this word is difficult. For some people it is an adverb of demonstration, for others it is a word denoting designation. In any case, the word is used in order to present something or someone and its use implies a close relationship with the speaker. It indicates something, reveals it, announces it as being nearby or ready to become present. It means:

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[4] Bresson wrote: "FAIS-TOI CROIRE. Dante en exil et se promenant dans les rues de Vérone, on se chuchote à l'oreille qu'il va en enfer quand il veut et qu'il en raporte nouvelles." – "MAKE YOURSELF BE BELIEVED. Dante in exile, walking in the streets of Verona. People whispered to each other that he goes to Hell when he chooses and brings back news from there." Robert Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), p. 137.

[5] Martin Heidegger, "The Anaximander fragment" in *Early Greek Thinking.* Transl. by David F. Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

"Here it is," "Look," "See." It is demonstrative, an indicator, a means of presenting something. *It points* to something that is being presented or will soon be presented. Or rather, something which the formula itself makes present: the word *Ecce [Behold]* is performative. It is an ostensive device: a discursive ostensory/monstrance.

The link with epiphany, revelation, apparition makes the word *Ecce/Behold* one that is common in Biblical, prophetical and messianic usage. As Carlo Ginzburg has written, the formulation *Ecce* "distances us from the narrative dimension. We could instead speak of an ostensive dimension, introduced by a word (idoú) that projects us into another dimension, that of the prophetic vision."[6]

The Hebrew word *hinné* is very common in the books of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel; it was later translated into Greek in the Septuagint version by the words *idoú* and *idé* and then used again by the evangelists in presenting Mary or Christ as the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, and also in the book of the Apocalypse, which reverted to the prophetic style of the dreams and visions of the Old Testament. *Behold* a virgin will conceive; *Behold* the Lamb of God; *Behold* the Son of Man. In the Latin translation of the Vulgate, the word used is *Ecce.*

Carlo Ginzburg links the use of this ostensive formulation in the biblical texts of the Old and New Testaments with non-narrative Christian painting and iconography. "The ostensive, non-narrative dimension of the image in Christian culture offers a visual equivalent to these nominal prophetic phrases." Hence all those images, so many times repeated, of the Virgin, the Baptism of Christ, Ecce Homo, the crucified Christ with Mary and John (according to St John's Gospel, on the cross Christ said to Mary: *Behold your Son;* and to John*: Behold your mother),* scenes which are repeated in iconography and which originate

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[6] Carlo Ginzburg, *À distance. Neuf essais sur le point de vue en histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), p.102. The following reflections are indebted to this essay by Ginzburg. As regards the reference *Ecce* in contemporary art, see also the catalogue of the exhibition organised by Thierry de Duve, *Voici! 100 ans d´art contemporain*. Palais des Beaux Arts, Bruxelles, de 23.11.2000 a 28.1.2001.

in this ostensive *Ecce* used by the Hebrew prophets (who were forbidden to make images).

2. *Ecce* is a way of demonstrating or presenting, a way of framing that alters what is being framed in such a way as to transform it for this purpose. This *demonstrating device,* retaining the memory of its prophetic style, has been taken up again in the art of the 20th century. If the *ecce* allows, iconographically, for a movement away from the narrative, this presentation will open the way to another deviation in the 20th century: auto-referentiality, by applying the *ecce* dimension to the actual work of art and not to what it represents. It *is.*

This movement was well understood by Duchamp. More than the object in itself (ready-made), what interests us primarily is to think of the way in which it is presented, or how we gain access to it. A revealing example would be the well-known *Fountain*. Duchamp asked Stieglitz to photograph the urinal bearing the name of R. Mutt mounted on a plinth with a picture in the background. The photograph was published in the review *The Blind Man.* It is thanks to this photograph that the urinal would eventually become part of the history of art. The original urinal has disappeared. What we have left is a set scene, a means of presentation and framing.

The framing-moulding effect is one of the characteristic features of the art moment inaugurated by Duchamp. But who does this moulding: the artist, the institution or the spectator? Who proclaims: "Behold, this is a work of art"? Is this proclamation performative, magical or sacramental? Will it imply a particular power and will it require faith?[7]

Paradoxically, in seeking to distance art from the individuality of the genius of the artist, Duchamp gives to the signature and the name of the artist a specific value. He appears to replace the work – *n'importe quoi* – by the artist; replacing belief in the work by belief in the artist even without meaning to. In seeking to get away from Romanticism, he deepens it. The antidote begins to feed the virus and strengthens it.

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[7] Thierry de Duve cited in Louis Marin, "La parole consécratoire et les transsubstantiations de l'art," *Poliphile*, n°1, *Revue annuelle des Arts & des Sciences*, Spring 1992, pp.70-88.

Instead of introducing a doubt by revealing the ritual strategies of art, it only increases credulousness.

3. In 1913, Duchamp asked himself: "Can one create works that are not artworks?"[8] Duchamp found this question, which seems to appear like the curse of Midas, deeply interesting, and it is not a statement but a question. If one is an artist, is everything one does art? If so, it is not the work which makes the artist, but the artist who makes the work? This link will take us back to the question of who it is who creates the artist, and make as believe and accept that someone is an artist.

Duchamp's texts stress the question of the context or the *use* (once again, the framing or *language game* as Wittgenstein would say): if we use a Rembrandt as an ironing board, does this mean that the Rembrandt has ceased to be a work of art? Does the converse of this equally apply? Can one turn an ironing board into an artwork? If one can *promote* an *"ordinary object"* to the "dignity of an object of art by the simple decision of the artist" (*Dictionnaire abrégé du surrealism*), then one can also *demote* a Rembrandt. Use would dictate the meaning. It is not the object as such that is in question here, but the subject. Hence, to dignify or deprive of dignity are actions external to the object, a form of description that would not depend on the object as such. A way of identifying, a conviction revealed in its *use:* "The meaning of a word is its use."[9] – in the practical application of a rule, in learning how to apply it, or in creating it.

4. In a text written for the review *ARTnews* in 1957, Duchamp declared: "When inert material is changed into a work of art, a true transubstantiation takes place (...)." The use of the word *transubstantiation* has obvious theological connotations and this can be of help in reflecting on the artistic process. What influence has the theological

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[8] Marcel Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe. Ecrits* (Paris, Flammarion, coll. "Champs," 1975), p. 105.

[9] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe, G. H. von Wright. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), §61. And if, instead of "This is a work of art," we declare, "This is a hand"? Wittgenstein wrote: "If e.g. someone says "I do not know if there's a hand here" he might be told "Look closer." This possibility of satisfying oneself is part of the language-game. It is one of its essential features." Ibid., §3.

model of the Eucharist in the field of art? Is there something in common between the expressions *this is my body* and *this is art?*[10]

In the Gospel narratives of the last supper, the word used is not "*behold*" but another term: "*This is*..." In the oldest version we have, Paul, in addressing the Corinthians, tells them: "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me'" (I Cor. 11, 22-23). *This is* has the same ostensive and performative power as *Behold:* both expressions not only point to but alter what they present. According to the Eucharistic ritual and Christian theology, thanks to the gestures and words of the priest the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, and the way in which the priest displays the chalice and the host, raising them up and making them visible to all, reinforces this ostensive power. (Ostensory or monstrance is the name given to the sacred vessel used for displaying the consecrated host for adoration). The real presence is an effect of the words of consecration.

In the same way as in the Eucharistic liturgy, will it be necessary to believe in the power of the performative word and of the artistic gesture in order to see the work of art? What affinity is there between art and sacramentality, the liturgy, in the process of artistic transubstantiation?

According to the theology of the sacraments, the sacramental sign signifies and accomplishes what it affirms. The sacrament is the "visible word" (St Augustine); "it represents in plastic form the promises of God and does so visibly." In the case of the Eucharist, the gestures and words of the priest over the bread and wine both signify and accomplish what they say: the transubstantiation, the ontological alteration into body and blood. The substance is altered, but not the species (which remain intact). The same appears to occur in the *ready-*

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[10] Concerning the relationship between the two statements, the theological and the artistic, see Louis Marin, "La parole consécratoire et les transsubstantiations de l´art," pp.70-88 – My gratitude to Tomás Maia for pointing this invaluable text out to me.

made. What is needed is a "prayer," a declaration, which effects the alteration.

