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- Peer Reviewed Journal

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Hegel and the Experience of Forgiveness. Starting from the Spirit of Christianity

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the theme of forgiveness in Hegelian philosophy - especially as it appears in the early text *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* and in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* - with the aim of emphasizing the specifically philosophical meaning of forgiveness. In the 1798-1799 text, in fact, forgiveness gains importance in relation to the comparison between the spirit of Judaism and that of Christianity. Starting from here, one can appreciate how, based on this theological background, the discussion that appears in the last section of the sixth chapter of the *Phenomenology* considers the experience of forgiveness as the paradigm of experience as such. In this sense, the moment of forgiveness is central insofar as it is a constitutively intersubjective experience.

Keywords: Christianity; Forgiveness; Experience; Hegel; Judgment.

Das eigentliche politische Prinzip der christlichen Liebe liegt im Verzeihen. Dies nämlich kann nicht mehr in die Seele des Einzelnen verlegt werden, dafür bedarf es stets eines Andern. Ich kann mich selbst beherrschen [...], aber sich selbst verzeihen kann niemand.

H. Arendt, *Denktagebuch*

This contribution intends to explore the theme of forgiveness starting from the role it plays in Hegelian philosophy - especially as it appears in the early text *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* and in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* - with the aim of emphasizing the specifically philosophical meaning of forgiveness. In the 1798-1799 text, in fact, forgiveness gains importance in relation to the comparison between the spirit of Judaism and that of Christianity. Starting from here, one can appreciate how, based on this theological background, the discussion that appears in the last section

of the sixth chapter of the *Phenomenology* considers the experience of forgiveness as the hermeneutic paradigm of experience as such¹. Given the fundamental *novitas* that it entails, the experience of forgiveness exemplifies the essential character of experience as such, that is, its non-deducibility. In this sense, the moment of forgiveness is central to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* insofar as it is only an opportunity, not a guaranteed possibility: in fact, as we shall see, it is a constitutively intersubjective experience.

The present contribution will be articulated in three steps. First of all, based on *The Spirit of Christianity*, I will focus on the analysis of the spirit of the law, underlined by a logic that is unable to deal with experience; then I will move on to the constitutive risk by which the logic of the law tends to absolutize itself and consequently promote a legalism that borders on pharisaism. Finally, drawing on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I will analyse the relationship between the judging conscience and the acting conscience, taking into account the issues related to the spirit of Judaism vs that of Christianity previously addressed in the early text. Lastly, I will try to suggest that the Hegelian *Geist* seems to present itself as a true spirit of forgiveness.

1. The logic of the law and the spirit of Christianity

The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate was written by Hegel between 1798 and 1799 and published posthumously in 1905 in a collection edited by Hermann Nohl with the title *Early Theological Writings*. As in his Bernese period, Hegel was here driven by the analysis of the needs of his time. More precisely, his aim was to find thought devices able to remedy the divisions typical of modernity. In this sense, the historical dimension intersects with the theoretical dimension, so that, as we shall see, the spirit of Israel constitutes in this writing, as has been noted (Appel, 2003, pp. 199-200), a true figure of thought.

¹ For a wider overview of the subject of forgiveness in philosophy, also with regard to the contemporary debate, cfr. Kodalle (2013).

Regardless of the typifications - if not actual stereotypes - about Israel attributed to Hegel in this text², what interested him was to analyze a figure of the spirit characterized by a certain logic. This logic is under the sign of Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. In the face of division, Abraham responds by subjugating one part to the other, thus indefinitely reproducing the division itself. This theme is important because, at that time, Hegel was reflecting on the nature of the division itself so as to envision a way to solve it without resorting to a relationship of domination, that is, a relationship in which one party crushes the other.

Referring to the events of the Patriarchs, Hegel immediately mentions the episode of Noah, where the latter, in the face of the wild and hostile nature, seeks to dominate it. But with what power does he do so?

If man was to hold out against the outbursts of a nature new hostile, nature had to be mastered; and since the whole can be divided only into idea and reality, so also the supreme unity of mastery lies either in something thought or in something real. It was in a thought-product that Noah built the distracted world together again (*WI*, p. 275; *THW*, p. 183).

The power mentioned by Hegel, as paradoxical as it may seem, is the power of thought, which makes it so that the thinking subject dominates the thinking object. But what is the sphere that supervises the activity of thought as domination? It is the law, which commands humans to regulate and limit themselves. And if the domination of thought is controlled by the law, it appears as legal (*gesetzmäßige Herrschaft*, *WI*, p. 275).

As mentioned, Israel represents a figure of thought in this context, as shown by the insistence on the adjective *gesetzmäßig*: in Hegel's thought, the latter can only refer to the dialogue with Kant, which Hegel would soon take further in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802). Conformity to law, that is, legality (*Gesetzmäßigkeit*) is in fact the a priori principle of Kantian Understanding. As Hegel would put it in 1802, the characteristic of the Understanding is indeed to take a finite aspect of reality and absolutize it *against* all the others - something that is likely to forever fall back into the logic of domination. The centrality of the law is the trait-d'union by the virtue of which Israel and the constellation of Kantian thought tend to

² For a problematization of this theme, see at least the seminal Fackenheim (1967, pp. 157 ff.), Pöggeler (1974) and, more recently, Arndt (2012).

overlap. In this sense, therefore, the power of thought I spoke of earlier does not correspond to that of thought as such, but rather to the kind of thought that rests on the Understanding: that is, the *Verstand*.

Thanks to Israel, the *modus operandi* of thought *qua* regulated by the *Verstand* is also described as a life practice. Abraham's *ingenium*, which is Israel's sign, is in fact defined as «self-subsistent, autonomous (*selbständig und unabhängig*)» (W I, p. 277; THW, p. 185). In this context, the concept of autonomy may refer to a principle of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, where the autonomy of the will is opposed to heteronomy, even if in that case it is the result of the exclusive use of reason (cfr. § 8).

However, Abraham's independence, as the rejection of any heteronomy, at the same time entails the rejection of the dimension of love. The act by which Abraham becomes the father of a nation is one that breaks the bonds of coexistence and love. This is not a temporary break that accounts for the need fulfilled by love. On the contrary, Abraham frees himself from the very need of that bond. «Abraham wanted *not* to love, wanted to be free by not loving» (W I, p. 277; THW, p. 185). The observance of the law as autonomy has to be so pervasive and so exclusive that not even the love for the most desired of children may scratch it; so, his willingness to strike his own child has to prove Abraham's superiority over any feeling of love. This freedom, which feeds on autonomy instead of love, therefore becomes a spirit that has to do without everything so as to depend on nothing. Which means that this spirit ends up to be «the spirit of self-maintenance in strict opposition to everything» (W I, p. 277; THW, p. 186).

He was a stranger on earth, a stranger to the soil and to men alike. Among men he always was and remained a foreigner, yet not so far removed from them and independent of them that he needed to know nothing of them whatever, to have nothing whatever to do with them [...] He steadily persisted in cutting himself off from others, and he made this conspicuous by a physical peculiarity imposed on himself and his posterity (W I, pp. 277-278; THW, p. 186).

Abraham, a stranger on earth, preserves an autonomy that can only come at the price of the deepest solitude. As a result, the liberator of the Jewish people from the Egyptian captivity also became their legislator. The freedom of autonomy, in fact, is at the same time submission to the law, which cannot fix the division, but rather constantly perpetrates it. The law,

in its strict logic, only allows for repetition with no exception, that is, with no unprecedented plus that only as such may lead to reconciliation (*Versöhnung*). The law shows its radical inability to achieve a real unification *qua* juridical institute.

Hegel speaks of the law in the third part of the text after discussing Israel in the first and Jesus's morality and love in the second. Where the law revokes any dialectics, reconciliation seems possible only when punishment is associated with the idea of destiny, which constitutes one of the decisive conceptual structures of this Hegelian text as well as one of the first signs of a markedly dialectical thinking. The punishment brought by the law *qua* criminal law, in fact, by weakening the guilty, can suppress the contradiction between the ought and the reality of the crime; however, the restoration of legality by the law is but the ratification of the gap between the law and individual actions.

The extraordinary resilience of the law is due to the fact that nothing, not even a violation, can affect legality, because in that case the law «is then called a penal law» (W I, p. 338; THW, p. 226). The law, as universal domination, is opposed to all that is particular. Therefore, nothing real can affect it. Nonetheless, legality also suffers from a constitutive weakness, as restoring the legal order through punishment does not coincide with the fulfillment of justice. Necessarily animated by the logic of a formal universality, whose sole prerogative is to not fall into contradiction, the law, in its dialogue / confrontation with the real, proceeds to the punishment of the offender because it «cannot forgo the punishment, cannot be merciful, or it would cancel itself» (W I, p. 339; THW, p. 226). By promoting the recovery of legality by force alone, the law makes of justice (*die Gerechtigkeit*) something constitutively contingent.

Penal law, far from reintegrating the offender, simply destroys the latter, which is but the example of how the law behaves in the face of every individuality. In other words, this means that the law does not tolerate any exception, as the case of the «exception which the trespasser wished to make to the universality of the law» (W I, p. 340; THW, p. 227) shows. The law, being opposed to individuality and peculiarity, only provides for repetition, because it is basically incapable of dealing with and acknowledging the unprecedented character of experience. The

guilty, therefore, even when punished, will always be guilty, and the transgression will always be a transgression. In its indifference to *Gerechtigkeit*, the formal universality of the law entails the irreversibility of the *Ungerechtigkeit*.

What has happened cannot be undone; punishment follows the deed, and that connection is indissoluble. If there is no way to make an action undone, if its reality is eternal, then no reconciliation is possible, not even through suffering punishment. To be sure, the law is satisfied when the trespasser is punished, since thus contradiction between its declared fiat and the reality of the trespasser is annulled [...] Only the trespasser is not reconciled with the law (*WI*, p. 340; *THW*, p. 227).

From a theoretical point of view, there are at least two significant consequences. In the spirit of Judaism, the logic of the law seems to be the only legality of thought. In this way, thought remains incapable of dealing with experience, which remains entirely alien to it. Secondly, what interests us most in this context is that the logic of the law prevents the very possibility of forgiveness insofar as it unilaterally ratifies the irreversibility of what has happened: «what has happened cannot be undone» (*WI*, p. 340; *THW*, p. 227). The violation of the law, in this sense, remains a forever open wound, which cannot be healed. Perhaps, in the light of this dramatic view, we can appreciate the mysterious conclusion of Hegel's discussion of Israel and the logic of the law, where the tragedy of the Jewish people is not regarded as a Greek tragedy, but as a modern one. Indeed, it is compared to *Macbeth* (cfr. *WI*, pp. 342-343; *THW*, pp. 204-205).

This problematic mixture of ancient and modern confirms above all that through Israel Hegel intends to analyze an ideal configuration of thought, so transversal as to embrace even the modern divisions of which the *Verstand's* primacy is both the symptom and the cause. This comparison, above all, is useful in emphasizing the characteristic that underlies the logic of the law. As Hegel explains in the later *Lectures on Aesthetics*, modern tragedy, rather than the ancient one, is similar to the *Trauerspiel*. In this sense, the end of the first part of *The Spirit of Christianity* tells us that the logic of the law is fundamentally a logic of mourning.

2. *Pharisaism, solitude before the law and the spirit of Jesus*

As opposed to the Jewish spirit, which establishes an abyss between life and guilt, as well as between guilt and forgiveness, the spirit of love, open to reconciliation, recognizes instead a bond between guilt and reconciliation. The enhancement of this bond, however, triggers the strongest reaction in the Jewish spirit of separation: «when their hatred took the form of a judgement, the thought of such a bond must to their minds have been the thought of a lunatic (*der Gedanke eines Wahnsinniges*)» (W I, p. 355; THW, p. 215). If the form of *judgment* alludes to the episode of Pilate attributing Jesus's death sentence to the crowd (Matthew 27:21; Mark 15:13; Luke 23:21; John 18:40), the fact that Jesus's attitude also appears to be that of a madman means that, for the logic of the law, a thought that wants to overcome its dependence on legality lies outside of the *logos* itself.

Against pharisaism, which is a peculiar declination of legalism, Jesus proposes a love that is primarily based on acknowledging need (cfr. W I, p. 354; THW, p. 216), where the reward doesn't follow the quantitative logic related to the degree of observance of the law. Here, continues Hegel, «the concept is displaced by life» and there is no loss of universality, but a «genuine infinite gain on account of the wealth of living relations with the individuals» (W I, p. 355; THW, p. 215).

The «reconcilability (*Geist der Versöhnlichkeit*)» (W I, p. 328; THW, p. 215), therefore, «makes a general demand on his hearers to surrender their rights, to lift themselves above the whole sphere of justice or injustice by love» (W I, p. 328; THW, p. 218). «Love does not leave the judge to apportion its right; it reconciles itself to its enemy with no regard to right whatever» (W I, p. 328; THW, p. 216). Thus, the fulfillment of justice is based on a surplus, so to speak, by which the law becomes superfluous: namely love. On the other hand, as we have seen, from the repetition perpetuated by the law, «from the terrifying reality of evil and immutability of the law» man «can fly to grace alone» (W I, p. 341; THW, p. 227). This means that love goes beyond the logic of reward and punishment, so that neither are something that one can deserve, strictly speaking.

From this point of view, legalism seems to overlap with the hypocrisy of pharisaism, because full adhesion to the logic of the law implies a

remunerative vision of justice, whereby righteousness is a form of credit and salvation is the result of trade. This is the topic addressed by the parable (Luke 18: 9) mentioned by Hegel (cfr. *W I*, p. 332; *THW*, p. 220). The Pharisee thanks God for not being like many other people who are unjust, thieves and adulterers like the publican next to him. He feels righteous because he honours all the dictates of the law. The publican, on the contrary, stands before God asking for mercy for his sins.

The absolutization of the law entails «honesty (*Rechtschaffenheit*)» (*W I*, p. 334; *THW*, p. 221) but *Rechtschaffenheit* risks falling into the arrogance of *Rechthaberei* because «this conviction of self-righteousness (*in sich gerecht zu sein*)» involves «disparagement of others» (*W I*, p. 332; *THW*, p. 220). The good conscience that comes from the belief that one has done one's duty, in fact, absolutises itself and thus turns into disdain for other people. Thinking that he exhausts the scope of what is right, the righteous judges others according to the etymological meaning of the verb *urteilen*, on which Hegel insists. In fact, the German word *Urteilen*, as Hegel affirms in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (§ 166, *Zusatz*³), could refer to an original divide (*Ur-theilung*)⁴, which means that by judging others the person with *Rechtschaffenheit* dissects them, breaks them into pieces.

There is a dual hypocrisy to this attitude. On the one hand because, in line with the idea of having built up credit by following the law, the person with *Rechtschaffenheit* ends up making the outcome of her action the very condition for it, that is, something like an a priori right. On the other hand, hypocrisy also undermines the validity of her judgment of others. The *Urteilung*, understood as the self-righteous' right to condemn others, is really the outcome of their inability to endure otherness: it is the «subsumption of others

³ «Die etymologische Bedeutung des Urtheils in unsrer Sprache ist tiefer und drückt die Einheit des Begriffs als das Erste, und dessen Unterscheidung als die ursprüngliche Theilung aus, was das Urtheil in Wahrheit ist». The broader consequences of this view can be found in the «Hegel Dictionary» edited by Inwood (1992), where it is stated that indeed Hegel «accepted the widespread view that *Urteil* and *urteilen* derive from *ur-* (original) and *teilen* (divide), and thus signify an “original division”» (p. 152).

⁴ The Hegelian doctrine of judgment in this sense is inspired by Hölderlin, who in the brief text *Urteil und Sein* (probably dated 1795) had traced the meaning of the German term *Urteil* back to *Ur-Theilung*, that is, the original partition (F. Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke*, II, p. 59). On this point, see the exhaustive monograph dedicated specifically to Hegel's doctrine of judgment: Lau (2004), pp. 161 and ff.

under a concept manifested» that the one who judges «cannot hold out against their independence» (W I, p. 335; THW, p. 222). And yet, even though he is unaware of it, the subject of the *Rechtschaffenheit* is himself a particular declination of otherness, one of many.

This subsumption of others under a concept manifested in the law may be called a weakness on the ground that the judge is not strong enough to bear up against them altogether but divides them; he cannot hold out against their independence; he takes them not as they are but as they ought to be; and by this judgement he has subjected them to himself in thought, since the concept, the universality, is his (W I, p. 335; THW, p. 222).