As Luther pointed out when arguing in favour of the transubstantiation of the species into body and blood, Christ's "entry" into the species comes about by means of the Word, in the same way as Christ entered, by means of the Word, into the womb of the Virgin Mary. The sacramental word has a performative power – "the Eucharistic symbols" (the bread and the wine) hide the body of Christ as a thing and reveal it as a symbol."[11] There needs to be, as Louis Marin has written, a "secretion of the secret," an uncovering of what is hidden. In order for the presence to be effective, "it is necessary for the secret to reveal its presence."[12] Will this be true also of 'ready-mades'?

5. To say "this is art" is not a gnoseological statement or declaration, it is an act that signifies, a "performative phrase" (Austin), an act of speech created by/for/through it, to the extent that the speaker has authority or conviction. It accomplishes a "creative action" (Anscombe) similar to the mythical tradition of the creation of the world by a word in the Book of Genesis. Instead of locating art under the aegis of theoretical wisdom (in relation to Truth), Duchamp proposes a practical wisdom (in relation to Action). More than a confirmation, it is a baptism:[13] to give a name and usher into a community. This declaration "this is art," whether on the part of the author or on that of the spectator, does not convey an *intention* to do something but is already in action.

Who is it that says "this is art"? Is it the artist, the institution or the viewer? Dickie would say that the institution contains within itself both the artist and the viewer. The viewer and the artist have the institution within them, close to their skin, even if they are far off in their [ivory] tower. The statement "this is art" must be part of a memorial, it is the repetition of an announcement and a gesture inherited from a tradition

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[11] Ibid., p.78.

[12] Ibid., pp.78-79.

[13] Word used by Thierry de Duve in the essay "Petite théorie du musée (après Duchamp, d´après Broodthaers)," in Elisabeth Caillet and Catherine Perret, eds., *L´art contemporain et son exposition* 2 (Paris: L´Harmattan, 2007), p. 95.

and is legitimately repeated. Does the viewer need to believe in the person uttering the phrase, in the artist, the director of the museum, the curator, the critic? Or will his or her power of conviction suffice?

As in the case of the Sacraments, the passage from the ordinary world to the world of the sacred requires a prayer of consecration. By means of the words of consecration "one thing is destroyed in its specific nature in order to become something else, while retaining its former appearance. In this way, at one and the same time, it becomes a sign of this transformation which affects its most intimate substance as well as signifying also the symbolic and real effects that it produces for each of those who receive it and for the community as a whole"[14]. The "this" (bread, wine) is destroyed by "is my body." The "this" (the ordinary object or gesture) is destroyed by "is art." There occurs a transformation of one substance into another, while the apparent characteristics of the original are retained. (Louis Marin reads the artistic formula as a gesture of displacement, or the removal of the normal usage and its replacement in a different context, another law, and it attains its effectiveness and validity under the law governing this new location[15].)

It is necessary to recognise the *language game* that is being played, or the *tone of voice* with which it is said, as Wittgenstein has written: "Certainty is as it were a tone of voice in which one declares how things are, but one does not infer from the tone of voice that one is justified."[16]

6. One of the conditions required for a sacrament to be valid is for the minister to be a validly ordained priest, who acts *in persona Christi.* He is a representative, a spokesman who repeats the words used at the Last Supper. In other words, the ecclesial institution institutes the priest and thereby validates his liturgical actions (the validity of his sacra-mental actions does not depend on whether he is good or bad, he believes or does not believe, his spiritual state or any crimes he may have committed). In the same way, it is the artistic institution (the peers,

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[14] Louis Marin, "La parole consécratoire et les transsubstantiations de l'art," p. 82.

[15] Ibid., p. 88.

[16] Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, §30.

the critics, the media, the directors of museums or galleries, the curators, collectors ...) that institutes the artist.

"Who creates the creator?[17] Pierre Bourdieu asked in 1977. How does one consecrate the name of the one who holds the power to consecrate? It is necessary to analyse the mechanism whereby belief is established in the artist, in the work and in its value in order to avoid falling into credulousness, as we shall see.

The terms Bourdieu uses for reflecting on belief in the value of the work are derived from the religious universe: the power to consecrate, belief, charismatic ideology, sacred commerce. Faith in the creator, good faith and bad faith, ritual sacrileges, sacralising desacralisation ... For Bourdieu, the art universe is a universe of belief; art takes from religion its "elementary forms." Once we have entered the art world, we share, even unconsciously, its beliefs in a logic which is particular and autonomous to it. Belief in the value of a work implies a kind of social magic, a symbolic alchemy. The art world is autonomous, with its own institutions and rules. This art religion has its prophets, priests and temples. Seemingly it denies the "economy" and replaces it by "transcendence." By means of the sociology of art, Bourdieu expresses a desire to desacralise and profane this religion, this product of belief, by making known the various means of manipulation, the arbitrariness of the conventions, the effects of domination used by critics, commissioners, directors of museums, art galleries, collectors ... in an analaysis of the world of culture as a market and speculation where what counts are not the things themselves but what one thinks of them. Mauss's studies of magic enable Bourdieu to deflect the question: the important thing is not *what the magician does* (the artist) but *who created the magician.*

Criticism of the way in which belief is produced also needs to be criticised. A critique of the critique, in order not to impede the possibility of the existence of a work. We have to safeguard the work of art from the more or less manipulative operation that is derived from it.

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[17] Pierre Bourdieu, "La production de la croyance. Contribution à une économie des biens symboliques" in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n° 13 (1977), pp. 3-43.

How to gain access to the work, bearing in mind that the production of belief exists, seems to me to be the central question.

7. A further theological (ecclesiological) aspect links the Eucharistic happening to the artistic process: the priest is there in the name of the ecclesial community, known as the Priestly People, and not in his own name. It is the ecclesial community, the faith of the community, the Spirit dwelling in it, that makes transubstantiation possible. Even when celebrating on his own, the priest celebrates in the name of all. Eucharistic communion corresponds to the consecration: the Eucharist is not only the consecration of the species and their transubstantiation, but the shared consumption of the body and blood, the creation of community. Hegel called it the Kingdom of the Spirit "The community is the existing spirit, spirit in its existence, God existing as community."[18]

For Hegel, the Eucharistic transubstantiation does not take place exteriorly but rather within the believer: a reformed conception of the Eucharist, which Hegel deemed to have come from Luther. The emphasis seems not to be so much on the object, on the externals, but on the reception, on the communion, the assimilation. Like *Hegel's apple*,[19] the object must be defined as something destructible/consumable for me to make it mine.

Reflecting on the reception of the Sacraments, Hegel declares that "the essential consists in accomplishing this movement in the spirit" (p, 198). The "mystical union" is "the unity in itself of the divine nature and the human nature" (p. 198). Hegel even uses the word *Genuss*, reception, to define the question: the certainty of the mystical union and the creation of the community by the Spirit, that God is in it and that it is in God "is not an eternal security, witness, confirmation, but only a fruition (p. 168). This enjoyment is in the "eating and drinking," in its appropriation: "It is in the form of an external sensible object, that the divine being is eaten and drunk (...). Thus, this sensible element must have value, become a divine element, be transformed into this element,

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[18] Hegel, *Leçons sur la philosophie de la religion III. La religion absolue.* Trad. J. Gibelin (Paris: Vrin, 1954), p. 189.

[19] See Ibid., p. 153. Commented on by C. Malabou in *L´Avenir de Hegel. Plasticité, temporalité, dialectique* (Paris, Vrin, 2012), p. 137ff.

be transubstantiated, become the very divine substance, two elements in one" (p. 199).

Hegel identifies the differences, in the various Christian Churches in relation to the exteriority of the divine Being: "Catholics venerate the host as such, even if it is not received (received in communion) (...); it possesses a solid objectivity. (...)."On the other hand, from the evangelical Lutheran point of view, "it is only in the reception and in faith that the transubstantiation comes about, exclusively in a spiritual manner" (pp.199-202). In this Church, the real presence is nothing in itself; only in its reception, in its absorption, in the destruction of the sensible element does the union with God come about. Communion implies the destruction of the outer appearance. According to Hegel, it is essential to destroy the external object of adoration in order for it to become an interiorised spirit, a mystical union. The host is a common object, the happening takes place within the believer: "The existence of the community is completed in the reception, the appropriation of the divine presence; it is a question of the conscious presence of God, of union with God, *mystical union*, of the recognition of God, the recognition of his immediate presence in the subject" (p. 202).

For Lutheranism, according to Hegel, one begins with the "ordinary, common object, but its reception, the feeling, the feeling of the awareness of God comes about when the external object is absorbed not only materially but in spirit and with faith. Only in the spirit and in faith does one encounter God present (p.203). For this reason Hegel declares "the consecration takes place in the faith of the subject (p. 203). God is not some exterior thing, remote in the host; only in its consumption, namely in the destruction of its exteriority and in faith, does the consecration become effective in communion.

Faith leads to a spiritual interiorisation, and it calls for a critique of the reification of the divine, of alienating exteriority.

If we follow this eucharistic model, what will be the result of transubstantiation and communion in art? The work of art, in the same way as God in the host and the wine, must also be assimilated, incurporated into the believer, or else run the risk of becoming mere idolatry.

8. Was Duchamp indebted to this Lutheran theological conception in the artistic field? A reformer rather than a destroyer? Might it be that the later transformation of Duchamp into King Midas, a magic producer of objects was a misunderstanding of what he was aiming at and of the range of his gesture?

Duchamp seems to affirm the inseparability between *transubstantiation* and *communion* on the part of the viewer. According to Duchamp, there are two poles in creation, artist and viewer. The transubstantiation of the object into an artwork involves not only the artist, but also the viewer: the artist is not alone in the accomplishment of his work – the act, the creative process requires the spectator who establishes the bridge with the world. The phrase already cited in which Duchamp links the creative process with the phenomenon of transubstantiation, also links the work with the viewer. "The process takes on another aspect when the viewer finds him or herself in presence of the phenomenon of transformation; with the change of the inert material into an artwork, a true transubstantiation takes place and the important role of the viewer is to determine the weight of the work on the aesthetic scales." Duchamp does not attribute to the viewer the role of the officiating priest, nor that of the alchemist, but that of recognising and judging the work (the *aesthetic scales* which he so often seems to despise).

The role of the viewer is decisive in the creative act and therefore also in the transubstantiation: "All things considered, the artist is not alone in accomplishing the act of creation because the viewer establishes the contact of the work with the outside world, deciphering and interpreting its profound qualifications, and in this way increases his contribution to the creative process. He is part of a complex process. This contribution is even more evident when posterity pronounces its definitive verdict and rehabilitates forgotten artists."[20]

9. If the real artistic event of transubstantiation takes place within the viewer and not merely exteriorly, the *Ecce* cannot indicate a distance, an external objectivity. Here we perceive the difference between credulousness and authentic faith. The one creates idols, the other a relationship and an interiorisation.

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[20] Marcel Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, p. 189.

In order to avoid ingenuous credulousness, it is necessary that, in the *Ecce,* due account be taken of what Duve called "the ethical task" of the museum,[21] its ability to ask the viewer: "Is this an artwork?" rather than [itself] giving a dogmatic and institutional reply that does not make a person think, as in a democratisation in which everything is equal. An invitation to judgement: "See for yourself whether this is art or not"[22]. In Duve's view, in the mouth of the museum, the phrase "this is art" would not be a performative but a "quoted performative" that must be in inverted commas: "It [the phrase] does not transform the thing presented in art, it cites it as having already been described as art."[23] The citation should always appear accompanied by a question mark: "This is art, is not it?"[24]

10. Can it be that the importance that has been attached, in recent years, to the history of exhibitions, to curatorial studies, to the role of the curator is a result of the more or less conscious importance that is given today to the *ecce,* the presentation and the liturgy of gestures and words in which the works are embedded?

11. As religion for Marx, so Duchamp declared that art is "an opium that is habit-forming" and for this reason [there exists] a "deep-rooted antinomy between art and ready-mades."[25] Could we [also] say between the Catholic host and Lutheran communion?

Ready-mades are not like works of art which are habit-forming, attachment to something *exterior,* because they depend on their reception and not on their objectivity. They ought to have been like a good drug (*pharmacon*), but became part of the problem: paradoxically they turn into the thing that they wanted to fight against. Isn´t it the magic formula of the 'ready-made' that has created most dependency in the contemporary art world? The derisory battle is framed as a moment of celebration. The attempts to transgress in order to question the artistic production and the logic of how it works, become canonical and dogmatised.

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[21] See Thierry de Duve, *Petite théorie du musée*, pp. 93ff.

[22] Ibid., p. 99.

[23] Ibid., pp. 94-95.

[24] Ibid., p. 95.

[25] Marcel Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, p. 191.

The credulousness originated by the "art" institution, with all its dogmatisms (which led to the withdrawal both by the Cubists and the Futurists of the *Nude descending a staircase* from the *Salon des indépendents* in 1912), needed to be destroyed, the hammer blows showing the way of operating through institutional manipulation and general credulousness. Might Duchamp be a hoaxer who shows how the essence of art is always a clever trick, depending on the believing experience of the recipient?

Duchamp's geniality resides in having dismantled the trick, in showing the rules of the game, hitherto invisible, or needing to be explained, the determination of the contextualisation, the framing, the power games, the institution ... the *ecce.* And, in the end, Duchamp switches from art to chess, "a very plastic game." The rules being established, learnt, clear, one knows what one is dealing with: "The rules we apply in playing chess develop in the community of chess players and relate to it. But there is no other game of chess that we can play that does not respect these rules. To play chess is to obey the rules"[26]. Duchamp endeavoured to show the community rules in the art game.

12. Might Duchamp's gesture be a critique of credulousness in the artistic sphere – introducing, *ad absurdum*, a form of abrasive atheism in order to purify the air? Might Duchamp himself be the atheistic moment which calls the world of art into question? And for this reason, he kept quiet and withdrew when he realised that, contrary to what he wished, the clever trick itself became part of the major trick which is art. In order to destroy a clever trick, one cannot oneself be a hoaxer.

I do not know whether Duchamp would like to be called "the negative moment" of atheism, because this indicates still being part of a dialectical process. Speaking of his reaction to the description "artist," Duchamp told Tomkins that he was "a non-artist, not an anti-artist. The anti-artist is like an atheist, he believes negatively. I do not believe in

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[26] Roger Pounet, "L´épistémologie du témoignage et les vertus," *Philosophie*, nº88 (Paris: Les Ed. de Minuit, 2005), p. 27.

art. Science is more important today. (...) Art was a dream that ceased to be needed."[27]

"I do not believe in art." Fine, but I do not believe that Duchamp did not believe in art; he himself did not believe in what he was saying.[28] He injected into it the virus of doubt, not in order to destroy it, but in order to purify it. It was necessary to attain the 1960s for it to be effective.

13. In 1914, Duchamp bought a *bottle rack* in the Bazaar of the Hotel-de-Ville, and added an inscription to it. When he moved to the United States in 1915, his sister and his sister-in-law tidied up his studio, removing everything they believed to be important and threw the bottle rack away.[29] Did they not recognise that it was a work [of art]? Was the word-gesture-context missing? If it had been on a plinth with a label, inside a museum or art gallery, framed in an explicit theory, would the same thing have happened? What is needed for a work to be recognised and accepted?

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[27] C. Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp : uma biografia* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2004), p. 452.

[28] On other occasions, Duchamp displayed his habitual contradictions in the way he said he envisaged "belief." "I love the word 'to believe'. Generally speaking, when one says 'I know', one does not know, one believes. I believe that art is the only form of activity by which man as such shows himself to be a real individual. Only through it can he move beyond the animal stage because art provides an access to the regions where neither time nor space hold sway. To live is to believe; it is at least what I believe." Marcel Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, p. 185.

And, in an interview with P. Cabanne:

"Cabanne – One gets the impression that every time you are persuaded to adopt a position, you immediately deny its importance by irony or sarcasm.

Duchamp – *Always. Because I do not believe in it.*

Cabanne – *But what do you believe in?*

Duchamp – *In nothing! The word "belief" is also a mistake. It is like the word "judgement." They are terrible words on which the world is based."*

[29] Marcel Duchamp, *Entretiens avec Pierre Cabanne* (Paris: Allia, 2014), p. 70.

What was missing was the *Ecce* – the ostensive device that evokes the response *Credo*.