According to a legal logic, the subject of the *Rechtschaffenheit* sees himself as the sole owner of what is right, reducing the universal to his own property. As we have seen, however, this position is the result of an optical illusion of which the pharisaic hypocrisy is both a victim and the perpetrator. Being an actor, who formulates hidden judgments underneath his open words (from the Greek *hypokrisis*, made up of *hypo-*, “under”, and *krinein*, “to decide, to judge”), the hypocrite - as noted by Hannah Arendt (2006, p. 93) - is also one that hides appearance instead of revealing it. As a consequence, he ends up becoming blind to himself and, in fact, blind to others. In this sense, hypocrisy is the most arrogant of all vices. As opposed to the falsity of those who are content to deceive others, remaining in a relationship (however ambiguous) with them, the hypocrite - who, as the etymology of the term suggests, is a theatrical actor - always acts, even to himself, thus remaining confined in his autistic inner theater.

There is no *alter ego* before whom he might appear in his true shape, at least not as long as he remains in the act. His duplicity, therefore, boomerangs back upon himself, and he is no less a victim of his mendacity than those whom he set out to deceive. Psychologically speaking, one may say that the hypocrite is too ambitious; not only does he want to appear virtuous before others, he wants to convince himself (Arendt, 2006, p. 93).

What one should note in Hannah Arendt’s words is that for the hypocrite the other is not an *alter ego*. On the contrary, by justifying (*rechtfertigt*) himself in front of himself, the hypocrite is the subject of an essentially monological discourse. Just as the law is closed to the *novitas* of experience, so the hypocritical and legalist pharisaism is impermeable to any form of otherness. Yet, just as legality is only apparently armed but is

actually always exposed to infraction, so the Pharisee, superficially certain of his good conscience but secretly undermined by his limits, cannot help but judge others to neutralize their particularity. To disentangle this seemingly inexorable mechanism, the thinking that wants to open up to reconciliation and forgiveness does not have to erase the law, but to deal with it. It is an opportunity to think of its peculiar logic so as to take it outside of the exclusive domain of legality.

This spirit of Jesus, a spirit raised above morality, is visible, directly attacking laws, in the Sermon of the Mount, which is an attempt, elaborated in numerous examples, to strip the laws of legality, of their legal form (WI, p. 324; THW, p. 212).

As you can see, therefore, it is necessary to deal with the logic of the law and separate the *logos* from legality, so as to give the former its freedom and to allow for a reconciliation that rests on grace and forgiveness. In this sense, judgment finds a renewed vitality, which goes beyond its purely applicative function. It is no coincidence that, despite having already noted the centrality of *nolite iudicare*, Hegel cites the seemingly antithetical passage of John 5: 22: «the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgement to the Son». It seems that «the demand to surrender their rights» (WI, p. 331; THW, p. 218) passes through a resignification of judgment by which the latter, by means of its very activity, abandons the sphere of legality to the extent that it separates - *urteilt* - the *logos* from the law.

However, if we must not judge, then why has the Father «entrusted all judgment to the Son»? In the Greek original, the term used is *krisis*, which in the New Testament certainly refers, among other things, to the themes of *parusia* and the final judgment⁵. In fact, Hegel also mentions John 12: 47, where it is said that God sent his Son not to judge (*richten* in Luther's translation) the world, but so that the latter could be saved (*gerettet*) through him. Although in Luther's translation the judgment of John 5: 22 is rendered as *das Richten*, one cannot ignore the Greek original, where *krisis* derives directly from *krinein*: to judge, *urteilen*. In the context of *The Spirit of Christianity*, where reflection on judgment is conceived within a critique of legalism, one must dwell on the apparent contradiction without trying to resolve it immediately, that is, by fully referring the *Richten* of John 5: 22 to

⁵ Cfr. "krisis" in Lampe, 1971, p. 779, and in Bauer, 1988, pp. 918-919.

the theme of doomsday (*Jüngstes Gericht*). This apparent contradiction, in fact, can have a precise meaning about the way in which thought, by means of the separation promoted by legalism itself, may overcome legalism without opposing it. «The son of God does not judge, sunder, or divide, does not hold to an opposite in its opposition» (WI, p. 378; THW, p. 262).

I will not even attempt to exhaust such a profound subject. However, what interests us here and, I think, was also Hegel's focus, is that, as noted, the way in which Jesus makes use of the terms *krinein* and *krisis* shows that he *judges and does not judge* at the same time (Papasoglu, 2013). One of the possible examples of this significant ambiguity can be found in John 8: 12-20, a passage describing a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees. The latter, having heard him say «I am the light of the world», claim that his testimony is not valid, because Jesus is testifying on his own behalf. Instead of defending himself against pharisaism by insisting on the *novitas* of his statement, Jesus seems to justify himself by appealing to the law by which a testimony could only be accepted in court if matched by at least another equal testimony. In John 8:16 he says in fact: «I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me».

However, this is no opportunistic reaction. On the contrary, precisely by accepting the suspicions and accusations made by the Pharisees, Jesus shows how the truth of legalism is something that goes beyond legalism itself. It is clear, in fact, that if the other witness is the Father, the conformity of the Son's testimony has a meaning that goes beyond the mere validity of the law. Indeed, the Pharisees then ask: «Where is your father?» and Jesus answers (John 8: 19): «You do not know me or my Father; if you knew me, you would know my Father also». Further insisting - against the Pharisees' definitive judgment - that legalism can overcome itself, Jesus also says (John 8: 15-16): «I pass judgment on no one. But if I judge, my decisions are true (*ἀληθινή*), because I'm not alone. I stand with my Father, who sent me».

On the one hand, this statement seems aimed at proving the validity of his testimony before the law, but on the other hand - once associated to his ability to judge - it serves to make this legal validity superfluous. Therefore, this means that the act of *krinein*, in its original meaning of «to separate», has a meaning and should be kept, albeit not according to the unilaterality attributed to it by the law. By admitting and valorizing the diaretic

meaning of the term, Jesus distances himself from legalism. The validity of his judgment, in fact, is no longer measured against legality, but against truth: in John 8: 16, his judgment belongs to the sphere of *alētheia*. By imperceptibly shifting from the legal dimension to that of truth, Jesus exemplifies the way in which, while recognizing a certain value to judgment, he uses it in a sense that, overcoming legalism, deconstructs it from within and therefore constitutes its *pleroma*.

As Hegel noted, in fact, the Father does not judge, therefore the Son, who is at one with his Father, does not judge either. However, «at the same time he has received authority, and the power (*die Gewalt und die Macht*) to pass judgement, because he is the son of man» (W I, p. 379; THW, p. 263). The point is that the ability to judge, once speculatively conceived in its relation to the divine, is not only the power of separation, but also the power of union. This means that, once recognized the unity of the Son and the Father, which legalism cannot tolerate, the power held by the Son by virtue of that bond is also that of separation. Despite not judging in the legal sense, the Son can still judge insofar as he knows that the power of judgment is the power to separate *and* to bond. «His power (*die Macht*) to bind and to loosen (*zu binden und zu lösen*) is grounded in the divine» (W I, p. 379; THW, p. 263).

The diairetic character of judgment acquires a value of truth only when it is understood not as exclusive and unilateral, but as the other side of the power to bond - that is, to forgive. Overcoming legalism is possible when the logic of separation, which belongs to the law, is accompanied by the possibility of reconciliation. That is why the Son judges and at the same time does not judge. He does not judge because he does not condemn and oppose, but because he separates judgment from legalism. Therefore this judgment goes beyond the one-sidedness of the *Urteilung* which gives rise to the order of legality and, instead of restoring separation, it exploits the power of the latter to promote forgiveness.

3. *Good conscience and the spirit of forgiveness*

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, forgiveness appears in the final section of the sixth chapter dedicated to the spirit, following the part devoted to

«Conscience (*Gewissen*). The beautiful soul, evil and its forgiveness». First of all, one should focus on the meaning of *Gewissen*, which is hard to translate. In general, as known, the German language has at least two terms corresponding to the semantic spectrum of the Latin term *conscientia*: that is, *Bewußtsein* and *Gewissen*. The first indicates a theoretical awareness, whereas the second defines the field of conscience in relation to morality. However, these terms have different nuances, which Hegel - who was very careful to the meaning and etymology of the words he used - would have been aware of.

As shown in the Grimm brothers' dictionary, since Luther the term *Gewissen* has had a religious and moral connotation.⁶*Gewissen* identifies the process by which behaviour, instead of being guided by perception, is determined by the act of judging (Grimm & Grimm, 1854). According to the Grimm brothers, who quote examples taken from Philip Melanchthon, the term also indicates acting correctly, by respecting God's will or even being determined by God. As has been noted (Cassin, 2013, pp. 264-265), however, these nuances can also be found in Luther, for whom the *Gewissen* is not properly the autonomy of conscience, as the latter finds its true meaning in the relationship between man and God.

In such a complex issue, the most important element is that for Luther the dimension of *Gewissen*, thanks to its relation to faith and the inner stirrings of the heart, is also a form of certainty, an ability to judge one's deeds that should produce a sort of self-evidence: conscience is free insofar

⁶ For Luther, the term was theologically connoted, being the equivalent of the Greek *syneidesis*, found for instance in John 8:9 and especially in Paul's Letters. Despite being a rarer occurrence in the Gospels, the term was of crucial importance to Paul and, therefore, to Luther, especially as regards Rom 2:15, where - in Luther's translation - it is said that «des Gesetz Werk ins Herz geschrieben ist; ihr Gewissen bezeugt es ihnen». As can be seen, the point here is the connection between *Herz* and *Gewissen*. *Gewissen*, which is close to the meaning of *gewiss*, is a certainty that comes from the heart when it is listening to God properly. The term draws on Paul's idea of *syneidesis* as the conscience facing God (on this, cfr. Stelzenberg 1961, p. 85). The certainty coming from *Gewissen* therefore comes from turning one's heart to God, which is different from mere *Meinung* as a judgment coming from the self rather than from communicating with the divine. So, the heart contributes to achieving certainty (*Gewissheit*) insofar as it is the source of *Gewissen* as opposed to *Meinung*. The latter, despite seemingly promoting the love of the self, actually disowns it by obliterating the *Herz*. On this topic, see at least Ringleben (2010, pp. 469-472) and Büttgen (2011, pp. 269-272).

as its sure faith makes it self-assured. In this sense, rather than being close to the root and semantic field of *Bewußtsein*, Luther's *Gewissen* roughly overlaps with *Grundbedeutung* of *gewiss*, whence *Gewissheit* as certainty.

In Hegel, in addition to echoing the association between *Gewissen* and *Gewissheit*, the term undoubtedly refers also to Kantian moral conscience, addressed in the previous section. Given the proximity between *Gewissen* and *Gewissheit*, the reader of the *Phenomenology* cannot fail to note that the former reproduces in the field of moral knowledge the position characterizing sense-certainty (*sinnliche Gewissheit*), whose knowledge is merely apparent - that is, only presumed (*gemeint*)⁷.

The reason why *Gewissen* is *Gewissheit* is that conscience, in this respect, tries to overcome the contradiction related to the law, that is, the incommensurability between the abstract universality of what is legal and the particularity of the agent. But how does it do this? *Gewissen* simply believes that the content of the law is nothing but the universalization of the intimate beliefs of subjectivity. Duty is no longer the universal common denominator of the singularity. On the contrary, for *Gewissen* the law acquires cogence and value precisely because of subjectivity, according to a radicalization of Mark: 2 27 («The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath»). And yet this knowledge is presumed and therefore presumptuous, since intimate conviction does not stand the test of action, where it conflicts with other convictions that claim to be equally recognized. By judging its own action as fair, in a somewhat pharisaic way, conscience judges unfair the action of others, thereby also claiming the power that the Father had given to his Son⁸.

⁷ In this sense, as noted by H.S. Harris (1994, vol. II, p. 109), when reason appears as the law-giver the meaning of *Gewissheit* is to be understood as «Sense-Certainty».

⁸ After underlining the properly theological background of the passages I have analyzed, I should briefly explain what reasons, in addition to the limited space of the present contribution, have led me to leave out the theme of forgiveness and the studies dealing with the *Anerkennung* in Hegel, in the context of practical philosophy (cfr., for instance, Siep 1979), of an ethical discourse (cfr. Honneth, 1992) or of philosophy of law (cfr., among others, Honneth, 2001 or Costa Douzinas, 2002). Indeed, compared to its later systematization, where the theme of *Gewissen* is related to the objective spirit, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* it is conceived as «Vorhof des religiösen Bewusstseins» (Bal, 2004, p. 237). In the *Phenomenology*, even though chapter four already addresses the issue of recognition, at the end of chapter six *Gewissen* is described as «eine letzte theologische

But even so, conscience is free from any content whatever; it absolves itself from any specific duty which is supposed to have the validity of the law. In the strength of its own self-assurance it possesses the majesty of absolute autarky, to bind and to loose. This *self-determination* is therefore without more ado absolutely in conformity with duty. Duty is the knowing itself; this simple selfhood, however, is the in-itself; for the *in-itself* is pure self-identity, and this is in this consciousness (W III, p. 476; PhS, p. 393).

Gewissen does not solve the antithesis between universal and particular, but simply accommodates it. The conscience justifies its position as a declination of the universal, and condemns the others' actions as an expression of individual particularism. Therefore, the action of *Gewissen* does not face the others. Instead of letting itself be transformed by participation in a common action, the *Gewissen* locks itself in its solitary inner theatre.

«In its own mind (*aus sich selbst*)» (W III, p. 480; PhS, p. 396), that is, from its interiority, conscience now presents itself in «the majesty of its elevation above specific law ad every content of duty» as «the moral genius which knows the inner voice of what it immediately knows to be a divine voice» (W III, p. 480; PhS, p. 397). This is the beautiful soul, whose *exemplum* can be found in Jacobi's *Woldemar*, in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* or in Schlegel's *Lucinda*. The theoretical foundation of thinkers evoking the idea of a beautiful soul can be found in Schiller's *On Grace and Dignity* (1793), where beauty acquires a moral value in Kantian terms. As for how the beautiful soul is described, a reference is undoubtedly Hölderlin, whose Hyperion is a literary example of this figure. The beautiful soul already hints at the theme of the religious community, but conceives of divine service as something that can be performed in one's own interiority, where she is «the contemplation of its own divinity (*ihre eigene Göttlichkeit*)» (W III, p. 481;

Struktur, die zur Religion und absolutem Wissen hinführen soll» (Köhler, 1993, p. 133). The relation of the term to its theological background separates *Gewissen* and forgiveness from other topics, such as the potential consequences linked to the chapter on self-consciousness in the 1807 work or the *Element of the Philosophy of Right*, where *Gewissen* belongs to the part devoted to *Moralität*. In the *Phenomenology*, instead, it shows «ein notwendiger Entwicklungsprozeß vor dem Hintegrund einer teologischen Gesamtstruktur auf dem Wege der bestimmten Negation, verweist die Einteilung in Paragraphen allen bereits auf eine eher statische Konzeption der Gewissenheit in der *Rechtsphilosophie*» (Köhler, 1993, pp. 137-138).

PhS, p. 397). This is therefore a «solitary divine worship» (*W III*, p. 481; *PhS*, p. 397). The sin of the beautiful soul, which retreats into the anachoresis of its own interiority, is to be unable to expose itself to experience.

It lacks the power to externalize itself (*die Kraft der Entäusserung*), the power to make itself into a Thing, and to endure mere being. It lives in dread of besmirching the splendour (*die Herrlichkeit*) of its inner being by action and existence; and, in order to preserve the purity of its heart, it flees from contact with the actual word, and persists in its self-willed impotence (*die eigensinnige Kraftlosigkeit*) to renounce itself which is reduced to the extreme of ultimate abstraction, and to give itself a substantial existence, or to transform its thought into being and put its trust in the absolute difference (*W III*, pp. 483-484; *PhS*, p. 400).

The beautiful soul then ends up suffocating in the narrowness of its own interiority and falls into madness. However, what *Gewissen* cannot tolerate, due to its fear of confrontation and experience in general, is that, when we decide to act, we should accept that this action might change us: intervening in a field whose variables are infinite, action constitutes as such a sort of betrayal of our intimate beliefs. But *Gewissen* claims to always stay the same, regardless of everything else⁹. Assuming that it can exhaust the universal, conscience «displaces or dissembles (*verstellt*)» (*PhS*, p. 394) the fact that it is only a part of it. Precisely for this reason, it falls into what Hegel calls *Verstellung*, that is, a form of hypocrisy by which the agent lies to everyone, including himself¹⁰. This circumstance therefore ends up producing an antagonism between the acting conscience and the judging one, which will hasten to condemn the incoherence of the former.

However, hypocrisy falls on both sides, because the judgmental conscience in turn claims to incarnate the authority of a completely impartial court, while its judgment does not rely on anything other than the universalization of its own intimate conviction, different but equal to that which guides the action of the accused subject. Even the *Gewissen* of the judgmental conscience therefore tries to escape experience. As Hegel seems to suggest, insisting on the possessive adjective that characterizes the

⁹ H.S. Harris (1997, p. 109), underlining the proximity between *Gewissen* and sense-certainty, notes that the latter «is a *Gestalt* that never changes – and at every stage of our spiritual evolution it remains inadequate in the same way».