Conclusion

Belief and Amnesia

1. As Karl Marx recognised and as was demonstrated in the chapter of *Das Kapital* entitled "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," merchandise is not the trivial object we are accustomed to thinking it is: "It is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties."[30] If, at first sight it appears to be a thing, an object, Marx was fully aware of its symbolic value and function. From the moment that objects made of a particular material are treated as commodities, they are seen as something completely different, they are transformed into something which is both palpable and impalpable."[31] Marx recognises that commodities possess a "mystical character," the "enigmatic character," the "mysterious character" which is not related to its "use value." In his view, this "mystical cloud," this illusion, needs to be dispersed by the liberation of man and by deliberate and rational action. In order to achieve this, he declares: "in order to find something analogous to this phenomenon, one must seek it in the nebulous area of the religious world. There the products of the human brain appear to possess a life of their own, autonomous entities that establish relationships between themselves and human beings. The same thing occurs in the world of trade with man-made products. It is what we might call the fetishism that attaches itself to manufactured articles as soon as they are presented as commodities, since they are inseparable from this form of production."[32]

The *fetish* aspect comes from the social character of the production and of the market: it is "social existence" which gives them a value

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[30] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Book I, Chap 1, Section 4. W.J.T. Mitchell, in *Iconology*, dedicated a chapter to Marx in which he studied the relationship between art and fetishes. I owe much to this analysis. W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1987), pp.185 et seq.

[31] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Book I, Chap 1, Section 4.

[32] Ibid., p. 113

distinct from their "material existence." What is in question here is the social attribution of the value, distinct from [that of] its use and material. Value is a relationship between people which is concealed under cover of a relationship between things. This detour is unconscious: "They happen unawares. Hence, the value bears no label stating what it is. Far from this, it transforms each product into a hieroglyph. Only with time will man manage to decipher the meaning of the hieroglyph, penetrate the secrets of the work to which he contributes, since the transformation of objects into values is a social product in the same way as language is."[33]

So we can say that merchandise is, in its phantasmagoria, very similar to a work of art;[34] at least according to the Romantic conception of art, a "magic object." Similarly, in the case of art, we can ask the question Marx asks of the economy: "And will not the modern economy which is held in such high esteem and never tires of insipidly jeering at the fetishism of the mercantilists, be itself the victim of fetishism?"[35] For this reason, he states ironically: "Up to today, no chemist has discovered the exchange value of a pearl or a diamond."[36]

2. Marx's critique revealed to readers at the end of the 19th century who believed they were so civilised and developed that, after all, they were not far removed from the primitive societies and their elementary forms of religion (which these readers looked upon as interesting and peculiar forms of anthropological analysis). Today's economy and materialism are another way in which the *magic thought* subsists, later taken up again by Baudrillard in his critique of consumption.

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[33] Ibid., pp. 115-116.

[34] Marx does not use the idea of a fetish in discussing art, but for thinking about merchandise – for art, he used the concept of ideology. Marx did not want to reduce works of art to simple objects of capitalist consumption; they were not mere products of merchandise. But, whether ideology or fetishism, they are two forms of idolatry: "one mental, the other material, and both are derived from an iconoclastic critique," as Mitchell points out in *Iconology*, p. 187.

[35] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Book I, Chap 1, Section 4.

[36] Ibid., p.131.

This attitude, however, has not been accepted. It is lived in denial. There is resistance to the claim that they are living in a believing regime – capitalists will deny that gold is their Holy Grail.

The fetishism of commodities must be understood as a form of double forgetting: first of all, the capitalist forgets that it was he and his tribe who projected life and value into commodities in the ritual of exchange. But Mitchell points out that there is a second forgetfulness: "The deepest magic of the fetishism of commodities is its denial of the fact that there is something magic in it."[37] It appears to be an "everlasting code," natural and not historic, as if it had always been so. Capitalist fetishism deletes the traces of its history, of how it came about. This new fetishism appears, in social terms, as a form of icono-clasm: it destroys the ancient fetishes, creating new ones. New gods replace old ones.

3. Throughout this text, we have endeavoured to show how art is indebted, albeit unconsciously, to religious structures and dimensions and theological, ecclesiological and liturgical models which subsist even though the amnesis is general and the belief remains unconscious. Can we have forgotten that, in our relationship with works of art, we continue to be members of a theological regime, a regime of institu-tionalised belief?

Art, like philosophy, is produced and received on the basis of "presuppositions." I have tried to clarify and explain some of these presuppositions in relation to contemporary works. An ingenuity of belief cannot be enough. It is necessary to tease it out, work on it. A necessary critical mediation. That done, it is necessary to carry out a critique of the critique, in order to pass from a religion of art, based on credulity, to a faith in the power of the work of art. For this to come about, it was necessary to pass through an "atheistic," sceptical moment in Duchamp. There is no true faith that does not experience atheism (Paul Ricoeur).

In this analysis of the concepts *Ecce* and *Credo*, insofar as they are part of the theory of art, there remains the need to distinguish very different forms of relationship with the work of art: from the attractive

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[37] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology*, p. 193.

appearance or the communicant interiorisation; from the institution-alisation of belief or of intellectual affection.

4. In the preface to the first edition of *Das Kapital*, Marx reminded his German readers that merely because the analysis they were about to read was based on the situation in England or, in their optimism, they considered that the situation in Germany was not so bad, they were not "pharisaically to shrug their shoulders," because Marx would then be obliged to tell them emphatically: "*De te fabula narratur!*"[38] Without the emphasis, I leave the question open.

(For Seth Siegelaub)

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[38] Marx here cites Horace: "The tale is told of you." (Horace, *Satires*, Book I, Satire 1).

Geoffrey Hill and Ruy Belo:
Poetry and Art--A Dialogue in the Quest for an Aesthetic Sense of the Ordinary

MÁRIO AVELAR

This section is devoted to the analysis of two contemporary poets' dialogue with the visual arts. My choice of British poet Geoffrey Hill (1932-) and Portuguese poet Ruy Belo (1933-1978) relies on the fact that they belong to the same generation and share an identical – Christian – cultural background. This analysis aims to unveil possible echoes of their spiritual concerns in the poems they wrote about paintings and sculptures.

One must agree with Donald Davie when he mentions "… Hill's continual, perhaps compulsive, hovering around institutional Christianity (particularly in its recusant and Anglo-Catholic varieties) without his ever saying Yea or Nay to that faith, neither giving his assent nor plainly withholding it" (Davie 166). One must also bear in mind that Belo raised his voice against the label of Catholic poet.[1] Still, what we may regard as a broad Christian cultural background remains at the core of their poetics. This tension between centre and context may be a relevant trace of their poetry as disjunctive space.

Before moving forward I must point out that my reading will be anchored in two of the three major facets of modern identity outlined by Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self – The Making of Modern Identity* (1989): modern inwardness and the affirmation of ordinary life (Taylor x).

In a first stage I will trace and synthesize the specific presence of the visual arts in Hill's poetry. Then, I focus on a section of Belo's fifth

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[1] Ruy Belo once wrote that he was "a clandestine follower of God." Manuel António Silva Ribeiro makes a detailed analysis of the transcendent in the poet's oeuvre (*A Margem da Transcendência – Um estudo da poesia de Ruy Belo*, 2004). José Tolentino Mendonça regards him one of the 20th century Portuguese spiritual writers (Mendonça 227).

book of poems, *Transporte no Tempo* [*Transport in Time*] (1973), where the visual arts take the centre of the poetic speech. Eventually we will be able to identify both poets aesthetic contribution to the questioning of modern spiritual identity.

The Dialogue between Poem and Visual Sign

Before approaching the above-mentioned first stage I must clarify the reason why I have chosen the dialogue between poetry and the visual arts as main vector of my reflection.

As John Keats has shown in "Ode to a Grecian Urn," his founding poem of modern ekphrastic tradition, once the poet chooses to apostrophize an art object, he enhances an intellectual relation with it; he tries to understand its roots, its cultural and artistic origins, where it comes from, the meanings emerging from its soil, hopefully its structure as a microcosm. Portuguese poet and critic Jorge de Sena once defined this poetic strategy as a "versified emotional speculation" (Avelar 22-25), thus emphasizing the synthesis between emotion and reason. This dialogue may emerge then as a privileged space of unveiling of the poet's intellectual-existential concerns.

Geoffrey Hill's Dialogue with the Visual Arts

Having clarified this choice, it's time to approach Hill's poems. Ekphrastic verse does not occupy a central role in Hill's oeuvre. Nevertheless one must point out two poems that rely on this textual tradition: "Picture from a Nativity," from his first book *For the Unfallen* (1959), and "The Jumping Boy" from *Without Title* (2006).

"Picture from a Nativity" may be considered a notional ekphrasis, since it does not rely on an identified/identifiable painting. In a certain sense this poem may be understood in the broad context of André Malraux's concept of *Imaginary Museum*, since the author brings to mind a whole set of pictorial representations of this religious topic that remain in his cultural subconscious. Eventually the reader recreates his own visual representation, according to his own artistic imaginary. The title actually clarifies its notional dimension: Picture of *a* Nativity (italics mine):

Sea-preserved, heaped with sea-spoils,

Ribs, keels, coral sores,

Detached faces, ephemeral oils,
Discharged on the world's outer shores,

A dumb child-king
Arrives at his right place; rests,
Undisturbed, among slack serpents; beasts
Wit claws flesh-buttered. In the gathering

Of bestial and common hardship
Artistic men appear to worship
And fall down; to recognize
Familiar tokens; believe their own eyes.

Above the marvel, each rigid head,
Angels, their unnatural wings displayed,
Freeze into an attitude
Recalling the dead. (Hill 19)

Hill's detachment from a concrete visual object allows him to elaborate on a very personal – maybe idiosyncratic – point of view. E.M. Knottenbelt helps the reader to understand this dimension: "In 'Picture of a Nativity' (1956), the Christ-child is as featureless (one of several 'detached faces') as he is silent ... It is a 'disturbing picture' because so 'unpainterly' (abstract) in its 'depiction' of Revelation reduced to the common callousness of things." (Knottenbelt 49) Can this be a trace of "the ... accute pessimism of the Schopenhauerian kind, informing all the *For the Unfallen* poems?" (idem 12)

Anyway, ordinary life – "the common callousness of things" – punctuates in the representation of an eminent, sublime topic. This fusion between personal insight and historical/cultural referent makes me share Knottenbelt's conviction that "… the poem is a mimesis of critical intelligence engaging with experience." (idem 3)

The notional dimension is absent from "The Jumping Boy," since this poem relies on an explicit referent, Christopher Wood's 1929 homonymous painting.

All in all suspicion about the poem's mere ekphrastic nature arises when Hill states that this poem is also "about the poet in 1940" (Ratcliffe 79). Critic Sophie Ratcliffe's close reading of the poem further unveils several autobiographical meanings: "One may guess the autobiographical elements from the fact that the boy in Wood's painting has neither 'bullet head', 'tin hat', nor Dunlop plimsolls." (idem79).

The poet's point of view, his personal insights thus interfere – short circuits – the conventional description of the painting, eventually locating the poem in a kind of genre limbo. Ratcliffe's analysis reveals this tension between subject and object:

> But for all its chiastic simplicity, 'The Jumping Boy' is not a straightforward 'feel-good' poem. Its complexity emerges in the tension between the lyric voice and its subject. Initially, one may see the lyric voice as the powerful one; the boy jumps 'as' the voice speaks, as if to oblige. But by the end of the poem the balance of power within the poem seems to shift: 'Jump away, jumping boy; the boy I was shout go.' The use of the imperfect tense conveys not a clear divide between the lyric speaking voice and the child, but a continuing wrenching realization. There is also an ambiguity here, as the phrase

'jump away' hovers between distance and delight. It could be read as an affirmation, akin to an instruction to 'go ahead', but it is also a verbal nudge, as if to warn the boy to leap out of the poet's hearing. (Ratcliffe 79-80)

Enargeia and *sapheneia*, ekphrasis' two main dimensions (Avelar 45), prevail in this poem, and yet they coexist in a kind of mannerist tension: the *enargeia* helps the reader to recreate the painting in a mental image, to visualize it, while the *sapheneia* – since it is anchored in the poet's point of view – introduces a fugue, moving the reader away from the painting because of the impact of Hill's autobiographical interferences.

Both examples show that Hill's dialogue with painting cannot be understood within the confines of a mere description of an object, regardless of its cultural importance and/or background. This dialogue eventually emerges as an active, productive soil of his existential concerns.

When we read *Broken Hierarchies*, his latest volume of collected poems, we are systematically confronted with the presence of the visual arts, mostly painting, and yet the poems are removed from the conventional ekphrastic genre. Hill's concerns are not didactic in the sense of seeking to create a pedagogical agenda. On the other hand, painting, aesthetics, the artist's fears and idiosyncrasies all converge in the textual soil, thus becoming part of the poet's ordinary existence, of his ordinary experience, of his ordinary perception; even when ethics stands at the centre of his intellectual concerns. An example of this ethical impulse may be found in "The Humanist," a poem of his second book, *King Log* (1968). Here, the act of deciphering the painting, the specific genre of the portrait, is inseparable from an ethical impulse and, eventually, of *anagnorisis*:

The *Venice* portrait:
He broods, the achieved guest
Tired and word-perfect
At the Muses' table.

Virtue is virtù. (Hill 46)

Broken Hierarchies provides other poetic examples in line with this attention to the pictorial detail where a trace of an historical instant may be revealed. Without attempting to exhaust this topic, I must point out poem 95 of "Al Tempo de' Tremuoti," *The Daybooks* section VI (2007-2012). Here the artist emerges as a paradigm/interpreter of the singularity of his time, revealing a truth that transcends time and space, thus becoming contemporary with the poet, contemporary with the reader:

> Reality so made; it is like fiction;
> Like Brunelleschi's dome proportionate
> Both to the thrustings of the city-state
> And to the golden straddle, his perfection:
>
> Quattrocento masters knowing them–
> selves imbued practitioners of their scope
> In fallen matter, in the mundane scape,
> The bode of majesty, in the mundane scape,
> The body of majesty their signal theme.
>
> Donatello himself many times over
> Master of the resources: Virgin, Babe,
> Playing nosy-on-face. So, what scribe
> Or what Evangel, seeking things to discover,
>
> Took such enraptured gazers of God's plight?-
> They speak of what we are. (Hill 935-936)

This ability to enhance a dialogue with different times and generations is emphasized by the fact that art holds an epiphanic dimension, since it "speaks of what we are." Hopefully our identity lies at the bottom-line of the epiphany. *Anagnorisis* is thus the ultimate experience of our encounter with the art object.

Nevertheless Hill regards the artistic object as a sign of its times, as we may see in the first stanza of poem 95. Other examples of this dimension may be found in different moments of the poet's oeuvre: "Holbein" (*A Treatise of Power* [2007]), poem XXI (*The Orchards of Syon* [2002]), and in two other poems of *The Daybooks* (31 and 89).

Another feature of Hill's dialogue with the visual arts must still be recorded, the one that takes the artist as the poem's main focus. Among different examples I chose poem 98 of *Speech! Speech!* (2000), "Terribilis Est Locus Iste," from *Tenebrae* (1978), "To John Constable: In Absentia," from *Canaan* (1996), and poem 36 of *The Daybooks* (2007-2012). The second, third and fourth poems focus the artist's madness – Gauguin, his mourning – Constable, and the artistic creative process, while the first one may be considered within the ekphrastic tradition.

Although the ekphrastic process is this poem's starting point, at a certain moment the artist emerges as its main focus. The religious topic – Madonna and Child – prevails in this poem. Two singularities must however be signalled: the way the object is preluded and, as I have mentioned above, the artist's perception. Unexpectedly the painting is introduced by a lexicon that belongs to another visual art, cinema – "TAKE TWO: the Northampton MADONNA AND CHILD:/ an offering-up of deep surfaces" (Hill 337), thus bringing the atmosphere of ordinary life into the core of the poem.

Also unexpectedly at the eighth verse the artist's aesthetic perception replaces the description of the visual sign:

Absent here even the unfocused selving

close to vacuity, Stanley Spencer's fixation,

crazed-neighbourly, which ís a truth of England

alongside manifest others,

an energy altogether of our kind. (Hill 337)

Like many Renaissance paintings that transplant this topic to a contemporary setting, Hill recognizes the insertion of aspects of English identity in Spender's depiction. The encounter with the work of art thereby provides a meditation on the nature of time, and allows the self to acknowledge concealed dimensions of his own being.

Ruy Belo's Dialogue with the Visual Arts

As I have mentioned above my choice of Ruy Belo's poetry rests on his 1973 book *Transport in Time*.[2] Although Belo kept an unremitting summons of cinema in his poetry (Ribeiro 144-148), in *Transport in Time* he develops a unique ekphrastic dimension of dialogue with painting, sculpture and photography.