¹⁰ On the several meanings of *Verstellung* and its problematic English translation, see Robinson (1977), pp. 73-76.

convictions of *Gewissen*, both when acting and when judging, the vertiginous spiral that is created between the acting conscience and the judging one is produced by the fact that each, taken in itself, claims to be absolute and entitled.

Just as little is the persistence of the universal consciousness in its judgement an unmasking and abolition of hypocrisy. In denouncing hypocrisy as base, vile, and so on, it is appealing in such judgement to its *own* law, just as the evil consciousness appeals to *its* law. For the former comes forward in opposition to the latter and thereby as a *particular* law. It has, therefore, no superiority over the other law, rather it legitimizes it. And this zeal does the very opposite of what it means to do; for it shows that what it calls true or genuine duty and which ought to be *universally* acknowledged, is something *not* acknowledged; in so doing it concedes to the other an equal right to be *for itself* (*W III*, p. 487; *PhS*, pp. 402-403).

However, even if consciences do not wish for it, the dynamic of judgment contributes to dissolve the antithesis it has produced. When the judge places himself on the same level as the acting conscience, the latter can perceive the judging conscience as equal to itself: it «comes to see (*Anschauung*) its own self in this other consciousness» (*W III*, p. 487; *PhS*, p. 403). Although, on the one hand, judgment is what condemns conscience to solitude, as if it ratified the consequences of its *Gewissheit*, on the other hand, it has the power to reveal its deception and to challenge its presumed (*gemeint*) and presumptuous autarchy. Given the extraordinary ambiguity of the *Urteilen*, which I mentioned earlier, it triggers - despite itself - a dynamic that is open to reconciliation. The important thing is that this unthinkable outcome can occur even *if the consciences do not wish for it*, that is, starting from an unprecedented process that can surprise them for the first time. It is precisely for this reason that it undermines their supposed autarchy: it inaugurates a real experience, that is, a bilateral mechanism that frees the conscience from its false belief that it can always and in any case do it all by itself. The judgment, which is what separates at first, may end up uniting.

The judging conscience, in other words, points out that, whenever we act, what acts is ourselves *qua* our individual self, and in this sense the

purpose of duty is always mixed with the attainment of a subjective finality, even if only that of self-satisfaction for one's own *Rechtschaffenheit*. «No action can escape such judgement, for duty for duty's sake, this pure purpose, is an unreality; it becomes a reality in the deed of an individuality, and the action is thereby charged with the aspect of particularity» (W III, p. 489; *PhS*, pp. 404).

However, claiming the right to judge, the judging conscience also shows its baseness (*Niederträchtigkeit*), because nothing justifies its belief of standing above the acting conscience (W III, p. 489; *PhS*, p. 404). By virtue of its supposed *Rechtschaffenheit*, its «tatlos Reden» (W III, p. 489) betrays its particularity just as the action betrays that of the agent.

At this point, however, the acting consciousness can come to see its judge as the *other* which, though, is equal to it - another in which to recognize itself. For the first time, conscience comes to a certainty that no longer comes from the solitary depth of its interiority, which is much less transparent than it suspects. Indeed, this certainty comes from experience, thanks to its relationship with the other. For this very reason, it produces an unexpected and unforeseen act, which Hegel does not hesitate to define an «extreme form of rebellion (*Empörung*)» (W III, p. 490; *PhS*, p. 406): conscience confesses.

Unlike reciprocal delegitimation, where every conscience was autistically affirmed on the basis of its presumed knowledge, the institution of confession constitutes an irreducible novelty, because one can only confess to another. Only by opening up to the transformative character of experience can one come to completely abandon oneself to another. In fact, as Hegel puts it, this is a renounce, but not a humiliation nonetheless. On the contrary, what the conscience renounces by confessing is nothing but its own prison, its supposed and particularistic self. Judgment separates conscience from itself so to reunite it with the blow of the spirit, of which, as is said in John 3: 8, «you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going». In the same way, the possibility of forgiveness following confession insists on an absolutely gratuitous act. While punishment is commensurate with guilt, forgiveness exceeds the sphere of the law. It constitutes the *exemplum* of experience and converts the conscience to it, because it cannot be deduced and can only come from another, which constitutively goes beyond our subjectivity.

The world of reconciliation is the *objectively* existent Spirit, which beholds the pure knowledge of itself *qua* universal essence, in its opposite [...]. The reconciling *Yea*, in which the two I's let go their antithetical *existence*, is the existence of the I which has expanded into a duality, and therein remains identical with itself, and, in its complete externalization and opposite, possesses the certainty of itself: it is God manifested in the midst of those who know themselves (*W III*, p. 494; *PhS*, pp. 408-409).

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The ineffable joy of forgiveness

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Abstract

The article analyses the concept of forgiveness, in the context of the contemporary debate, especially in French philosophy. The study concerns four main points: we will consider the notion of forgiveness as the main gift, on the basis of the proposal of Jankélévitch and Gabriel Marcel; the strict relationship between the notion of forgiveness and the one of mystery, with regard to the work of Gabriel Marcel on this theme; the difference between the act of forgiving and the one of excusing, and the extension of the concept of forgiveness, on the basis of the Catholic interpretation of it.

Keywords: Christianity; Donation; Gift; Mystery; Problem.

If we really want to love, we must learn to forgive.

Mother Theresa

1. The need to be forgiven: forgiveness as a gift.

One must not write an article about forgiveness to feel the need to be forgiven. On the contrary, the need to be forgiven appears as essential for a proper psychophysical balance. We will seek, therefore, to motivate this thesis.

Furthermore, we cannot speak of extending forgiveness, because there can be, someone who does not feel the need to forgive, even if when it comes to being forgiven, everyone wants forgiveness, as if it were something due.

However, to claim forgiveness is not only impossible but also meaningless, because there cannot be forgiveness if there isn't also a donation, a generous gift.

Etymologically, the word forgiveness comes from the Latin *perdonare*, which means to give completely (for-give). Giving

completely means, in this context, according somegracein order to *give* the absolution for a sin committed.

The importance of this act is clear and it's at the core of emotional well-being. First of all, the man who is capable of forgiveness is not affected by anger and he can continue to move on. In effect, unsolved angers keep us from moving forward, because they lock us in ourselves and in our bitterness. Furthermore, if we allow unforgiveness to continue, we are likely to experience depression, bitterness, or both. That's why it's important to clarify what forgiveness is in order to learn how to forgive.

In the *compendium* dedicated to the moral philosophy of Jankélévitch, in a chapter dedicated to forgiveness, he writes that true forgiveness is necessarily a gift:

[...] True forgiveness, on the margin of all legality, is a gracious gift of the offended to the offender; true forgiveness is a personal relationship with someone. (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1001).

Pope Francis, on the occasion of the Angelus of St. Stephen 2015, affirmed that forgiveness is a gift; In fact, "as the word itself says, forgiveness is the highest expression of the gift" (Pope Francis, Angelus, December 26, 2015).

So it would be necessary, before we speak of forgiveness, to define what is meant by a gift.

Speaking of the theme of gift means to speak about a theme that assumes a central role in Christianity. This role is so pivotal that St. Paul affirms that all is gift, because, whatever is, is by virtue of a gift. "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4: 7).

What is a gift?

As testament to the importance of this theme, there is currently an abundance of recent literature that offers considerations and reflections on this subject, especially in French philosophy, e.g. in Gabriel Marcel's production. We will, then, analyze this theme with respect of his production. This is to testify the importance and the centrality of this theme.

The act of giving means to deliver a good to another person. In this sense, giving is exchanging. Moreover, the peculiarity of the act of giving, i.e. the generosity, obliges us to radically distinguish it from the exchange

or transfer. In effect, the act of giving is a social act that intends to build a communion between the members of the relationship:

The gift is a social act that makes the man highly worthy of living a life. Through the gift, the individual inaugurates a relationship; he sanctions and seals a community relationship. In this communion, the man who gives and the man who receives the gift form an inseparable dyad. They touch each other, they open their arms at the same instant, they walk and drive in the same path. (Serra, 2015, p. 7).

It was the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel, in the text called *The Mystery of Being*, who affirms the impossibility of identifying gift with exchange. Indeed, even if the transfer of operation actually takes place, the gift presents itself as the expression of something quite different.

What is a gift? Should we consider it as a mere transfer? The most elementary reflection shows that it is not. [...] To transfer, it would be simply to pass a certain object, a certain possession from one account to another. Now, even if this operation actually takes place, it presents itself to me, and also to the one who receives it, as the expression of something quite different. (Marcel, 1951b, pp. 119-120).

Looking at the status of the *Gegebenheit*, we see that a gift, in order to be authentic, must meet at least three characteristics: first of all, it must be the fruit of a gratuitous and generous action, then it must present itself as an asymmetrical and unilateral movement and, finally, it must present itself with a certain unconditional character; that is, it must not be for specific purposes.

Marcel (1951b) reported that, "the soul of the gift is generosity" (p. 119). This supports the social norm that for a gift to truly be a gift it needs to be not only gratuitous and free, but also the fruit of one specific goodness called *generosity*.

If we accept this to be true then we also need to analyze the qualities of generosity: what's generosity?

Normally, generosity is defined as the disposition to give and donate with liberality. In this sense, it is not only the soul¹ of the gift but also a

¹ Saying that generosity is the soul of the gift is something profoundly different to affirm that it is the cause of it. The cause of something is what determines an event. In this sense, the cause is the reason or the motive. We have already seen that the gift cannot have a cause; in fact, the gift appears to be free from any cause-effect relationship; we cannot say, in

virtue. Indeed, no gift can be accorded except through the virtue of generosity.

Here we encounter the first problem; it appears to be impossible to define generosity without speaking of the gift, and vice versa, we cannot talk of the gift without referring to generosity.

To be aware of it, it will suffice to consider the source of the generosity itself. Where does generosity come from?

Doubtless, it can be said that generosity is something that one obtains. However, when we properly reflect on this assertion it is false, because to obtain means to snatch with effort. Moreover, it is obvious that generosity cannot be the result of a certain effort. Indeed, one can strive and even struggle to obtain it, but one never succeeds, except by the gift and the grace.

This amounts to saying that generosity is not obtained, but, on the contrary, it is received: it is a gift. Gabriel Marcel rightly pointed out that "generosity itself appears as a gift" (Marcel, 1951b, p. 121).

As we have already seen, speaking of gift means talking about gratuity. In fact, giving is nothing else but that which is given *freely*, without the need for exchange or the accumulation of debt.

The second characteristic of the gift must therefore be its unilaterality; that is, its asymmetry in relations. In other words, the gift does not need reciprocity, as a prerequisite. Why?

We can say, as it has been reported by Bianchi that:

We have different ways to answer this question. But I personally think that the act of giving is possible because the human being has the capacity to accomplish this action without a calculus. The human being is *capaxboni* [and] *capaxamoris*. (Bianchi, 2015, p. 11).

Once again, we can see the strict relationship between love and forgiveness.

However, even if it does not require reciprocity, this does not necessarily imply that a response cannot take place. It only implies that reciprocity is not necessary to the economy of the gift:

fact "I give you because of this or that", for there would be only a transfer there. The soul of something is, on the contrary, the vital reason of the gift; it is its bearing structure, from which it feeds.

The recipient will be able to respond to the donor and a reciprocal relationship may then be developed, but it may also be that the gift is not welcomed or that there is no response of gratitude. The logic of gift, in fact, is not measured by the equivalence of exchange, but by the unilateral character of the offer. (Bianchi, 2015, pp. 11-12).

Affirming this is like saying that a gift is not a reciprocal movement but uniquely asymmetrical because, even if it was not accepted, the action of the *Gegebenheit* is the fruit of the generosity and graciousness of the subject. The word 'free' reminds us, in fact, that the action must be actually *gratuitous*; that is to say, it must remain outside the logic of *do ut des* (I give so that...).

Indeed, talking about gift means nothing but sharing for free, without exchange - as it was already mentioned. It is exactly this meaning of grace - *gratia*, which cannot but derive from the past participle *gratus*. Grace is, therefore, gratuitous favor and which, as a subject, we have done nothing to merit i.e. "it is not to be deserved" (Bianchi, 2015, p.24) because it is the result of free and unconditional love. Thus the gift does not complete the exchange but it is already beyond such finality.

To say, for example, to someone: "I give this house to you, but on a condition that you introduce only such change as I have specified, or receive only such persons whose name I shall give you" it is not really giving. (Marcel, 1951b, p. 119).

Apart from "this logic of sacrifice" (Steffens, 2016, p.67), where it is believed that everything must be paid for or made to pay, Christianity teaches that the sacrifice has already taken place as an original gift: "that it belongs to the Christianis therefore only the grace to receive the gift" (Steffens, 2016, p. 68).

However, to assert that the gift is an asymmetrical movement does not necessarily imply unilaterality. Indeed, one can think of gift as the most authentic expression of sharing that, by creating links among the subjects, inviting them to enter into a kind of *co-esse* of communion. This is not in contrast to what was said before; in fact, it is the nature and level of these bonds that change: we must move from the logic of utility and functionality to that of love. To do this, we will consider the third aspect of gift: the unconditionality.

The unconditionality² plays in the economy of gift, a decisive role. In fact, making a gift does not mean simply delivering a good in the hands of others, but also, in doing so, expecting nothing in exchange:

"To give" means delivering something into the hands of others without receiving anything in exchange. [...]. When a gift is given, there is a subject, the donor, who in freedom, without constraint, generosity and love, makes a gift to another person, a gift that does not depend on the response he will receive. (Bianchi, 2015, pp. 11-12).

Thus, gift also implies unconditionality and the latter implies freedom:

This is the greatness of the dignity of the human person: he knows how to give of himself with freedom: this is the *homo donator*! (Bianchi, 2015, p.12).

One cannot aim for a gift outside the dimension of freedom. In fact, a gift vitiated by some constraint, would cease from the beginning to be a gift. This does not mean, however, that the gift has no preconditions to satisfy, but on the contrary, that these conditions do not belong to the order of necessity, linked to the exchange, but rather to that of freedom.

To assert that gift is other than simple exchange means to recognize, among other things, that it does not have the finality to exercise a determined "attractive" power over our neighbor, but on the contrary, that it is an occasion to show him our love beyond every utilitarian logic.

[...] We must add that we do not give with a definite purpose. For example, to attach yourself to the recipient by way of recognition. To give is not to seduce. [...] To give is to spread, to extend oneself. (Marcel, 1951b, p. 119).

Thus if a man gives it is because he is capable of love, *capax amoris*. This highlights a paradox. In fact, it was said that the donation frees utilitarian logic from the *do ut des* philosophy that constitutes the debt. However, the action of

²The word of unconditionality means "unconditioned", "not limited" by any external circumstance. In this sense, saying that the gift is unconditional means, by not being determined or conditioned by whatever a cause, that it is also absolute. Indeed, the absolute term in its Latin etymology *ab + solus*, means exactly this: free from each link or cause, i.e., unconditional.

spreading implies that the setting in motion of a relational movement, leads to an openness in relations that have the possibility of envisaging a possible debt. What then changes is not the fact that the debt has completely been eliminated, but on the contrary, it's meaning now, is that it is from love. In this sense we can borrow the words of St. Paul where he says, "Owe no one anything, except to love one another" (Romans 13: 8).

If everything we have just said is true for the donation, then it is even more so valid for forgiveness, which is the purest and the most authentic expression of gift, as we have seen. So we must now deal with forgiveness.

2. *Forgiveness and mystery: the mystery of forgiveness.*

The word "forgiveness" is one of those words we often use. It is used so assiduously that to propose a reflection on this theme could appear either discounted or useless. However, it is exactly when things get discounted that it is useful to analyze them again in order to find and search for their original meaning. What is forgiveness?

On the basis of all that has been said before, we have concluded that forgiveness is a gift and that above all, the gift of the self is the most authentic. Having unmasked this intimate connection between gift and forgiveness, we must now discuss forgiveness, *strictusensu*.

To write a discourse on forgiveness is not easy because, as Jankélévitch (1998) observes, "The impetus for forgiveness is so palpable, so controversial, that it discourages all analysis" (p. 1000). If the definition of the term "forgiveness" is so difficult, it is first of all because it appears in its pure nature, as genuine and authentic like a mystery impossible to describe.

...] In the clear transparency of this innocent movement, what could we find to describe? Inenarrable is the moment of brevity, indescribable is the mystery of a *simplicissime* cordial conversion. (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1000).

Therefore to find a definition of "forgiveness" is difficult, by virtue of its mysterious nature and its impossibility to problematize. What is then a mystery?

We can try to define the mystery, as opposed to a problem.

A problem is something we have in front of us and have to solve it in order to move ahead. It is completely external and foreign to us. Mystery, on the other hand, is something in which we are involved as a subject:

A problem is something we encounter, which blocks the way. It is all before me. On the contrary, mystery is something in which I find myself engaged, the essence of which is therefore not entirely in front of me. (Marcel, 1935, 145).

If problem is completely outside of us,³ mystery is rather a situation in which one finds oneself engaged in the first person i.e. an ontological situation, which must first be recognized:

Would it not be of the essence of what is ontological alone that can be attested? [...] It is of the essence of the mystery to be recognized; the metaphysical reflection presupposes this recognition which is not within its purview. (Marcel, 1935, pp. 143-145).

Recognizing a mystery, therefore means identifying something in which the subject is involved, where we can no longer make "the distinction between *in me* and *before me*" (Marcel, 1935, p. 145). We do not possess the mystery, but instead, we *live* it. It is an actual and real situation. In effect, forgiveness is not a concept, but an experience for the person who chooses to live a positive relationship with another who has offended them. In this context, we can see how it's difficult, almost impossible to find the causes of forgiveness; in effect, if they only spread by the gentle heart of ourselves, this means there is not any external cause. That's why a philosophical discussion about forgiveness is so hard to handle

The superiority of the nature of mystery, in relation to the problematic, is attested because the latter is the unique category capable of expressing not only Being but also the truths of the mind, which are impossible either to formulate rationally or to oppose totally to the subject. Thus mystery is the only category capable of expressing the non-original purity of the life of the mind:

³The elementary equation $ax = b$ can be assumed as an example of a scientific problem. This problem, to be solved, does not "need" us - as subjects, in the sense that anyone who is able to use a scientific method can solve it. It is completely outside us. This is also testified by the language when we say "there is this problem *before* me."

[The mystery] guards the essential, and reveals the original[thought] removed from discursive reflection, it gives to philosophical thought the most fruitful ground for its exercise [...] (Ballanti, 2012, p. 27).

It is for this reason that one is struck by such a great difficulty when it comes to formulate a definition of the word 'forgiveness'. Indeed, it is always difficult to state definitions of the truths of the mind. One can, however, draw two conclusions from what has been just said.

Firstly, forgiveness cannot necessarily be considered as a problem, but we must, nevertheless, recognize the nature of the *meta-problem*, i.e. of the mystery we live *hic et nunc*.

Secondly, as a situation in which one is involved, forgiveness is not an asset one possesses, but once and for all, it is an ever-present path; a path or a "process from the part of the one who has been offended with regard to the offender" (Bianchi, 2015, p. 45).

For these reasons, therefore, we will endeavor to describe forgiveness, not as a thing-or merely as 'a having' -but as a spiritual adventure.

3. *The difficult path of forgiveness: to forgive and to excuse.*

Some of the greatest obstacles to forgiveness are the misconceptions about what it is.

Forgiveness is neither something we can claim, nor it's a due, but, on the other hand, a path to build. Of course this path is not an easy one because it's not always easy to forgive; as it has been said:

[It is] an obscure and enigmatic path full of difficulties to cross [...]. But in that path, those who donate and those who receive them are not alone, they are not solitary in a solitary way. There, they move by taking their hands, guarding their lives, forming and giving consistency to a human shield able to withstand, with tenacity, the inevitable avalanches and weather that time and space have reserved for them. (Serra, 2015, p. 7).

The act of forgiving involves a gift. Not only does it imply a gift, but what it involves is the actuation of the perfect gift; "of the perfection of the gift" (Serra, 2015, p.52). This perfect gift is a selfless giving of itself. Indeed one might ask, "why forgiveness"?

Like all gifts, even forgiveness must bring something to the others. What forgiveness brings to the other is the liberation from the fault committed; "one forgives so that the other can live, and live without being crushed by the fault" (Serra, 2015, p. 52). This definition of forgiveness could confuse two acts, which, although similar, are in fact different: that of forgiving and that of excusing. We must now deal with the terminological difference between the two.

To do that, we must explain what are the *sine qua non* conditions of forgiveness; i.e. its transcendental dimensions. We have already discussed in detail about donation; here it will be necessary to insist on its eventual nature. According to two different modalities, a distinction between the act of forgiving and the act of excusing can then be drawn. First of all, we can do it by considering the definition of the two terms. After that, we can consider what the "non-eventual" nature of the excuse is.

A gift is an event, and forgiveness as the supreme gift is an *eventa fortiori*. It's an event of love, grace and freedom and it was for these reasons that the words of Mother Theresa were cited at the beginning of this text. In fact, just as we cannot make someone love us, we cannot force someone to forgive, because forgiveness is nourished by love and *vice versa*. Their relationship is reciprocal, and if love is an event that happens in the history and in the life of two people, in the calmness and serenity of a relationship, to enlighten and to mark a new path, forgiveness can also accord the present a new chance.

True forgiveness is a dated *event* that happens at a given moment of historical development: true forgiveness, despite all legality, is a *gracious gift* of the offended to the offender; true forgiveness is a personal relationship with someone. (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1001).

This means that forgiveness occurs and appears in history in a particular moment as a donation. There is a moment of the inner life of the subject, which, in a burst of freedom and grace, decides to give itself to others⁴. It is

⁴ The etymology of the word is clear. The word "event" is something that happens. *Ad+venire*. Every single thing, that came as an event, is a gift because, coming from outside, we do not choose it, we can only certify its actuality. So the act of forgiveness, for the simple reason that it is the fruit of the grace, is an event.

for this reason that Jankélévitch could affirm that "the event [...] is [...] the decisive moment of forgiveness" (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1001).

In showing the eventual character of forgiveness, nothing else has been done but to emphasize again its nature of the mystery, because, in fact only the mystery is an event which is always the result of an interioreffort; of an effort of re-elaboration, and of conversion, which enables the offended to overcome the offense. As John Paul II said in his speech on the World Day of Peace:

In reality forgiveness is, above all, a personal choice, an option of the heart that goes against the spontaneous instinct of doing evil for evil. This option finds its element of comparison in the love of God.

This quote resumes all that we said earlier. Moreover, it can raise some questions. First of all, does not this act of conversion also occur with an excuse and therefore with the act of excusing?

We must now concentrate on the act of excusing in order to see what it entails. In doing so, we want to show that this act is not, unlike forgiveness, an event.

To excuse means to justify an offense by finding extenuating circumstances for the offender. It also means not really holding the offender responsible for his actions. There were, indeed, external causes, which played a fundamental part, which may have obliged the offender to do what he did. "To apologize constantly, to clear the man of his responsibility, is something infantilizing" (De Bellescize, 2016, para.1).

We look for rational justifications, for example, on the life of the subject himself and of his past. An excuse is also a form of negation because if one excuses it, it's because he has minimized the fault until denying it completely. This is why the excuse does not consist in treating the offense in all its gravity, but in accepting it because it was caused by rational events.

That is the first difference. While, what precedes the excuse is the tendency to minimize evil, making it rational, what precedes forgiveness is the responsibility to take the evil seriously, as an irrational scandal.

If we rationalize evil, we tend to deny it as an event. We rationalize and minimize the insult, but in doing so, as Jankélévitch said, forgiveness is rendered useless:

Neglecting evil and wickedness, [it] minimizes at the same time insult; by minimizing insult, it makes forgiveness useless. There is no forgiveness because there is, so to say, no offense and absolutely no offense, although there has been an offender. (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1001).

We can still go on in our comparison between forgiveness and excuse, saying that what the latter implies is not a gratuitous gift, but a certain clemency. That's why we cannot mix the act of forgiveness and the one of understanding; in effect the two acts are essentially different. We can continue in this analyze.

With the concept of clemency, there arises two problems.

First of all, it should be noted that clemency is not, strictly speaking, an event; that is to say, it is not a free and disinterested gift, but on the contrary, it is always the fruit of reflection or rationalization. "Clemency does not imply any particular event" (Jankélévitch, 1998, pp. 1002).

Second, the concept of clemency raises the problem of otherness. It has been rightly said that forgiveness, to be authentic, is always a relationship and, therefore, forgiveness towards someone. But clemency tends to minimize, all the more, this relationship. Here's the reason why.

Clemency, in fact, is not the privileged moment of the relationship with others, because it is not the gift that happens in the depths of disintegration, but rather the fruit of certain grandeur of the heart of the offended:

Clemency is a kind of forgiveness without interlocutor: moreover it does not pronounce the word of forgiveness for a true partner in flesh and blood. [...] clemency excludes really all transitive and intentional relationship with one's neighbor. (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1002.).

Thus, it can be said that clemency is not relational, but solitary:

There is in guilt a dimension of confinement in the narrowness of the self, where a vow is liberating and cannot take place except in the light of a glance that loves us and which hopes for us. (De Bellescize, 2016)

It is an opportunity to display the alleged superiority, as Jankélévitch used to say, "it is a question of being the strongest" (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1003). It has been said that it is like "an old barren woman who digs her own grave" (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1003).

Now that we have distinguished between the act of forgiving and the act of excusing, we must continue our analysis by asking what the limits of forgiveness are; that is to say, to what extent one must be forgiving.

4. Forgiveness as a Requirement of Faith: the extent of forgiveness.

When we talk about forgiveness we cannot avoid speaking about Christianity. This word traverses the whole Bible and comes as a divine prescription. In effect, all Christians want to be forgiven for their sins. Sin is the heavy burden that brings the tenseness of guilt and the anguish of knowing that we have acted against the will of our Father in Heaven.

For this reason, forgiveness is something all of us want to receive but most of us hesitate to give. Jesus makes it clear, however, that we can't have it without giving it: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Mt 6: 14-15).

Forgiveness is the true moment of self-giving and sharing. We forgive for selfless love towards our neighbour. Or, it's not only important but also essential for the man of faith to forgive: why?

Firstly, that's because that's a compulsory act, asked by God himself: "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you". (Col 3:13).

It's mandatory for all the Christian community to forgive evil. In this way, we can both imitate God's love and aspire to his kingdom; that is a fundamental precept: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Eph. 4:32).

In effect, as we have said, when we forgive we learn to love and, for this reason, we can be a little more similar to God. On the other hand, when we refuse to forgive, we refuse to prove love and we move away from him. That's the core of the Lord's Prayer or *Pater noster*: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Mt. 6: 12).

We can see then that forgiveness involves love and love involves forgiveness backwards. Or if we aspire, as Christians, to the love of God, we cannot neglect to love the others. Loving the others implies, as we had seen, the act of forgiving.

That's why forgiveness is a necessary event for the man of faith, who can, thanks to this act, remembering the past, to assimilate it.

But are there any limits to forgiveness? Can we forgive everything or there are some events that are truly unforgivable?

As a continuation of the Gospel of Matthew, we find the apostle Peter, who asks Christ: "Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. (Mt. 18:21).

This dialogue can help us to tackle the problem of the limits of forgiveness because it capitalizes on the crux of the problem: is there a limit to forgiveness?

To ask ourselves whether we can set limits on forgiveness means, as we have said before, is to ask whether we can set limits on grace and love, by which forgiveness is nourished.

When Jesus answers Peter that forgiveness must spread and multiply, he wants to open to the possibility of infinite forgiveness and the reality of continual pardon. It is absurd to interpret these words of Christ literally, but on the contrary, what Christ means by this is that there is no limit to the action of forgiving and that between the offended and the offender there must always be forgiveness.

Indeed, the act of forgiveness, in its unconditionality, is infinite: it forgives once and for all, and in doing so "it opens up to the culprit an unlimited credit" (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1140).

To say that forgiveness extends to infinity means to affirm, first of all, that there is nothing unforgivable, and secondly, that forgiveness has no limits. An explanation of these two passages will be sought in the rest of the text.

"We must forgive always and always without conditions" (Bianchi, 2015, p. 72). To affirm this means to recognize either the unconditionality of forgiveness or its potential infinity; we can always forgive anything.

Again, it is a comparison with the excuse that allows us to shed light on this passage. Indeed, there are certain acts or crimes that are justly impossible to excuse, because the evil that has been done is impossible to rationalize. There is no excuse. Yet, even in this impossibility, there is always the possibility of forgiving them. With forgiveness not being a rationalization, it can be extended even to the inexcusable:

Forgiveness is meant precisely to forgive what no excuse can apology:

For there is no fault so grave that one cannot, as a last resort, forgive it. [...] Forgiveness, in this sense, can do everything. [...] for if there are such monstrous crimes that the perpetrators of these crimes cannot even expiate them, there always remains the possibility to forgive them; for forgiveness being done precisely for these desperate or incurable cases. (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1142).

Even when evil becomes inexcusable, it is pardonable, forgiveness being a mystery of love, which is offered in the generous freedom of the subject:

Forgiveness [...] extends to infinity. Forgiveness does not ask whether the crime is worthy of being forgiven, whether the atonement has been sufficient, whether the grudge has lasted long enough ... which amounts to saying: there is the inexcusable, but there is no unforgivable. (Jankélévitch, 1998, p. 1141).

We can therefore affirm that with God and in faith, forgiveness acquires a dimension of eternity. In this sense, forgiveness has no limits and according to the prescription of Christ, we can even forgive up to seventy-seven times.

A man of faith experiences forgiveness not only as a precept, but also as a genuine need. For the Spirit of God always gives us the possibility of meeting with the other, beyond every despair and guilt. One can, in power, forgive everything, offering the gift of gracious and gratuitous love to our neighbor.

Not only, therefore, does pardon have no limits of extension, but it nevertheless has not an original cause, let alone this gratuitousness of the gift that its etymology suggests.

Here we can report the words of Father André Fils Mbem, who affirms:

To conclude, forgiveness is, above all, a personal choice. It is an option of the heart that goes against the spontaneous instinct of doing evil for evil. This option finds its element of

comparison in the love of God, which welcomes us despite our sins, and its supreme model is the forgiveness of Christ. (Mbem, 2014).

To conclude, we can say that there is, in the Christian faith, this all-powerful spring of forgiveness, unconditional and universal, witnessed by the words of Christ on the cross "Father forgive them: for they do not know what they are doing"(Lk 23:34).

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*Freedom, evil and forgiveness:
in debate with Ricœur's Philosophy of the Will*

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Abstract

The question of forgiveness arose for Paul Ricœur from the first moment of his phenomenology of the will. Isolating consciousness in order to describe its structure, especially that of its willing dimension (freedom), presupposes a distancing from the world, but also a distancing from evil. The precondition of this distancing is forgiveness. Forgiveness appears when consciousness is ready to reject the finitude that, of necessity, opposes itself to freedom: this 'face' of forgiveness, distinguished from the articulation of phenomenology and hermeneutics, is the admiration carried by Stoic and Orphic myths. This forgiveness releases freedom from an evil identified as contempt for finitude. Forgiveness appears next when the evil endured at the hands of another challenges one's freedom: this essay will develop what Ricœur could only sketch regarding the idea of "Franciscan" hope. Forgiveness appears, finally, when Ricœur explores it in connection with guilt. In conclusion, this essay seeks to articulate the unity shared between these 'faces' of forgiveness.

Keywords: Evil; Forgiveness; Freedom; Hermeneutics; Phenomenology; Ricœur.

Introduction

The question of forgiveness arose for Paul Ricœur from the first moment of his phenomenology of the will. Indeed, isolating consciousness in its willing dimension, in order to describe its structure, supposes not only a distancing from the world, but also a distancing from evil. On what condition can the conscience keep evil at a distance from itself, thus permitting the description of its structure of freedom? This condition is forgiveness.

Ricœur proceeds in two stages. First, in *Freedom and Nature*, he places both evil and the world within parentheses, so as to describe freedom as the structure of the human will marked by finitude. Second, in *The Symbolism of Evil*, he removes the parentheses, so as to study practical

freedom, and more specifically, freedom under a double influence, evil and forgiveness. In doing evil, freedom loses itself, but in welcoming forgiveness, it finds itself anew.

Our first hypothesis is that Ricœur introduces forgiveness already at the first stage. After the description of freedom as project and as corporeal motion, he comes to the question of the difficult question of consenting to necessity. At that stage, liberty rests upon a choice that Ricœur calls metaphysical: one must say yes or no to the recognition by the ego of a certain self-transcendence and to the renunciation of self-positioning of self by the self (*l'autoposition*). This crisis of liberty tested by finitude cannot, according to Ricœur, be traversed without the support of Stoic and Orphic myths that carry the ego to admiration for life.

Even if Ricœur did not make it explicit at that point, the question of evil emerges under the mode of a challenge for freedom: conscience commits evil when it chooses to say no to finitude, when it opts for the self-positioning of the self by the self. It pretends to become creative, taking itself for God. But Ricœur (1966) ceaselessly affirms that human freedom is not creative, for “to will is not to create.” (p. 521) While even theoretical freedom is not entirely formed – this only occurs in the consent to its finitude – it already runs the risk of losing itself. Faced with this risk, forgiveness is the support that freedom receives not to fall. The first face of forgiveness comes in the dialogue with what the Stoic and Orphic myths announce: the victory of admiration of life over contempt for it. This will be the topic of our first part.