Among the poems that somehow touch this interaction, I have chosen "Dialogue with the Figure of the Prophet Jeremiah, painted by Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling," "Statue of a Girl About to Dance," "Declaration of Love to a Roman Woman, Second Century A.D," "Melody Beside the Bust of Públia Hortênsia de Castro," "Meditation on a Sphinx," "Frieze of Young Girls in Jerusalem," and "Sitting Woman," due to their explicit ekphrastic impulse. At this stage I must call the reader's attention to this phrase, "ekphrastic impulse," since, as we will see ahead, it identifies the specific identity of these poems.

As we have noticed in Hill's poems, the ekphrastic process dwells on an intellectual relation between the poet and an artistic sign, which hopefully implies a decentering of the self; or, due to the convergence between emotion and intellect, an amplification of the confessional tradition. This kind of dialogue may be thus a privileged soil for the revelation of the poet's main intellectual and existential concerns.

In his afterword to the second volume of Belo's oeuvre, Joaquim Manuel Magalhães highlights the melancholic sensibility that prevails in his latest poetry. In my view, this melancholy derives both from biographical circumstances – his estrangement from the Catholic tradition that had played a significant role in his life[3] – and from his *agon* with poetic traditions – the specific impact of Portuguese

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[2] I am deeply grateful to Teresa Belo for her bibliographical information. I am also grateful to Alexis Levitin's translations of Ruy Belo's poetic excerpts. Unfortunately only a few of his poems have been translated into English.

[3] Ruy Belo joined Opus Dei in the early 1950's while a law student at Coimbra University. After having achieved a Ph.D. in canonic law at St. Thomas Aquinas University (Rome), he returned to Portugal and left the Opus in the early 1960s.

Mannerist poets Luís de Camões, Diogo Bernardes, Agostinho da Cruz e Rodrigues Lobo (Magalhães 332-334). The end of this section must approach Belo's *agon* with the powerful Modernist presence of Fernando Pessoa in another context.

Belo's poems on visual signs have led some critics to consider him a follower of Jorge de Sena (1919-1978) who, in 1963, published *Metamorphosis*, a book that welcomed in Portuguese poetry a systematic dialogue between text and work of art, namely ekphrasis. However, this diagnosis stands on the surface of the poem, since Belo's concerns lie not in the attempt to provide a textual recreation of the object – hence the absence of *enargeia* in his poems, but he rather takes it as a suggestion of an existential meditation.

"Dialogue with Figure of the Prophet Jeremiah, painted by Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling," the first poem of *Transport in Time* that evinces the obvious presence of the visual arts in this book, provides the key to an understanding of Belo's approach to the other arts. This poem makes clear that his aim has nothing to do with a textual recreation of the visual object; instead he takes it as a leitmotive for a meditation on Time; hence his emphasis on specific details of the visual sign – the prophet's posture, his expression, the colour of his clothing.

The initial lines identify the main topic of Belo's reflection, the act of thinking: "Think you must think a lot jeremiah/ on you weighs the weight of thinking for us who do not think/ by ourselves who have hours for everything to think about" (Belo 408). The prophet's stature as thinker emerges in opposition to the poet's ordinary pose, someone who stands here as just "one of the crowd," one more person among many other persons – "the flock of American tourist / noisily going by some sixty feet below" (idem 409), constrained by his daily, stifling routines. Since the poet lives a transient, ephemeral life, he does not own the weapons that allow him to think about life's meaning. For him, "more than a privilege it is a burden to think" (idem 408); actually "thinking hurts" (idem 409). Eventually Jeremiah gains the stature of the thinker par excellence, the accurate representation of an Idea: "you think better than the thinker/ that Rodin established as the thinker" (idem).

All the other poems mentioned above – "Statue of a Girl About to Dance," "Declaration of Love to a Roman Woman, Second Century A.D," "Melody Beside the Bust of Públia Hortênsia de Castro," "Meditation on a Sphinx," "Frieze of Young Girls in Jerusalem," and "Sitting Woman" – take the ekphrastic approach, and devote themselves to the relationship between self, art object and Time. They actually emerge as prismatic variations on this topic.

"Statue of a Girl About to Dance" revisits John Keats' meditation on Time in "Ode to a Grecian Urn." Like Keats' poem, Belo's starts by introducing the topic of suspension: "For twenty-three centuries now this young girl/ has been focusing all her life that the marble allows/ in the act of dancing, triumphing thus / over the human condition" (idem 410). And, still in line with Keats, he stresses the immortalization of an instant provided by the sculpture – "Prepare the dance Greek girl/ you will never dance"; thus the melancholic tone: "a brief instant in this corridor in this passage" (idem).

"Frieze of Young Girls in Jerusalem" starts by echoing an identical concern: "Girls sharpetched against against the twilight / ready to intone the canticle of night/ wrapped in the seamless tulle of youth/ yearning to shred the vigilant veils of their dreams" (idem 434). While Keats exhibits several questions whose answers might lead to an understanding of the story depicted on the urn – "What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?/ What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?/ What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?" – Belo's option lies on the creation of a fiction that may provide a meaning to the frieze.

Although the poet's cogitation on Time stands at the centre of "Meditation on a Sphinx," his approach reminds us of another major English Romantic poem, Shelley's "Ozymandias." Both poems share an identical scenic background, the Egyptian desert, and both stress the irony of the perennial dimension of a work of art built by an artist destined to remain anonymous in the unfolding of Time:

Human hands here kill death

Mortal civilizations never die

Before the unceasing succession of empires

the anonymous sculptors of granite

statues remain immutable

The life of effigies makes eternal the life

that in a human face is so precarious (idem 422)

This approach might lead us to think that Ruy Belo shares "the notion of the work of art as issuing from or realizing an 'epiphany' … as the locus of a manifestation which brings us into the presence of something which is otherwise inaccessible, and which is of the highest oral or spiritual significance" (Taylor 419). The poet would emerge then as a surrogate of the priest, the owner of a higher truth – the Namer, as Ralph Waldo Emerson once put it in his essay *The Poet* –, and the creator of a higher form of expression. However relevant the work of art may be, the poet (Belo himself) does not aim to achieve a higher status. This perspective becomes clear in the first lines of "Declaration of Love to a Roman Woman, Second Century A.D": "One day they will pass by my verses/ as now I pass by these sculptures/ unworthy of nothing but a hasty look" (idem 412)

Regardless of the absence of a systematic ekphrastic tone, all these poems retain a few descriptive traces that ensure a certain presence of the object and a meditation that brings to mind some Romantic idiosyncrasies. Other poems however – "Melody Beside the Bust of Públia Hortênsia de Castro" and "Siting Woman" – take the object as a mere trigger for the poet's intellectual roams.

"Melody Beside the Bust of Públia Hortênsia de Castro" does not provide any direct information either on the Portuguese humanist author,[4] or on the sculpture that depicts her. On the other hand the poem progresses according to the poet's accidental reminiscences and intellectual ravings. It is among these latest that one may detect and unveil the author's contribution to the building of an identity that the poet would eventually share: "in that forgotten language / already mine even before I was taught it" (idem 414).

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[4] Públia Hortênsia de Castro (1548-1595) studied Rhetoric and Metaphysics at Coimbra University. Her *Flosculos Theologicales*, together with her books on prose and verse, and her letters award her a place among the most outstanding Portuguese humanists.

The work of art as impulse for the poet's meditation also lies at the core of "Sitting Woman," a poem on a drawing of Portuguese artist Manuel Ribeiro de Pavia.[5]

The poem starts with a reference to the visual sign in the first two lines and then moves away from it, in a path of systematic digressions, reminding us of an unconscious flux that leads the poet to different places and circumstances of his personal journey. The poet's floating intellectual itinerary becomes so evident that he eventually recognizes the impact that this image had on him, and his subsequent incapacity to free himself from it: "Damn her and after all these digressive verses/ that woman still is seated there" (idem 455).

The Poetic and Intellectual Quest for an Answer

My synthetic and necessarily elliptical reading of these Christian contemporary poets' dialogue with the visual arts, allow us to unveil some features of their spiritual concerns.