Freedom must nevertheless confront a second crisis, deeper than the first, when it is confronted with evil committed by human beings against others. Ricœur distinguishes two aspects of this evil: suffering and fault. Evil as suffering is the new hardship to which freedom is exposed, where it risks losing itself. To endure, freedom must find a support: consolation, thus showing us a new dimension of forgiveness. We will explore this aspect in our second part. Since Ricœur did not probe this in detail, we have sought to develop this aspect in greater detail and will present the results here.

Forgiveness is, ultimately, what is asked by the conscience that judges itself guilty: two notable Ricœurian texts treat this theme, writings separated by forty years. The first belongs to the philosophy of the will, *The Symbolism of Evil*. The second comes as the epilogue of his work, *Memory*,

History, Forgetting. Beyond their notable differences, what unites these texts is the question of confession and of forgiveness. In our third part, we will focus on Ricœur's results in the *Symbolism of Evil*.

1. The First Face of Forgiveness: Freedom Tested by Finitude and Supported by Admiration

To understand what forgiveness signifies, we will begin by exploring the consciousness that lives it, whether as the one who pardons or as the one who seeks forgiveness. The consciousness experimenting forgiveness is, for Ricœur, one who is structurally free and whose liberty is placed in peril or reduced to slavery. When reduced to slavery, it may be seeking liberation. The question of evil and of forgiveness orients us straightaway towards the willing dimension of consciousness. Concerning methodology, Ricœur follows Husserl, at least in the first part of its description: the will as project and motion. But he distances himself concerning the interpretation of the results of method, particularly about the question of the origin of conscience. If Husserl is seeking a pure transcendental ego, Ricœur (2004) speaks of an ego that is enlarged and humbled.

The enlarged ego is the one that is never without a body. This is why Ricœur constantly evokes the voluntary with the involuntary, the project with corporal movement. This enlargement is also the place of humbling for the ego, which wanted to posit itself: the ego cannot but recognize that it is always preceded by a life that it cannot fully understand, a life that escapes it and which, sometimes, is radically opposed to one's own life plans, but a life the ego must consent to. Without life – and its necessities – there is no freedom, even if freedom meets, with this necessity, its contradiction.

Ricœur speaks of a threefold sadness which threatens the will in its process of becoming free through consent to its life: the sadness of the past, when the human person conceives his or her own character as a state that condemns him or her to an unbearable subjectivity; the sadness of formlessness when the menacing shadows of his unconscious emerge; the sadness of contingency before the incredible and hazardous complexity of our body which at each moment could go irredeemably away, before

irreversible aging, before inevitable death. In this sadness, the risk is to say no to the finite, to the formlessness and to contingency, pronouncing a triple confession of totality, transparency, and self-positioning.

What is it that permits us to understand the destructiveness of these wishes? What is it that comes to prevent us from falling into the illusion of absolute lucidity? What is it that authorizes us to choose a path where it may be possible at the same time to consent to finitude without thereby resigning ourselves to sadness?

The description must stop here for a moment, for a philosophical choice must be made, one that Ricœur calls metaphysical. There is an alternative: yes or no, do we believe that freedom continues to be possible in this finite life? Ricœur replies “yes,” and invites his reader to follow him.

Consent is at the same time described theoretically and now carried out within the description. And the will is no longer alone: another has been invited – poetry. As for the methods: hermeneutics comes along and enters in conversation with phenomenology. The first fruit of this encounter is the discovery that necessity is not a bloc of causality hermeneutically sealed off from the freedom that we were tempted to reject: necessity – character, the unconscious, and life – is the world where freedom discovers itself to be responding “to an appeal or a grasp which surpasses it” (Ricœur, 1966, p. 469).

This appeal or this grasp opens the path, located at the very interior of the sadness of finitude, towards the joy of consent. They take the form of admiration for life experienced by consciousness in reading Stoic and Orphic poetry. Even if he does not say it explicitly, “Admiration” is the symbol¹ deduced by Ricœur through hermeneutics: we recognize it as the symbol of forgiveness for a consciousness confronted to the metaphysical choice previously discussed: we could call it metaphysical² forgiveness. Admiration

¹ In *Freedom and Nature*, the first detour offered to phenomenology passes through the sciences: consciousness cannot describe the life that carries it without passing through concepts elaborated by biology. In this detour, the scientific concept is received by the consciousness as an “index.” In the same way, the myths give access to the depths of experience that are not directly accessible for investigation by the understanding itself. The myths are received by the understanding as “symbols.”

² Jaspers (2001) distinguishes four types of guilt: criminal, political, moral and metaphysical. Ricœur (2000) follows this distinction and uses the term to describe the experience, for the guilty, to be expelled from himself, from mankind and from the world, not to be able to recognize himself in the wrongdoings that he committed. The meaning here

is the appeal and grasp which comes to unmask the illusion of self-positioning, all the while inviting and aiding freedom not to flee but rather to advance towards itself despite the challenge. On the other side, we encounter another symbol, the one of evil: "contempt" toward this finite life.

Stoicism saves the human person from his contempt for finitude that passes through the admiration he professes for the world in its organized totality. The victory of admiration over contempt is the "detour"³ which begins to lead the person momentarily tempted to reject the world back towards consent. The challenged ego discovers itself enlarged, under the horizon of totality, and at the same time humbled, its core going out of itself to the Transcendence from which all order stems. This gives him the capacity to understand this order. Stoicism, though occasionally scornful of the smaller details of human experience, nevertheless manifests a kind of admiration by default for the whole. The admiration of Orphism goes further by consenting to this world even in its troubling elements.

Orphism – Ricœur cites Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* extensively – carries man beyond his death and the contempt that it provokes, towards a goodness more originally manifested in the great metamorphosis of the world where ruin is continually overcome. In doing this, Orphism humbles man's immoderate will to be Being itself, immortal, and pushes him to conversion: "As consciousness, renouncing the attempt at self-positing, receives being with wonder and seeks in the world and in the involuntary a manifestation of Transcendence which is given to me as the mighty companion of my freedom!" (Ricœur, 1966, p. 478) But Orphism also carries with it the possibility of excess: it can push the subject to forget himself in idolised nature. The admiration by default seen in Stoicism offers something to resist.

Thanks to the combined effects of Stoicism and Orphism, admiration is offered as the passage towards consenting to finitude. Evil is identified through the symbol of contempt, and forgiveness through the symbol of an admiration more powerful than contempt. This symbolism appears as a pole in circulation with another pole, the will phenomenologically

is similar: the rejection of finitude is, for the enlarged ego, rejection not only of its bodily dimension but also of himself and of the world.

³ The figure of the detour is dear to Ricœur, when he opposes the long path of hermeneutics with the short path of Husserl and Heidegger.

described as Freedom. Freedom is faithful to itself in recognizing and rejecting the previous confession of self-positioning, and in the same movement, welcoming enlargement and humility as essential characteristics of the renewed ego.

In return, freedom discovers itself as “an only human freedom” (Ricœur, 1966, p. 482), that is, “a freedom which is human and not divine, a freedom which does not posit itself absolutely because it is not Transcendence. To will is not to create” (p. 486). Transcendence appears not directly but through the detour of the symbols of evil and forgiveness.

The hermeneutic detour permits phenomenology to follow the description of consciousness. It integrates into this description elements that it receives from outside. These elements are integrated in their being recognized as indications of what comprises consciousness – going beyond that to which consciousness has immediate access. The “only human freedom” can be understood in the circle between the conceptuality that the phenomenology of the will constitutes – freedom – and the symbolism that the hermeneutic of Stoic and Orphic myths elaborate: admiration more powerful (forgiveness) than contempt (evil). Ricœur has explored this circularity in the conclusion to “The Symbol Gives Rise to Thought” (Ricœur, 1967, p. 347-357).

We have described freedom up to the difficult but not impossible contentment to finitude. This is the end of a first detour. But it does not signify the end of the path: consent and admiration remain in tension because of another dimension of evil: sufferings and wrongdoings committed by other human beings. The admiration of a world where freedom is possible does not suffice when such evil is present: the hope of an entirely different world becomes necessary, Ricœur says; a world where freedom will be delivered from the slavery by which evil threatens to diminish freedom.

2. *The Second Face of Forgiveness: Freedom Tested by Suffering and Supported by Consolation*

On the path of consent, a new stumbling block emerges: evil committed (culpability) and its result for others: evil endured (suffering). In contrast with the metaphysical evil already discussed, we will call it effective evil. At the end of *Freedom and Nature*, Ricœur insists above all on the impossibility of consenting to a necessity that has become bad – at least partly – because of human actions. To consent will only be possible with the support of something other than admiration: evil mingled with necessity cannot be the sign of good Transcendence. If a world must be the sign of a good Transcendence, it will be other than this world – it will be a world where evil is absent, a world where “I hope to be delivered from the terrible and at the end of time to enjoy a new body and a new nature granted to freedom” (Ricœur, 1966, p. 480).

The hope of this world, if it helps freedom to follow the path of humanisation, cannot lead to the desire to flee from the world, even though it is marked by human evil. Hope comes in welcoming the promise of deliverance: it sustains patience during freedom’s testing by human evil, it aids the engagement of freedom in its battle against it. It announces, on the horizon, the conciliation between freedom and necessity, despite finitude and despite evil. On one hand, Rilke’s Orphic poetry shows this hope. And Ricœur cites these verses: «Only in the realm of praising may Lament/ Go, nymph of the weeping spring» (Rilke, R.M., 1942, p. 31).

A nymph consoles man in carrying a word returned from death and from nothingness: life, says the nymph, in contrast with death, is of such splendour that even the perspective of annihilation cannot completely trouble it. The hostility placed by suffering between freedom and life has to be converted into a “into a fraternal tension within a unity of creation. A Franciscan knowledge of necessity: I am ‘with’ necessity, ‘among’ creatures” (Ricœur, 1966, p. 481).

This ending by Ricœur is very brisk. Nevertheless, we are now familiar with his way of proceeding: Orphism permits one to take a step along the path of consent, when confronted to a suffering provoked by nature. But another obstacle presents itself that leaves the Orphic outlook without force: evil committed by other human beings. Another recourse

appears here: Franciscan fraternity. In his *Canticle of Creation*, Francis of Assisi writes: «Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Earth, our Mother, who nourishes us and sustains us [...]. Be praised, my Lord, for those who forgive for love of you» (Francis of Assisi, 2006).

The Franciscan tradition shares Orphic poetry's admiration for life, but it prolongs this admiration in hope and consolation by means of love, helping freedom to face the new challenge of a suffering lived through the fault of another person. Another aspect appears immediately: the suffering that we force upon others. We will return to this in the third part, following Ricœur in *The Symbolism of Evil*. It seems nevertheless essential to give place to the victim before turning to the guilty. The privilege that Ricœur gives to guilt is inscribed within the Christian tradition, marked by the Protestant Reformation.⁴ Beyond this orientation, the force of Ricœur's position is to expose the detour of his reading: his hermeneutics contains, without making it explicit, numerous elements linked to the sufferings of victims. This permits the emergence of a symbolism parallel to the one of guilt that he has elaborated (Causse, 2014).

Babylonian, Greek, Hebrew, Christian, and Orphic texts (Ricœur, 1967) not only display hope, but witness a consolation that supports freedom to remain free when challenged by the suffering caused by humans. Forgiveness continues to accompany freedom along the way of humanisation, helping it to resist that which could enslave it and delivering it when it is subjugated. The confrontation with suffering endured from another illuminates a new dimension of forgiveness.

From a philosophical point of view, forgiveness contains another interest: that of shedding light on the evil that threatens freedom, of permitting men to recognize it better, to reject it for oneself and to combat its effects. Ricœur (1967) notes this concerning 'sin', the second symbol of guilt: "This symbolism of sin gets a new emphasis when sin is considered retrospectively from the standpoint of that which goes beyond it, namely, 'pardon.' At the end of this first part we shall stress the fact that the complete and concrete meaning of sin becomes apparent only in this retrospection" (p. 78).

⁴ In his reflection on guilt, Ricœur (1967, pp. 130, 139) cites the Apostle Paul, St. Augustine and Martin Luther together.

What fruit might we gather from this reading of Ricœur, complemented with our own investigations (Causse, 2014)? The first symbol of evil suffered because of another is the “stain”, the same as that which Ricœur brought to light for guilt, even if it is perceived from a radically different angle. Evil takes, in league with our embodied nature and our relationship to the environment, the form of a contracted impurity. The victim does not see the other as guilty in the first instance, for the victim is at once submersed in suffering and so sees otherness at the border of the physical and the moral. This suffering resembles misunderstandings of illness, but it is so sudden, radiating from the exterior towards the interior, and obscurely implicating a relationship to the other, whether the other is a person or an object. It is charged with evil.

Just as illness carries with it an archaic tinge of fear of divine wrath, how much more this ambiguous suffering, where the angry divine seems to have incarnated itself in this other who commits violence against me? The confusion is even greater for the children who suffer violence from their parents or their close relations: if it is in a father that this figure is incarnated, what child do I become? I am no longer a man; I am a thing, and an impure and rejected thing. The confusion is even greater when the aggression is sexual, where a form of pleasure is mixed with suffering. All is confused, nothing has sense any longer; everything – pleasure or displeasure – brings one back to being only something impure, in whom desire is dead. The victim disintegrates in order to survive: within the self the sacred and the profane are split. And as nothing of humanity escapes profanation, it is in a disincarnated ‘elsewhere’ that the sacred finds refuge, at the risk of madness and of death (Daligand, 2004).

What face does forgiveness – effective forgiveness, in contrast with metaphysical forgiveness – take that can unveil this evil and indicate a way out of it? Following Ricœur, we call it “purification”. What purification can come to aid the child or the adult so challenged? This purification is of the order of rite and of myth,⁵ establishing a tight alliance between the gesture

⁵ The myth is here understood in the way that Eliade and Ricœur speak of it: it is a narrative giving a situation meaning that it would otherwise lack, giving the gestures and the words to live this transformation. The rite is the enactment of these gestures and words: throughout the rite, the reading of texts comes to link the spoken words with the gestures

and the word. It links as well the collective with the personal: it seeks to separate once more the pleasure of desire, to reinstate the confidence in one's embodied and relational being, in re-establishing the joy of friendship. We refer here to Ricœur's remarkable passages about emotion in the second part of *Freedom and Nature*. It requires nothing less than a rite of new birth to bring the victim into freedom. We can think of the ritual of Baptism, present already in Ancient Babylon and the Greek world, as it is now in the Jewish and Christian tradition. To these rites correspond myths that we cannot cite but in passing here: in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Enkidu passes from the wilderness to civilization washing himself; in the Bible, Noah is saved from the flood, the Israelites are liberated from Egypt passing the Red Sea; Jesus of Nazareth is baptised by John in the Jordan, and so on.

This purification operates together with several other actions such as medical and psychological care, associational support for the reconstruction of the self and of one's ties with others, and the support offered by recourse to justice. Transitional justice (Hayner, 2011), restorative justice (Zehr, 2012) and mediation (Iula, 2012) are of this order, while penal justice (Garapon, 2002) – with its primary attention to the law and to infraction – leaves the victim in the shadows and demands an additional accompaniment.

Forgiveness as purification situates us straightaway on the level of the body, collective and individual: it is here that it replies to the defilement and, as much possible, warns it through education, prevention, the fight against recidivism, protocols concerning abuse, etc. Finally, the symbolism of stain and of purification is operational concerning the pollution of our environment and the management of our waste. Without going so far as to hypostatize nature, it permits us to remember that, by our bodies, we belong to one another, and to the land: a child made ill because of pollution is also a victim of the action of other people. Forgiveness as purification permits us to recognize the person within the right to clean air and to healthy food, and to identify the communal actions geared towards this transformation of his or her situation. In the same way, poor populations

made, seizing the person that participates in it and renewing her humanity capable of just gestures and true words, of gestures and words that are coherent and humanizing.

threatened by the rising of seas demand to be recognized in their right to a habitable earth.

Purification, the first symbol of effective forgiveness for a victim, unites the individual with the covenant among all humanity, the land and the source of goodness from which all emerges: the splendid image of the rainbow at the conclusion of the Noah story situates us all in this place. But humanity thus re-founded is far from an Eden: the covenant does not cease to be broken. The second symbol of evil suffered appears: the misery in which part of our humanity is submerged. Mercy⁶ is the symbol of the pardon that precedes it.

If the first symbol situates us in the broader human range – the earthly condition, the most singular, the incarnated condition of us all – this second symbol reduces this breadth to situate us at the interior of a specified human community. We can consider the Hebrew people, having arrived in the Promised Land at the time of the kings and prophets, as a symbolic model of it (Beauchamp, 1976).

This people lives an unbearable paradox: it has been born of mercy, having been enslaved in Egypt and then liberated. Its identity is founded in this experience. And nevertheless, the rich and the powerful do no better than the Egyptians: they hold many of their own people in miserable poverty. It is in this context that the prophets speak up. Their announcements proclaim that mercy will once again be exercised in favour of those bowed down. They are going to be liberated and a new land will be given to them. Let the rich and the powerful hear this and understand the consequences for them!

Forgiveness as mercy appears under the form of a preferential love for the poorest, for it is they that give the community the power to live together. And forgiveness is incarnated in every person or group of persons who seeks and finds the gestures and the words to incarnate this preference. Here again, Jewish and Christian rites and texts about Easter are particularly relevant, even if it is possible to participate in these rites in the very manner that the prophets denounce, perverting them and making them tools of one's own power. It is indeed there that we find the heart of

⁶ In French, to speak of "misery" (*misère*) is also to speak of "mercy" (*miséricorde*). There is an intimate – indeed, unbreakable – connection between these two realities.

the battle of the prophets: giving the rites and texts their true meaning, denouncing interpretations and the practices that can only be described as false and perverse. These political associations, institutions, parties and movements can incarnate mercy. We could cite, for example, "ATD Fourth World,"⁷ founded by Father Joseph Wresinski.

After the purification given to freedom in order to break free of the stain, after the mercy shown to freedom in order to break free of the miseries of poverty, a third symbol of forgiveness appears: it comes to touch the victim at their very core, where suffering has brought them to the brink of losing the very basis of their identity, the confidence in a source of goodness from which everything emerges, and from which emerges the person that I am: unique, and in relationship with a multitude of others on the way to freedom. Extreme suffering prevents our responding to the question "who am I?", for it muffles the voice that calls "where are you?"⁸ Suffering renders one insensitive to the hand that is extended in order to prevent us from falling into the abyss (Girtanner, 1999), and it ties the tongue that can no longer even call for help. We might think of those who were victims, along with others, of terrible atrocities – those in concentration camps or gulags, for example (Lomax, 1995) – and who, on returning, feel themselves guilty for having survived (Causse, 2014). What symbolism meets this experience? It is desolation.⁹

Can forgiveness reach these depths? It is Ricœur (2004) who shows us the way, citing St. Paul's hymn of love from the First Letter to the Corinthians (p. 468). Love has the capacity to descend to the abysses where evil reigns. Love grows to the same measure, and no distance is able to stop it. Love shows its height and depth when it meets the person submerged in desolation.

⁷ ATD (All Together in Dignity) Fourth World.

⁸ We touch here upon Ricœur's reflections about narrative and its foundations: Ricœur (1992).

⁹ According to the dictionary of the CNRTL (Centre national de ressources textuelles et lexicales), *désolation* designates first of all the act of ravaging a country, to empty it, to destroy it; it designates also the result of such acts. In a figurative sense, it designates the act that reduces a person to isolation, to live in a state of extreme pain, of painful affliction owing to the lack of a beloved or of a sign of God.

A victim, his heart marked profoundly by suffering, may see himself as no longer capable of being loved. To be found once more by love, to be touched by it in the most distant regions, is forgiveness in its largest dimension: consolation. Consolation is not a state, it is an urge, and the growth of love that does not abandon freedom when put to the test. This growth, in order to be experienced, presupposes the belief that it is possible and to welcome it. There is no other condition, even if, paradoxically, we can need to be helped by others to believe it, by some witness of consolation.

Those who incarnate this consolation are numerous but their humility renders them discreet. There are texts that identify them: the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke, the figure of Sonia in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, a nurse in Wiesenthal's *Sunflower* (Wiesenthal, 1998). People, individually or through institutions, practice this as well: none can pretend to possess it, only to transmit it, and to inscribe in space and time the rites and texts (for example, Yom Kippur in the Jewish tradition, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Catholic tradition, but also, in some cases, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions¹⁰) that dispose us towards it and towards living it.

For the person suffering from the faults of another – and the other can be a person as well as a group – forgiveness is experienced as an appeal and a grasp, from outside as well as from inside. This experience is expressed by the two chains of symbols, of evil (stain, misery, desolation) and of forgiveness (purification, mercy, consolation): through these symbols, the person who was the victim is able to name forgiveness and its power over evil, then to accompany it through his or her own actions toward others. The first could be to forgive his or her repentant persecutor. This symbolism organizes itself according to a deepening of experience: from bodily and environmental exteriority, it passes through community mediation, and arrives at the person in respectful relation with others.

Each symbol deepens and takes up the preceding symbol. Desolation can be taken as an example, in order to show the chain of symbols. Desolation is first of all lived in the most intimate core of the self: but this lived experience is communal, as it is shown by those victims that continue

¹⁰ See Pons (2000), Lefranc (2002), Cassin (2004).

to belong to the community of those who have been killed and feel guilty remaining alive. And it is bodily, bespeaking a relationship to the world where nothing has taste, colour, or relief. It is a world that has become a desert.

After the detour through symbols, we return to freedom: welcoming and sustaining the appeal and support of forgiveness announced by the symbolism, it can traverse evil and find itself capable of accomplishing itself as human freedom. This could be by according it to someone who asks for it, or even – if the transgressor does not ask – of disposing oneself to announce it, in word and deed. Becoming such a witness of consolation, as a person or as a community (Ricoeur, 2016), freedom is not only faithful to itself, but deepens itself.

3. The Third Face of Forgiveness: Freedom Tested by Guilt and Supported by the Hope of Justification

A final face of forgiveness must be explored: that which presents itself to freedom that is enslaved by doing evil. In returning, this face will help freedom resist its subjugation when temptation presents itself. This exploration will be more rapid because Ricoeur has preceded us already. We will content ourselves to recall his findings.

The Symbolism of Evil elaborates a symbolism of culpability, itself clarified by the symbolism of justification. In its most exterior dimension, evil is symbolized, as we have noted earlier, by the stain and forgiveness by purification. The point of view being that of the guilty party, the distinction between sacred and profane no longer passes the border between the real and the unreal but in the world itself, among things: it separates those who are at the disposition of others who will not be, being reserved to the Deity. It is possible only to touch what is profane: to touch a sacred thing is to make a stain, to affect the order of the world. Only a ritual of purification can allay divine anger while also re-establishing order. This dimension is visible in the ritual of marriage, in the *catharsis* in Greek tragedies or in the waiting, in a trial, for a just punishment.

A second symbol appears in taking account of the relational dimension of evil committed: to attack someone is also to attack the

confidence that grounds social relations. Here, evil is symbolized by sin, which is fundamentally the rupture of the covenantal relation between people and with the source of goodness from which emerges the possibility of living together. (Ricoeur, 1992, ninth study). Forgiveness is symbolized by redemption. The covenant was sealed between two partners: the sinner broke it, and the other partner maintains the covenant despite its rupture. Redemption is the return of the sinner to the covenant. One element must be underlined: the partner in a covenant is not a victim, but one or more representative members of the affected community. These members stand between the guilty party and the victim. We might think here of experiences of mediation, or of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions.

The third symbol comes with the internalization of the evil committed: guilt is the realization of being held captive, of being diminished in the ability to be oneself, of being powerless to find once more one's lost freedom. This guilt is brought to light through justification: the revelation of being held in slavery comes into contrast with the hope of being justified. Justification is promised on the condition of allowing the light to occur by itself, for repentance to grow and the acknowledgement of wrongdoing to formulate itself.

Justification is the fact of being declared just by the person empowered to do so. Later, Ricoeur (2004) will make this explicit in terms of separation between the agent and his bad actions, the agent understanding that his confession gives value to this saying: "you are better than your actions" (p. 493). Ricoeur insists nevertheless on the fact that forgiveness, for the guilty, can only be promised: it cannot in any case be realized in the conscience by the conscience. This is why the symbolism of evil remains unachieved: the double symbolism of guilt and forgiveness remains open. This is also why there is neither a concept of "forgiven freedom", but only a semi-concept of "servile will".

On the side of the victim, we have not had the same difficulty: he or she is fully re-established in their freedom upon welcoming consolation. Freedom and forgiveness make a circle for the victim. Transmitting forgiveness presupposes that it is fully received, not as a state but as an urge coming from another and which goes towards others, not without having produced, in oneself, its work of deepening freedom.

The symbolism of guilt and of justification brings freedom to the point of repenting and of confessing. It can even be followed to the point of asking for forgiveness. Freedom in this situation is to recognize oneself as once again enslaved by the evil committed, but also to be placed partially in one's being thanks to this distancing from evil that is repenting and confession. From a phenomenological point of view, it is not possible to go further. The next step will be the possible event, but not the necessary event, of seeing oneself giving the forgiveness that is sought. This presupposes the intervention of another conscience, capable of forgiving, as well as have a forum capable of framing this exchange (Ricoeur, 2004, gives examples of this "ceremonies").

Conclusion

Exploring the interplay between evil, forgiveness and freedom, we have described, at the intersection of phenomenology and of hermeneutics, the structure of freedom and its finitude, and brought to light the support that it receives from metaphysical forgiveness, in consenting to this finitude despite the contradiction that opposes it. Accepting this help, theoretical freedom advances toward an only human freedom.

For human freedom, the challenge of evil committed by human beings necessitates the description of forgiveness to branch out in two directions: the victim and the guilty party. Effective forgiveness thus has two faces: consolation and a hope of justification, as well as evil: desolation and guilt. As Ricoeur has elaborated the latter, we have done the same for the former. As for freedom, it becomes a freer will on one side, and a servile will on the other.

The relation between metaphysical and effective is first related with the relation between a theoretical point of view and a practical one. The metaphysical is linked to the theoretical description of the will. It qualifies a decision inside the theoretical description. The effective is related to a situation where a decision is already made. Between theoretical and metaphysical, as between metaphysical and effective, there is a leap, the one of a choice. This leap takes a different turn for forgiveness and for evil.

Metaphysical and effective forgiveness are in continuity with each other, related to an openness of freedom to a helpful otherness. On the other hand,

metaphysical evil is a rejection of any transcendence, and can be understood as the root of effective evil: stain and sin are two effective expressions of this rejection. Guilt, when recognized, is nevertheless already a turning point toward forgiveness. Finally, we could say that metaphysical evil is the root of effective evil as stain, sin and non-recognized guilt, and metaphysical forgiveness the origin of effective forgiveness and hope of justification.

We then have arrived at a new place where we await two people, and where the question is posed, within oneself, of the conjugation of this double experience: consolation and hope of justification. This place is as much a horizon as it is the symbol of a force that gives itself to freedom to persevere toward the unification between a freer will and servile will in hope of release.

The face to come is reconciliation. In returning, a question is posed: can forgiveness be accomplished if the meeting between the two is not possible, whether because the victim is dead, or because they cannot access consolation, or perhaps because the guilty party does not confess? And, within oneself, how to hold together the consolation by which being a victim recedes into the past, not in order to be forgotten but so that this will lose its charge of desolation, and the recognition of places of culpability for which no request for forgiveness seems to be able to extend?

This remains an open question, but it is not therefore a setback, for forgiveness is, more than a state, an urge for liberation: the absence of reconciliation is less an end of this movement and more its continuation under different forms. Here, we can only suggest ways forward: the multiple engagements before so many people haunted by desolation and guilt.

Another figure sketches itself next to reconciliation: leaning upon one's experience of consolation, the desire for another to have the same consolation can be born. This is true of a particular other that I have wronged, but also any other tormented by desolation. To act in and for consolation is a larger face of forgiveness. Freedom finds itself affirmed because it has been shared in friendship and in mutual respect, in a human community advancing in freedom.

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For a historical-sociological approach to the city of Haifa

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Abstract

The city of Haifa, in the northern part of Israel, has been the theatre of harsh clashes between Jews and Muslims for many years. Haifa was heavily involved in the Great Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 and during the 1948 the Palestinian population, about 80.000 people, was evacuated by the Jewish militias. After the establishment of the State of Israel, several terror attacks took place in the city.

Today, several religious groups live in Haifa, with non easy relations. Nevertheless, each year the city celebrates the *Holyday of Holydays*, an interfaith festival.

The city presents significant traits that may help us test Tönnies's idea of a dichotomy between community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*). In different moments of city life, we find features typical of community and, in certain others, characteristics typical of society.

Keywords: Haifa; Intercultural relations; Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Urban sociology.

Introduction

Forgiveness is a rare concept within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the hatred developed between the two warring parties in decades of violence makes very difficult to forgive each other. In many Palestinian cities and refugee camps there are stones displaying the names of the "martyrs" (the victims of the conflicts) with the slogan "never forget, never forgive"; many Israelis, in turn, believe that the Palestinians must never be forgiven for their attacks against Jewish citizens. Moreover, both parties accuse the other to be responsible of the conflict and to commit the worst crimes (Fonzo, 2016). The conflict also involves the Arab citizens of Israel, who support the Palestinian cause and accuse the Jewish state to discriminate against them.

However, Jewish and Arab citizens have some opportunities of encounter and peaceful coexistence, some moments in which they appear

to forget the hatred and share experiences, in a sort of tacit and reciprocal forgiveness. One of this moments is the *Holiday of Holydays*, an interfaith festival held yearly in Haifa.

Before analyzing the festival and the place where it is held, we must remember that the birth and development of a city (Weber, 2003) depend on various contingencies and matters of expediency, beginning from the place chosen, provided it possesses certain characteristics: above all, the presence of water, indispensable for survival but also a formidable source of other vital necessities, as well as acting, as it has from remotest times, as a primary communications medium. Besides water, the lymph indispensable to the creation and continuation of life comes, undoubtedly, the community destined to inhabit the place. Generally speaking, history shows us that, during the early stages, most populations tend to share a rather homogeneous culture including language, religion, customs, habits and rites. But this is not always so.©

Haifa in Israel is an anomalous case because of the unsettled historical picture it provides us with.

1. From the intensification of the conflict to the Holiday of Holidays

An Ottoman city until 1917, Haifa was first occupied by the British, then ruled by them as a mandate (between 1922 and 1948), becoming one of the main centres of the Arab-Jewish conflict.

From 1935 to 1939 the Great Arab Revolt, including a general strike lasting seven months in 1936, took place, involving Haifa. In Haifa, on the 18 April 1938, a bomb placed by Irgun on a train caused the deaths of 2 Arabs and 2 British policemen. On the 24 May 1938, members of Irgun shot 3 Arabs dead. On the 6 July 1938, Irgun had two bombs explode in the Haifa melon market killing 18 Arabs and 5 Jews, as well as injuring over 60 persons. On the 25 July 1938, 43 Arabs were killed by Irgun at the Haifa market. On the 27 February 1939, Irgun struck again causing the deaths of 24 Arabs at the Haifa Suk. Again, on the 19 June 1939, Irgun, using a donkey loaded with explosives, killed 20 more Arabs in the market in Haifa.

Meanwhile, the Second World War broke out. Had Feld-Marschall Rommel not been defeated at el-Alamein, the area of Carmel near Haifa would have become the principal outpost against the advancing German army.

In December 1947, there was armed fighting in the streets of Haifa between Arabs and Jews. On the 24 December 1947, Arab snipers shot and killed 4 Jews; this led, by way of retaliation, to the killing of the same number of Arabs by the Jews. On the 30 December 1947, the slayings, known as the Haifa oil-refinery massacre, took place; the Arabs killed 39 and injured 49 Jews, following a previous killing of 6 Arabs by Irgun. On the 1 January 1948, members of the Jewish Palmach (Yishuv regulars) took the lives of 70 Arabs at Haifa (the Balad al-Shaykh massacre). On the 3 January 1948, in Haifa, the Arabs eliminated 4 Jews. On the 14 January 1948, again in Haifa, 7 Jews and 2 British citizens were killed by the Arabs.

February 1948 was a "Black Month" for Haifa: on the 3, Arab militants took the lives of 6 Jews travelling on a bus; on the 7, the Arabs killed 3 Jews and Jews the same number of Arabs. On the 19, 4 Jews were killed on a bus at the hands of Arabs; retaliation was immediate and on the 21 February 4 Arabs were killed by militant Jews. On the 31 March 1948, a bomb on the Cairo-Haifa train killed 40 Arabs, wounding a further 60: the Jewish militarist movement Lehi acknowledged responsibility for the attack. On the 23 April 1948, on the same train route, another bombing by Lehi caused the deaths of 8 British subjects while wounding a further 27 people.