The first relevant conclusion lies on the fact that both poets only marginally enhance a direct dialogue with Christian *topoi* – the Nativity, Madonna and Child (Hill's "Picture of a Nativity" and poem 98 of *Speech! Speech!*), and Prophet Jeremiah (Belo's "Dialogue with Figure of the Prophet Jeremiah, painted by Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling"). Besides, even when they do, they do not constrain themselves to a depiction of their objects. Thus one must search

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[5] Portuguese neo-realist painter and illustrator. Born in Pavia, Alentejo (1907), died in radical poverty in Lisbon (1957).

elsewhere for the specificity of their personal contributions to the wide and heterogeneous soil of modern identity.

As I mentioned above, Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self – The Making of Modern Identity* provides a detailed reflection on the idiosyncratic paths that concurred to the polyphonic identity we share today.

One of the traces of modern identity that Taylor points out is the epiphanic dimension of the work of art (Taylor 419). Although with different approaches, both Hill and Belo summon this feature in their poems. As we have seen, Hill identifies an epiphanic dimension in art, since it "speaks of what we are." Hopefully the self, our identity, lies at the bottom-line of the epiphany; a kind of personal anagnorisis is thus the ultimate experience of our encounter with the art. Belo also recognizes a pedagogical, revelatory dimension in the work of art, yet he refuses to be considered as naming a higher truth.

These poets' insights confirm Taylor's diagnosis: "[o]ur modern notion of the self is related to … a certain sense of inwardness. … We are creatures of inner depths" (Taylor 111). Their encounter with the art world, their own private, imaginary museum that helped them to build a cultural identity, also lies there, in the inward search that also means an affirmation of ordinary life (cf. idem, x). For this aspect must be emphasized: the presence of painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, is not an extraordinary one; instead it is something that belongs to the ordinary, daily existence of these poets.

Belo's reflections enhanced by the bust of the humanist Públia Hortênsia de Castro, and Hill's "common callousness of things," his autobiographical projection in "The Jumping Boy," all are simple natural-textual reflections of ordinary experiences, of ordinary perceptions; even when ethics stand at the centre of their intellectual concerns. As Taylor acutely remarked: "… being a self is inseparable from existing in a space of moral issues" (idem 112). Hill and Belo attest this observation.

Both Hill's poems on artistic topics and Belo's strategy of ekphrastic impulse show that "… the epiphanic centre of gravity begins to be displaced from the self to the flow of experience … Decentering is not the alternative to inwardness; it is its complement." (idem 465) The dialogue between poem and visual sign actually relies on and foresees

a double movement: a centrifugal movement when the poet approaches the object and decentres himself; a centripetal movement when he is led to meditate on his own experience, on the path that led him to the unveiling of an artistic relevance. Hence the inscription of this dialogue as a personal, individual narrative or life as narrative, or "how I got there or become so" (idem 47, 50).

Eventually, the artefacts they choose, which they are confronted with on their personal journeys, become meaningful – "Who am I? the answer is an understanding of what is important to us" (idem 27) – in a very private, even idiosyncratic way, since "[w]hat I am as a self, my identity, is essentially defined by the way things have significance for me." (idem 34)

A literary approach must also remind us of the fact that both poets were forced to deal with a strong Modernist presence: T.S. Eliot and the new criticism in Hill's case, and Fernando Pessoa in Ruy Belo's.

This aspect has been hinted above. Knottenbelt identifies a specific date that should be regarded as a touchstone in Hill's struggle for a poetic identity: "...1955 marks the beginning of a constant concern with defining his [Hill's] own place as a modern Romantic striving to combine the best of both the Romantic and Modern traditions" (Knottenbelt 23). On the other hand Magalhães points out Ruy Belo's dialogue with previous poetic traditions that allowed him to overcome Fernando Pessoa's central presence in Portuguese modern poetry.

The *agon* with the Modernist spectre led both poets to revisit the Romantic legacy, which they did without becoming Romantic epigones: Hill's poems on visual artefacts reinvigorate the Romantic confessional dimension, while, at the same time, affirming his poetic identity;[6] Belo's poems revisit Keats' and Shelley's *topoi* and poetic atmospheres in a contemporary *ethos*. One must recall that this movement of Romantic recovery is identified by Charles Taylor as a relevant trend in modern aesthetic thought: "… where the original

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[6] "Hill's distaste for 'confessional poetry' is thus both a matter of ethical judgement, and a demarcation dispute: an attempt to establish his own literature of confession." (Murphy 140)

Romantics turned to nature an unadorned feeling, we find many moderns turning to a retrieval of experience or interiority" (Taylor 461).

Geoffrey Hill meditates on the nature of time, and Ruy Belo struggles with the "omnipresent consciousness of death, of loneliness, and his refusal of any hypothesis of a revivifying Eden, not even in the personal childhood past" (Magalhães 341). Thus they both testify to the relevance of *modern inwardness* and to *the affirmation of ordinary life* (Taylor x) in the poetic meditation on art objects and in their search for identity in times of radical questionings and uncertainties.

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The Secular Age of Film in Portugal

INÊS GIL

As we all know, Portugal has a strong Catholic culture that changed after the 1974 revolution. Many young people refused to be part of the Catholic community because it was said that in the Salazar regime it collaborated with the Dictatorship. Today, the relation between film and religion almost does not exist, partly because of the social secularity, partly because there is still a bias against the Church. After a quick overview of religious film production under the regime of Salazar (the dictator), we will analyse how the Catholic Church proceeds today to create a dialogue with culture (cinema).

Under the totalitarian regime, Portuguese cinema was not interested in producing films about the Bible but was more concerned about developing stories about its own religious culture, as Fatima for example, because it was *genuinely* Portuguese. But the film production about Fatima was also very scarce. Daily newsreel production about Fatima or other Catholic events were the most important Portuguese religious films.

Since the Estado Novo had already established a strong censorship classification, the Portuguese Christian directors knew exactly the plot limitations. In 1943, for example, Jorge Brum do Canto directed a film about Fatima's miracles in *Fátima Terra de Fé*. It was about a scientist who rejected religious faith until the illness of his son causes his conversion. Even if this film is a little ingenuous, it created vivid debates when shown in cine clubs.[1] In 1963, Manoel de Oliveira, directed *O Acto da Primavera (Rite of Spring)*, as a tribute to the people of the North of Portugal and their relation with religion. The film is half documentary, half fiction about the representation of the Passion, during Easter, in a very small village in the North of the country. We suspect that Salazar, the dictator, never liked cinema, which he saw it

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[1] Manuel B. da Cruz and Natália C. Guedes, eds., *A Igreja e a Cultura Contemporânea em Portugal 1950-2000* (Lisboa: Universidade Católica Editora), p. 277.

as untrustful. The Catholic Church, during the Estado Novo, was clearly following the Dictatorship and established strong moral values, forgetting films that would express human values and privileging films that would not upset the viewers. During the thirties, forties and fifties, seminarians were forbidden to attend public cinema showings.

The staging of the passion in *Rite of Spring*, Manoel de Oliveira (1963)

The relation between film and the Catholic Church never liberated itself from the idea that cinema could have negative effects on society and the Church was always ready to condemn or forbid films that could have this *negative effect* on the audience.[2] Until recently, the Catholic Church never tried to show the human nature of cinema and how important film is to express human values and qualities. Even in the age of neo-realism, censorship was ultraconservative: for example, De Santis' *Bitter Rice*, from 1949, had been censored for having inappropriate images that showed the female peasant workers' naked legs in the rice fields. Portuguese censorship was definitely concerned only about the superficiality of the images (as in *Bitter Rice*), forgetting the deep meaning of the film. Most of the time, censorship was not aware of the subtleties of the messages and ignored them.

Only in the late fifties (in a very shy and slow way), some new catholic elements recognized cinema as interesting art and original entertainment. But censorship was very strict and would not allow

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[2] For more information about that period see: Carlos Capucho, *Magia, Luzes e Sombras, 1974-1999: Vinte e Cinco Anos de Filmes no Circuito Comercial em Portugal* (Lisboa: Universidade Católica Editora, 2008).

criticism about religion. Jacques Rivette's *The Religious* (1966) or Ken Russel's *The Devils* (1971) were severely amputated. Everything that was dangerous, or that looked dangerous for the political and social stability of the government, was excluded. In Luchino Visconti *La Terra Trema* (1950), the Censorship commission wrote, "*there is an atmosphere of rebellion against the established society that fills the whole film." Its exhibition was prohibited during the Estado Novo because of a "communist atmosphere.*"[3]

Films that clearly criticized German fascism would not be exhibited either. José Vieira Marques, one of the creators of the first International Film Festival of Figueira da Foz, who had been a priest, is an important name in the relation between film and Catholics in Portugal. He believed that cinema had the possibility of expressing humanity and spirituality in a very profound way, especially through realism. He believed that cinema had a very original capacity to reach the mystery of faith and he criticized films such as *The King of Kings* or *The Ten Commandments* that lacked interiority. For him, it was through the reality of decantation and asceticism that Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc* had reached the expression of the Sacred. For him, the *deaf rhythm*, the grey photography and the minimum of actions of Bresson's *The Diary of a Country Priest* proved that cinema had a very specific way of showing souls that were totally opened to Grace and God's Love. But José Vieira Marques believed also in strong Catholic Censorship based on the Legion of Decency, to prevent *immoral commercial* cinema.[4]

The Portuguese Catholic Church had always been afraid to invest in film production to create new forms of evangelization, because of the bad reputation cinema had. Even in the parishes, films projected were not films that defended human values but were ingenuous, ascetical and innocuous films, that would not hurt the susceptibility of the viewers.