In more recent times, a first attack, claimed by Hamas, occurred in Haifa at the bus station on the 5 September 1993, though no injury was caused to people. A second attack, this time a suicide bombing claimed again by Hamas, targeted the number 16 bus on the 2 December 2001, killing 15 Jews. A few days later, on the 9 December, near the Check Post Junction of the Haifa district in the Tel Hanan direction, 39 people were wounded by a bomb: the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group claimed responsibility. The fourth episode, again a suicide attack claimed by Hamas, took place on the 31 March 2002 at the Matza restaurant, Haifa, resulted in 15 Jewish casualties. On the 5 March 2003, an attack, again a suicide bomber, struck bus 37 in Haifa killing 17 and wounding 53 Jews: the youngest victim was a 12-year-old, the oldest was 54; the bomber was a twenty-year-old Arab from Hebron. The Palestinian organization Hamas claimed responsibility once again. The Maxim restaurant in Haifa was targeted on the 4 October

2003 by a further suicide bomber and resulted in 21 Jewish victims. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad group claimed responsibility. The total tally for victims in Haifa, before and after the birth of the State of Israel, is 237 Arabs and 143 Jews (including the three victims caused by the boarding of the *Exodus* in 1947), plus 12 British casualties. In 2011 three presumed organizers of the tragic 5 March 2003 episode were released from prison during an exchange of prisoners.

It was actually during a moment of extreme crisis, in the early 2000's, that a keener sensitivity aimed at seeking solutions capable of overcoming the conflict began to spread: the idea of fostering peaceful coexistence, an idea which first emerged in 1914 under Mayor Hassan Bey Shukri, grew stronger. Hassan Bey Shukri, in office from 1914 to 1920 and from 1927 to 1940, an Islamic Arab who considered the Jews his brethren, was forced, following the umpteenth attack on his life, to flee Haifa and take refuge in Beirut (Cohen, 2009, 15-17). The idea was taken up again in 1994 by the mayor Yona Yahav (in office since 2003, once a Labour-Party member of the Knesset between 1996 and 1999, later a member of the liberal, secular Zionist party Shinui – which means change – and a member of Kadima since 2009), whose *Holiday of Holidays* (in Hebrew *Hachag shel hachagim*) takes place, every December, organized by the Arab-Jewish Beit HaGefen cultural centre, directed by a board of seven Jews and seven Arabs.

This event takes place thanks also to the city's rather solid commercial structure based on a number of resources: the port (opened in 1933) which is not only commercial and industrial but also touristic; the grand manufacturing area; a considerable wealth of cultural and artistic meeting places and centres. As to social status, there is a varied layering of classes, easily discernable on the basis of homes, languages spoken, language-styles adopted, educational qualifications and means of transport employed. There are no great signs of an agricultural presence but the relations between the various quarters of the city are rather evident: Wadi Nisnas was not chosen at random to house the Holiday but because it is a district known for its firmly consolidated tradition of sociability. The very pace of life in the various urbanized areas of Haifa is clearly differentiated: it is more or less hectic depending on job types, on the number of daily tasks carried out, on degrees of personalization of inter-subjective relations, on rates of social alienation, levels of community solidarity, frequency of

conflicting attitudes, degrees of willingness to adhere to forms of cohesion, intra-familial and extra-familial standards of living, the nature of the places frequented daily, ethnocultural contexts (the hilly Jewish Quarter, Hadar HaCarmel, dates back to 1920). The University of Haifa (founded in 1964) and the Technion (University Institute of Technology founded in 1908 and opened in 1924), both set in vast areas, deserve a special mention.

As urban sociologists have often emphasized, industrialization and urbanization have acted as the principal thrusts to immigration processes. Not only does Haifa belong fully to this ambit of phenomenology, but it also remains a peak example and a place charged with symbolic power, recollective of the return of the Jews to their homeland after the dramatic events of the Second World War.

2. Urban, inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict

The sociological peculiarities of Haifa need to be gone into more deeply. The city has never maintained total autonomy, a sole identity of its own, for long. Due to a continuous series of historical events associated with the exercise of power, it has undergone a variety of experiences, without anyone of them prevailing or enduring to act as its exclusive reference culture.

Geographically, it is situated on a large gulf, well suited to mooring sailing vessels and, as such, the only one on the Palestinian shore. Not only that, but Haifa avails of an important waterway, once known as Cison and now called Nahrel-Muqaṭṭa', which flows through the valley of Esdraelon and reaches the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan Valley and Syria, thus creating a direct link between the Mediterranean Sea and the interior. The area facing the port (which acts as a distribution hub for oil and fruit as well as for minerals coming by train from Beersheba) is probably the oldest modern-era settlement, with the Arabs living in the Wadi Nisnas area, the Jews, for the most part (since the 1920's), in the Esdraelon district and around Mount Carmel, which overlooks the entire city and was the site of the victory of Elijah over the prophets of Baal, as narrated in the *First Book of Kings*, chapter 18, verses 20-46, as well as being the residence of Elijah's disciple, Elisha. In ancient times the wines of the Mount Carmel area were renowned. In the XII century, a Carmelite Monastery was built on the

mountain. The same area also contains two villages of Druze, Muslim dissidents.

Towards south-east stands the city's industrial area with its oil refineries, built between 1936 and 1939, at the point of arrival of the pipeline from Kirkuk in Iraq (closed down in 1948), its thermic plant, cement works, foundries, glass factories and other industries (in particular chemicals and high technology) all along the roads leading to Acre and Nazareth and comprising four villages. The workforce is employed mostly in the services industry, far fewer in manufacturing.

The present-day urban area is largely a development of the potential that Haifa already enjoyed in the past although then rather small compared to the size of its present municipal area. "*Haifa* was a small-sized settlement of Jewish culture established at the beginning of the Current Era. It grew up, like many other similar housing agglomerates, as an answer to various kinds of needs that could not be met by the surrounding area where many prime necessities, to be found in an urban context only, were wanting. Today, naturally, the presence of the above-mentioned structures is greater and answers new needs that have arisen following the macro-processes of industrialization which invested Europe and the Mediterranean areas at the time when Haifa was reborn, in the XVIII century. Undoubtedly, the most significant phase of this development took place in the XIX century, to continue even more massively in the XX century when the city's population reached one hundred thousand (mostly Arab Muslims, a lesser number of Arab Christians and even fewer Jews). The Jewish population in Haifa began to grow slowly but surely, until, after the Second World War, it broke even with that of the Arabs. On the 23 April 1948, Israeli soldiers evacuated about eighty thousand Arabs from the city.

The proclamation of the State of Israel took place on the 15 May 1948.

From that day on, Haifa became the arrival point for Jews entering the land of their ancestors. Most of those who arrived came by sea and therefore passed through Haifa, Israel's maritime port. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and immigrants disembarked at the city's port when the political situation was as yet anything but stable and serene following the refusal of the neighbouring Arab States to accept the new setup decreed by the United Nations Organization in 1947.

The ensuing conflict led to the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-49, which saw Haifa at the centre of many battles due to the presence of its port and industries. The Arabs of Haifa surrendered on 22 April 1948. Many of them left and the city's Arab population dropped to 3,000.

Today, the city of Haifa, divided topographically into lower, midway and upper areas, has more than 270,000 inhabitants (they numbered only 24,634 in 1922 and 229,000 in 1979), a majority of Jews (of whom approximately 25% of Russian origin), as well as three minority groups, respectively, in the order of size, Arab Christians (for a total of 20,000, of whom about 6,000 Greek-Orthodox), Muslim Arabs (just under 10,000) and Druze (who, however, when one takes into account the entire metropolitan area, total around 40,000 Shia Ismaili Muslims of agro-pastoral, patriarchal culture) living in the vicinity of Haifa, especially in Daliya tel-Carmel, Isfiya and Shfar'am.

Haifa has universities and culture centres, theatres and cinemas (it is important to mention Haifa's annual International Film Festival), and is home to various other religious groups like the Baha'is, the Melkites, Maronites (about 2,000), the Arab-Christians, the Ahmadiyya (Sunni Muslims who came from Pakistan in 1925, have a large mosque and are 2,000 members strong), Protestants (one thousand). It is important to refer also to the Hashemites (of Jordanian origin) who claim direct descent from Muhammad, whose great-grandfather was called Hāshim.

3. *Haifa between community and society*

The city of Haifa presents a number of significant traits that may help us test Tönnies's idea (1963) of a dichotomy between community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*). In different moments of city life, we find features typical of community and, in certain others, characteristics typical of society. At residential level, some houses are built in such a way as not to favour interaction between social actors, while others favour it so much as it appears to be something taken, practically, for granted.

It is one thing to live in large, multi-storey condominiums, another to reside in one/two-storey houses that favour continuous, even specular, encounter of glances, voices, modes of behaviour. But there are also

situations where given contextual conditions are nullified by the will of individuals who gather for mutually shared moments of convivium, celebration, ritual, entertainment, leisure. This is true of Jews, Arabs, Melkites, Maronites, Ahmadiyya, Baha'i, Catholics and Protestants alike. In this sense, it is quite clear what strategical role an occasion like the *Holiday of Holidays*, held in Haifa every year in December, can play.

The everyday life of Haifa undergoes a series of interactions involving people, one might say completely, and impacting on every sphere of their lives. This can be seen at neighbourhood, condominium, district and city level, depending on the contingencies of the moment, on local, regional, national, foreign or domestic socio-political events and on whether open or surreptitious conflict is taking place.©

On the basis of different existing rates of intra-family and intra-ethnic-religious integration, the tendency towards the community dimension, that is, towards serene face-to-face relationships, is more or less pronounced.

One needs to ask, however, whether it is possible to apply this twofold category of traditional and modern to the specific case of the city of Haifa. First of all, one needs to ask to what extent it is possible to speak of tradition. If it is true that during its long history it has known many different vicissitudes, we might deduce that the city lacks, substantially speaking, the kind of continuity required to favour the construction of a strong cultural system, capable of resisting in the long period and overcoming obstacles and attacks of all kinds. Compared to the city of Jerusalem, for example, the history Haifa is highly discontinuous: inhabited and deserted, destroyed and rebuilt, reduced to the dimensions of a mere village, then expanded exponentially in recent years. One notices, therefore, the lack of a constant uninterrupted settlement in time. From a historical-sociological point of view, this means that Haifa seems to lack an identity of its own, which facilitates, therefore, the easy embedding of many other cultural, national, linguistic and religious identities. In brief, what might appear as a weakness becomes a strength, which opens the city up to further grafting, without opposing resistance.©

Certainly, there is no dearth of problems. It is sufficient to recall the arrival in Haifa of conspicuous numbers of immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union: they are sufficiently well received and where possible given jobs in the city. The Arab community, in particular, objects that these new arrivals

are an evident source of competition within the far from florid and not easily accessible labour market, especially during the present grave international employment crisis.

It must be added, however, that the socio-economic cohesion of some areas of the city makes it easy to deal with the impact of these new arrivals, who are often encouraged to seek work elsewhere, within the urban area itself or outside of it. To this avail, a certain sense of belonging peculiar to the notion of community, “whose members share a territorial area as a basis for everyday activities” (Parsons, 1965, p. 97), prevails. Hadra HaCarmel, the Jewish quarter *par excellence*, and Wadi Nisnas, its Arab equivalent, are, each in its own way, a more or less cohesive, more or less integrated, more or less welcoming community. First of all, we cannot speak of total homogeneity within them. In other words, they are neither exclusive nor excluding realities. This seems to indicate the existence within the urban framework of what Talcott Parsons might call a societal community, that is, a condition marked by two subsystems (the one Jewish, the other Arab) demanding, at least as a tendency, “obligations of *loyalty* towards the society’s collectivity, as both all its members and as all the various categories, diversified according to *status* and role, that the society comprises” (Parsons, 1973, p. 28). This kind of loyalty is not always necessarily clear, visible and perceivable. It persists as a basic trait. It appears as implied. But as in the case of von Neumann and Morgenstern’s theory of games (1944) or, better still, the famous prisoner’s dilemma (Poundstone 1992), it is the outcome of an initial intention to collaborate, to have trust, until the opposite is proven, at least. One might also speak of a kind of well-placed mistrust (Mutti 1998; 2006). In situations of conflict, marked by bitter clashes, tough action, those who opt for milder, less violent, non-vindictive, non-absolutist solutions, even compromise, may be accused of being disloyal. It is compromise, actually, that is often considered ineffective, transient, defeatist. And yet, in many cases, it is the only sure way out of an unresolvable *impasse*, from a dead end whose lack of escape routes obliges opponents to confront each other within a very confined space, providing no alternative except direct conflict and injury on both sides. The compromise is a form of mediation, difficult to achieve and based on hopes of finding a formula capable of overcoming the crisis. When two interlocutors, individual or collective, seek to solve a problem,

reach a decision, their respective points of view tend, generally, to be univocal, interested and rather ideological in perspective. It is only during discussion and through dialogue that the needs and expectations of the other emerge, though not always and immediately perceptible, due to different, even contrary, stances. So it becomes mandatory to find a way of paying attention to the other in order to grasp his/her intentions and his/her need to be truly acknowledged. Therefore, it is indispensable to become available, to open up to mutual understanding and shared participation. An attitude of expectation, suspension of judgement and prejudice, is the proper response to a well-grounded operative choice: to know in order to understand, to understand before acting, to proceed with caution, avoiding direct, head-on, declaredly hostile attack. Obviously, an attitude of unconditioned surrender to the proposals of the other is unacceptable because unproductive: it would be of no use to those on the other side either, it would simply strengthen their conviction of being right always and under all circumstances. This would not be a just and correct attitude to assume towards those who, having made themselves available to ideological colonization by another, have foregone their original matrix. In other words, permissive or excessively tolerant (a rather ambiguous term) attitudes of which there is much talk when referring to people of a religious or another kind of inspirational bent should not lead so much to the annihilation of one's own identity as to a conscious and as opportune as possible way of interacting, hypothesising that, in principle, one's interlocutor should also be prepared to strive towards consensual convergence. What is usually required is simply that well-placed mistrust referred to above. In other words, what is required is *epoché*, a suspension of judgment, which is, simultaneously, an expression of faith but also of well-placed mistrust, that is, of prudence and wisdom, all at once. One offers one's right but tries to avoid being struck. One should offer the other cheek, but – as one might put it – there is no third one giving the other the right to go on offending endlessly, to his/her own detriment (as well as that of others). An inclination towards intercultural and interreligious dialogue does not appear, when all comes to all, a losers' formula, if carried out with caution and without significant surrender of the values that produce and sustain it. Once more, the metaphor of the dilemma of the prisoner who cannot decide whether to collaborate or not comes in handy here. In

general, the starting point is trust and respect. But, in the long run, if all this fails, one is obliged to assume an attitude whereby the other understands that one is no unmindful victim of the coercion of others, but only a messenger sent to announce the will to engage in two-way, dialogic communication, that is, in a circular process, where no-one prevails over the other.

4. *The Holiday of Holidays as spontaneous solidarity*

The experience which the citizens of Haifa enact each year with their *Holiday of Holidays* assumes the characteristics of spontaneous solidarity that the festive atmosphere arouses, the municipal authorities promote, the inhabitants themselves share to a considerable degree, though not totally. On the other hand, it is the *Holiday* occasion itself that generates a feeling of shared identity in the inhabitants, regardless of their various ethnic-linguistic-religious backgrounds. There is an important mingling of art and entertainment, music and theatre, of adults and adolescents, of children and the elderly. Then, as Tönnies put it, it happens that “all confidential, intimate, exclusive cohabitation [...] is seen as community life; society is, on the contrary, the public space, the world. A person belongs to his/her people’s community from birth, is bound to it for better and for worse, while he/she enters society as if it were a foreign land” (Tönnies 1963: 45-46).

These December activities highlight the period as an annual watershed: the various communities of Haifa meet, spend time together, discover that peaceful coexistence is achievable. The difference between the *Holiday* and the rest of the year is evident, but, at least as far as intentions are concerned, it appears yearly less and less so, therefore more nuanced, despite the multi-century, in some cases multi-millennial, barriers that have separated the communities and prevented them from enjoying shared, long-lasting customs, a joint destiny.

In actual fact, going from Wadi Nisnas as to Hadar HaCarmel or vice versa is almost like going abroad. Yet the municipal area is a spatial continuum and both quarters are reciprocally visible at a glance. The one/two-storey houses of Wadi Nisnas facilitate interpersonal relations of a horizontal rather than a vertical nature, the opposite is true of the area

inhabited prevalently by Jews, where interpersonal contact takes place most frequently within a sole multi-storey building.

On the one hand, it is easier to develop interpersonal relationships “as real and organic life” (Tönnies, 1963: 47), on the other, solidarity is presented as an integral “aggregate”. But in both cases, intra-family experience follows certain common dynamics: men-women, parents-children, brothers-sisters, big-small. Sharing a living-place for long periods cannot but generate a sense of affiliation, a feeling of mutual participation. Passing through a series of concentric circles, one might say, that Simmel’s sociability (Simmel 1997) spreads out from family to relatives, to the neighbourhood and later to networks of friendship, nowadays based more and more on electronic intermediation (*Twitter, Facebook, Skype, etc.*) extending beyond the boundaries of districts and cities, nations and continents.