Only in the late fifties, a new breath in the Catholic Church created a few cine clubs as the Centro Cultural de Cinema (1955), the Cine-

[3] Lauro António, *Cinema e Censura em Portugal* (Lisboa: Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2001), pp. 82-83.

[4] Artur Lemos, ed., *Por Caminhos Não Andados, Seminário dos Olivais 1945/1968* (Lisboa: Multinova, 2007), p. 208.

Clube Católico (1956) and others. It is interesting to note that the sixties expressed the necessity of a new way of understanding *sin* not only as a condemned fault but also as a way of redemption: for example, Jacques Robin's *The Last Steps* (1964) had been banned. The director of Distribution Company, Sonoro Filme, answered: "It is true that it is about adultery. But adultery exists since the beginning of time and will always exists. In this film, the question of forgiveness is very profound. Yes, there is sin in the film, but sins, even the biggest one, can always be forgiven. This is the doctrine of Christ and this is the doctrine that was taught to me for four years when I was a student in one of the best Portuguese Catholic Schools."

In April of 1974, censorship was abolished, access to numerous film screenings was allowed and the Portuguese film industry changed: the Cinema Novo was born as well as a new generation of directors who freed the Portuguese film history from the classical light comedies. In 1976, António de Macedo directed *Fátima Story* that reveals the excess of religiosity with the pilgrimages to Fatima, accusing the intentional repression by the Catholic Church. *Maria's Hours*, directed in 1976 by the same director, was a clear criticism to the Catholic Church and provoked some hostility among the spectators, Catholics and atheists.

As mentioned earlier, the Catholic Church had backed away from Portuguese film production since the revolution of 1974 and the end of censorship. SIGNIS has been present in the Festroia Festival since the 1980s in a discrete way. Today, the Catholic Church in Portugal wants to find a dialogue with the contemporary Portuguese film industry through the presence of a Catholic jury within the Independent International Film Festival IndieLisboa.[5] It is a challenge for both: for the Festival to show its openness to Catholic values, which are now less conservative, and for the Portuguese Catholic Church which demonstrates the hope of real reconciliation with cinema.

In 2015, in the city of Braga, in the north of Portugal, the Diocese is organizing its own International Film Festival – FlumenFest, Minho International Film Festival – with few awards (features, short films, fiction, documentary, animation or experimental).[6] The FlumenFest

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[5] See the website festival IndieLisboa in http://indielisboa.com/.
[6] See the website festival FlumenFest in http://www.flumenfest.pt/eng.

objective is "to promote a fruitful dialogue between film and human values from an original, aesthetic perspective" and for its first edition the festival's theme is *Reaching for the Other*. It is interesting that the first criterion for joining the competition is based on the fact that the film needs to reflect on human values. Today, the Portuguese Catholic Church understood that the doors have to be open to believers *and* non-believers and that spirituality is also a human value that belongs to the non-believer. Today, the cultural project of the Church is to propose and not to impose. Unfortunately, many Portuguese films are still very anti-clerical, inspired by clichés and stereotypes that devalue the Christian message and only aim to attack the Catholic Church.

It is interesting to note that the Portuguese public accepts an explicitly *religious* film directed by an atheistic filmmaker more than a spiritual film directed by a religious filmmaker. For example, in 2013, Joaquim Pinto and Nuno Leonel asked Luis Miguel Cintra, a famous Portuguese actor, to read, *al fresco*, the Gospel according to Saint John (the original title of the film is: *O Novo Testamento de Jesus Cristo Segundo João*). Among long shots from different points of view we see and listen to Cintra reading with an absolute continuity the text, out in nature, during summer, somewhere in Portugal, it does not matter where. The viewer experiences Cintra's voice reading John's Gospel in a spiritual atmosphere without any kind of artificiality and throughout a whole day. The light changes seem to transform the tone of the text, resisting the setting of the sun. The film was shown at the 2014 Indie-Festival of Lisbon, but did not awaken any reaction from the Portuguese critics.

Luis Miguel Cintra reading the Gospel of Saint John

But the most interesting spiritual cinematographic work is Pedro Costa's. Internationally acclaimed, Pedro Costa still remains a controversial filmmaker in his own country. He is presented as a director whose work is part of *Slow Cinema* or *Cinéma Soustractif* or even *Extensive Cinema.*[7] In this new film tendency (we still cannot speak about a new *genre* because there are too many different styles and story-lines), characters live in a world of cruelty, theirs bodies and souls are in deep suffering and the film shows them not as people on stage. That would be a show, and ethically it is forbidden to turn suffering into a spectacle. Many characters of Extensive Cinema are shown as they are, the narrative never judges theirs acts, even if they are shocking. Presenting the cruelty of the human being and the cruelty of the world may be the source of evil. Pedro Costa's work, if not directly linked to religion, points to spirituality, a humanistic spirituality; that is, he gives visibility and expression to the voices which have been marginalized and forgotten by society. In his last two films about a character whose name is Ventura – *Colossal Youth* (2006) and *Horse Money* (2014) – Costa uses a strong stylized image in a low-key light (very artificial), but the stylization serves to dignify the people.

Ventura in *Horse Money* (2014)

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[7] See the notion of *Slow Cinema* – Ira Jaffe, *Slow Movies: Countering the Cinema of Action* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2014). See also: Antony Fiant, *Pour un cinéma contemporain soustractif* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2014). The notion of *Extensive Cinema* is our proposal since it has to do with a film tendency that allows the viewer to experience time passing.

Ventura and the other characters are presented because they deserve a memory of *important people* whose portrait remains in paintings and museums. They are precious people because they have not been contaminated by materialistic society, neither by the feeling of power. Humility is present throughout the films and a strong Christian atmosphere involves the cinematographic narrative. But this sacred atmosphere is only obvious through the aesthetic work of the image that projects the characters onto a space beyond the tangible world.

The video-installation Pedro Costa realized for an exhibition in 2014 about Archive at the Church of the São Roque Museum in Lisbon requires our attention.[8] Unlike *Horse Money*, the images are not stylized at all, at first sight. There are two screens, each one containing the image of a girl's face from Cape Verde, which were part of his second feature film *Casa de Lava* (1994). The expression is always the same, at the same time harsh and fragile, and the only movement of the picture is the hair in the wind. Because of the loop, the eyes never blink and create a strange tension between the viewer and the portrait. Here, this is the *suspended look* that belongs to spirituality in the sacred space of the church. The surreal stare (at us) of ordinary people is responsible for the spirituality of the images.

The two screens, face to face at the São Roque Museum in Lisbon,
Pedro Costa (2014)

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[8] The exhibition entitled "Visitation-Archive as Memory and Promise" held at the Museu São Roque of Lisbon between 10 of July and 2 November 2014.

Despite the financial difficulties of Portuguese cinema, every year a few features are produced and some shorts, many times associated to cinematographic studies. It is interesting to notice that many works are created to be adapted to art installations and exposed in museums or galleries. The frontier between documentary and fiction is each time thinner, and the difference between film and plastic arts sometimes does not exist. Spirituality is not the favourite theme either for art or for film. Lately, Portuguese Catholic Church has been particularly very active in promoting a dialogue between film and religion, opening to debate with non-believers into its sacred space. Because of the excess of consumerism and the lack of religious feeling, society is each time more receptive. But we know that it will take time to find new cinematographic forms of expressing the transcendent without moving apart from the immanent, essential necessity for trust and reconciliation.

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Index

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 Research 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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