The most significant and frequent bonds, beyond the family circle, are those found among friends, that is, individuals who do not meet by *default* for reasons of geography (as in the case of a neighbourhood) or blood connections (as in the case of relations); they are chosen because of affinity, suitability or aptness on the basis of emotional thrusts. Friendship like *Erlebnis*, like life experience, has much in common with the character of a community, insofar as it contains “a mode of common, reciprocal, associative feeling” (Tönnies 1963: 62), close to that of community. Anyhow, the forms of participation and responsibility characterizing the organization and realization of the *Holiday of Holidays* may also be explained as a sensitive response to its aims and the spontaneity of the collaboration it generates, neither of them subject to economic and contractual formulae.®

Obviously, there is the question of the venue itself and the huge financial commitment (amounting to about one million Euro per annum) it involves and which is met mainly by the municipal administration. This expenditure in itself does not suffice to guarantee the success of the various events held in December in Haifa. There are many other forces at work, as well as the willpower required to implement initiatives of all kinds and duration.

Therefore, only particularly favourable conditions of collaboration are capable of guaranteeing that, for a whole month, every particular of the

venue is well planned and prepared for, that no accidents occur, that every exhibition and event goes off very well.

In Haifa, especially in the area where the *Holiday* is held, with all its various cultural venues, an almost tangible aura, an atmosphere of intense cooperation and conscientious understanding is practically palpable. Every effort is made to avoid all and every obstacle to the smooth running of the *Holiday* programme. A wise and skilful direction, that of Asaf Ron, prepares and implements all the events included in the *Holiday of Holidays*, a series covering a 360-degree range of forms, languages and expressions.

People from all the city's different generations, languages and religions take part (and many more arrive from outside the city), without any marked distinctions, almost a kind of metaphor of the continuity between community and society, between the local dimension and a global perspective. To this regard what Tönnies wrote (1963, p. 83) is enlightening: "the theory of society starts with the creation of a circle of men who, like those in a community, live and dwell peacefully side by side, though not bound but essentially separate despite bonds, while in a community people remain bound despite separation. Therefore, here, activities are not carried out because they stem from a necessarily-existing unit and as such express the will and spirit of the unit through the individual, who, by acting according to it, acts in representation of all the members as well as on his/her own behalf. Rather, in this case, each performs on his/her own account and in a state of tension with all other."

Applying Tönnies suggested interpretation of the relationship between community and society to Haifa and its *Holiday*, an overall picture emerges whereby the entire city seems to possess the characteristics of a society while the single districts, with their diverse socio-cultural matrices, appear as communities which, by coming together for the *Holiday*, create a mix that is simultaneously community and society, a mix that represents the peculiarity of Haifa as an exemplary response to potentially conflicting tendencies.

Furthermore, those who reside in Haifa "live and dwell peacefully side by side" but remain separate for historical-sociological reasons of various kinds. The fact is, however, that this mingling into a practically indistinct crowd in order to participate in the *Holiday* celebrations, seems to cause an

actual transition between town society and town community, thanks to the neighbourhoods that comprise the city of Haifa itself.

In other words, the strength of the communities, separate from each other, when virtuously joined during the *Holiday*, produces effects superior to those one might expect from a simple sum of inventions, contributions, consensus. One may speak, therefore, of a (disproportionate) flywheel, an enhancer (to the n th power) and a diffuser (in all directions) that produce evident results in the immediate wake of the *Holiday* but also, during the rest of the year, more latent and less visible outcomes.

In the end, this city, for the very fact of insisting on a territory that is, in any case, contiguous, while separating the various "blocks", nonetheless unites them in a collective citizenry. On the other hand, the communities of the various districts tend to maintain their residential links, despite diversities within the various families, their ancestral religions, and mother tongues. Then, when all of these converge upon *The Holiday of Holidays* it becomes difficult to distinguish between the ones and the others, the Jews and the Arabs, the Druze and Maronites, and so on. So, a transition from a purely individual and family to an enlarged perspective, less regardful of difference, more willing to mix with others (known or unknown), more open to novelty or the little known, is achieved. One passes, thus, from intercommunity tensions to the normality of the more aggregating and aggregated societal dimension, like that found in the *Holiday* crowd. But one may also find that corporate experiences can generate opposition, outbreaks of hostility, breach. It is not as if similar contrasts did not reside within community realities. Indeed, partial membership can mitigate some of the harshness that may, otherwise, surface in a social ambit.

Membership of a community brings with it a whole series of conditioning factors which influence the attitudes and behaviour of those belonging to it. Weber (1961, p. 38) states, however, that a typical community based on social relations exists "if and so far as, the inclination to act socially is based [...] on a shared membership, subjectively felt (due to emotion or tradition) by individuals belonging to it". And also that (Weber 1961: 39) "a community can rest on any kind of affective or emotional, even traditional, foundation - for example, an inspired brotherhood, an erotic relationship, a rapport founded on reverence, a 'national' community, an army held together by bonds of camaraderie."

The community is indeed a double-edged, ambiguous form of society; it influences and inspires, encourages and compels, in short, it does the one and the other all at once. Having said this, it is evident that communities present problematic issues that do not make it easy to see what may follow.

Therefore, if the *Holiday of Holidays* relies on the Arab community of Wadi Nisas and the Arab-Jewish Beit HaGefen cultural centre, this choice appears a grounded and reasonable one, in view of the modernization of cultural proposals that make a treasure of the potential of the reference territory itself. Obstacles are not wanting because many roots are of deep, remote origin and cannot be easily removed. The resistant survival of former cultural forms is a constant that emerges at every innovative attempt aimed at changing its original profile.

Recourse to forms of organic solidarity (Durkheim, 1962), during the *Holiday*, proves particularly efficacious (also in order to achieve greater social cohesion), in that the various functions (organization, management, performance) are all based on first-class professional criteria, thus avoiding trusting the success of the events included in the programme to chance. A simple way of proceeding also becomes a reference parameter to convey in clear and strong terms that even most complex, intricate and contradictory situations can be coped with thanks to proper intentions and appropriate precautionary measures. The prevention measures adopted to safeguard the public and the performers are an eloquent example of this: a security surveillance service controls, discreetly and accurately, all the entrances to the venue area.

Presumably, other precautions are foreseen and a centralized service coordinates all those involved in the task of preventing accidents or incidents. These might well defeat, once and for all, the efforts carried out to date to maintain what is known as "Haifa's Answer," the title of the film shot in December 2011 and presented in December 2012 at the Beit HaGefen centre¹.

It is evident that the challenge is based on a substantial trust toward others, in hopes that they, in turn, may respond consistently and adequately to the credit offered them. The requirement of essential identity needs, in fact, to be met. The principle of reciprocity is also called upon. ©

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSrW_QwIUMo. Retrieved 10 may 2017.

However, identity continues to act as a lifeline in situations of a very problematic and controversial nature. In the face of uncertainty, there is a need for a secure basis upon which to found one's view of life, to which to cling firmly in the face of possible loss of fundamental orientation. The issue, however, goes beyond simple, personal points of view and touches on issues of integration, of relationships within communities, of ways of being public, of guiding symbols, of definitions of the situations (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, pp. 571-572) that arise from time to time.

Reciprocity also plays an important strategic role both in communities and social circles. Usually within more restricted ambits it is practiced quite freely and almost without limitations, whereby the *do ut des* (to give in order to take) rule does not apply: generally speaking, nobody attributes great consideration to give-and-take, while, on the contrary, this attitude is quite common within broader social contexts where minute calculation, used to establish what we are due in exchange for what we have done, is the norm.

In other words, the challenge which the *Holiday of Holidays* promoters have undertaken is based on the belief that long-term investment (and not only in economic terms) may produce concrete results spelling repacification, understanding, solidarity, tending towards the common public good, that is, to the advantage of all the citizens.

When all comes to all, the December *Holiday* model seems to be turning into a constant given for the city of Haifa, thanks to solutions of friendship and loyalty opposed to those of conflict and destabilization.

Conclusion

Processes of urbanization and industrialization have made Haifa a particularly attractive destination for migration both from abroad and from within. It is not simply a matter of seeking work in a city potentially richer than others. Another of Haifa's distinguishing factor is that it, more and better than other cities, is putting to the test formulae of a less confrontational nature, with a view to tranquillizing a citizenry that, until not too long ago, was obliged to come to terms with some very difficult

issues due to continuous successions of attacks against defenceless people from various backgrounds.

The municipality is devising new ways of obtaining consensus, ones that go beyond the traditional political-party mode. The choice of political and administrative coalitions involving different parties has also become an example for the citizens and impacted on the way they lead their everyday lives.

The presence of so many different religious denominations of various origin shows that, in Haifa, people are free to practice any of the many different creeds found there, without any problem. Indeed, there are numerous occasions during which exponents of the city's leading religious denominations come together. The *Holiday of Holidays* is one such special occasion.

Unlike the past, present-day Haifa does not appear to run many risks. Its social-economic situation appears quite solid compared to the rest of Israel. If there is a problem, it is that due to the enormous rate of immigration, especially from Russia. The city cannot absorb all the new arrivals alone, so, many are sent, gradually, to other parts of the country.

Finally, considerable attention needs to be paid to the polycentric nature of the city, from Mount Carmel to the industrial zone and the various residential areas surrounding it, almost like satellites around a planet. The settlements distributed throughout the municipal area suggest an-negligible multi-layered economic and cultural stratification.©

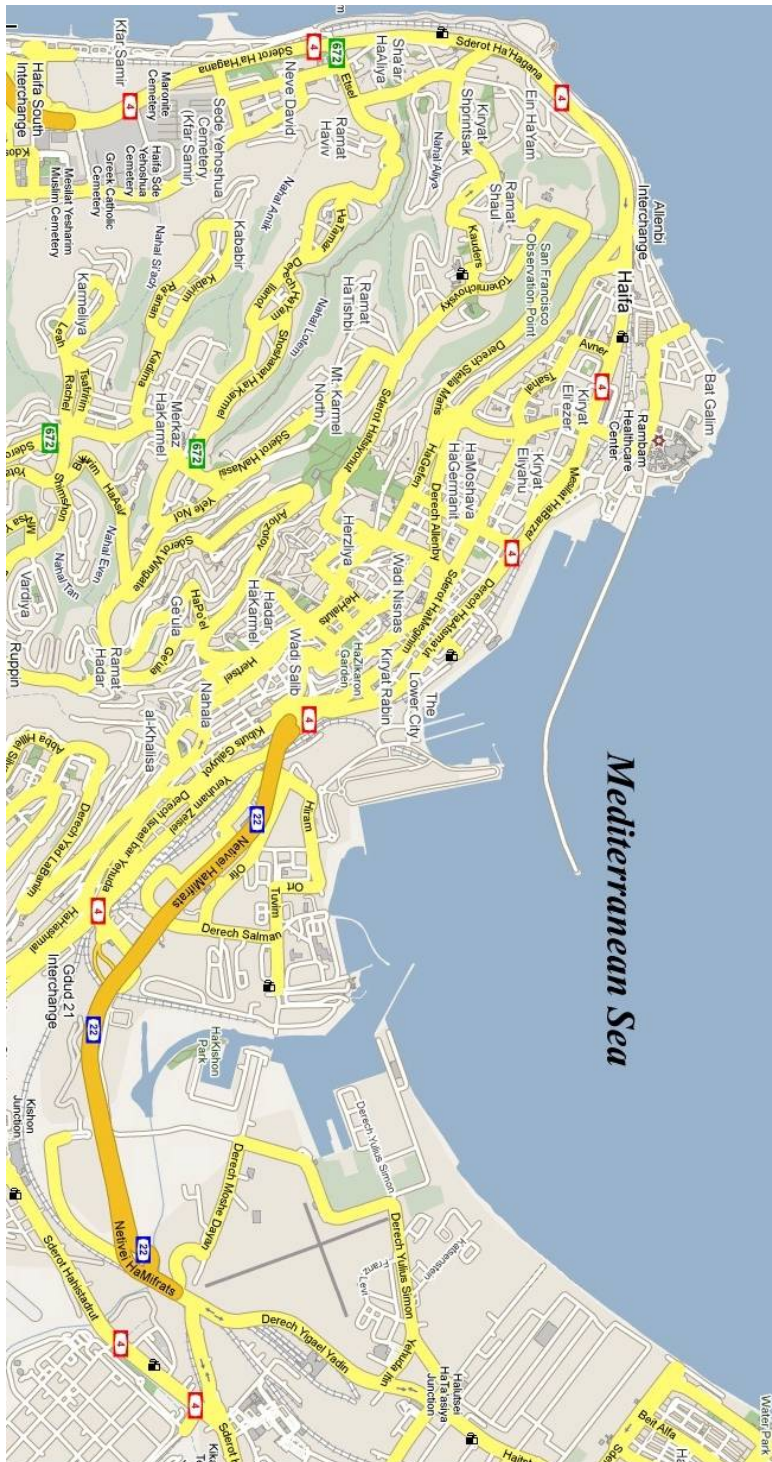
In some respects Haifa may be seen as a global city because it contains several multi-ethnic and multi-religious realities. So, for this reason, it can act as an example for other cities (not only in Israel) that are divided, more or less, on grounds of conflict, more or less committed to solving the problems of difficult coexistence among their heterogeneous populations. The exemplary nature of Haifa is no accident. It is the result of multifarious factor accruing to its maritime position and reinforced by certain historical episodes of resistance against invaders, occupiers, mandataries and colonists. It may also appear that the present-day inhabitants of Haifa have little or no specific knowledge of the history behind the city's contemporary urban set-up. However, at the same time, the fact that they choose to live there shows that they trust in its future.

So, at present, this case is becoming one requiring greater in-depth study in order to understand whether the answer endeavours to provide is destined to become an example of best practice to imitate or not.

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For a historical-sociological approach to the city of Haifa



Haifa Map

The economic ethics of Islam

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Abstract

Islam could provide the world with an essential tool to overcome inequality: the Islamic finance, based on the ethical principles of Quran and Sunnah. According to these principles, indeed, the Islamic bank should aim to reduce poverty by easing the access to the credit system to the most disadvantaged people. In that way, the development of people and countries would not pass through the satisfaction of material needs, which today are more and more growing, but through simplicity, solidarity and ethics.

Keywords:

Islamic economy; Islamic finance; Solidarity; Sustainable development.

Introduction

If the history of Islam is made by confrontations and clashes between Europe and the Muslim world, particularly in the Mediterranean space, it is also made by confrontations and clashes with Byzantium, India and China. Islam, indeed, has created socio-cultural and geopolitical clusters, marked by these clashes, which are also encounters. The concept of multipolarity allows us to underline the competition of agents of validation of religious, juridical or political laws, of the “ethics of disagreement” (Al-Alwani, 2010), as in Islam there is not a supreme authority.

Pluralism is at the root of this horizontal solidarity. Only God is One and Unique, while creation is multiple.

The “ethics of disagreement” in Islam can be expressed by this famous *hadith*: “Mes Compagnons sont comparables aux étoiles; quelle que soit celle que vous suivez elle vous guidera. Les divergences entre mes Compagnons sont donc pour vous une source de miséricorde” (Geoffroy, 2009, p. 51)” Starting from Quran and from words and facts of the Prophet, the *hadith*, a powerful work of interpretation and codification, gave rise to the Sunnah. The *ijtihad*, effort of comprehension and interpretation based

on reason and intelligence, is a stance of the reason aimed at facing unprecedented situations. The *ijtihâd* is the spirit that vivifies the letter, as it is a continuously renewed effort of interpretation, referring to the four sources of Islamic law, namely Quran, Sunnah, consent or *ijma* - essentially a plural notion - and *qiyas*, the reasoning by analogy. In the juridical field, the *ijtihâd* corresponds to jurisprudence, namely to the cluster of decisions that can be source of the law and reference point for solving controversies. What is important is the unity of hearts and solidarity.

Eric Geoffroy underlines the importance of the “ancrage d’un *ijtihâd* spirituel dans la réalité sociale, dans les chantiers immenses qui attendent le musulman contemporain... Les formes religieuses dépourvues de souffle inspirateur sont mortifères” (Geoffroy, 2009, pp. 118-119).

The *ijtihâd*, as highlighted by Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, general director of the ISESCO, is “le renouveau et la nécessité d’être en phase avec l’époque... s’impose à toute la Oumma en fonction du besoin et de la réalité de chaque pays” (Altwajri, 2007, p. 17).

Mohammed Arkoun, who held the chair of history of Islamic thought at the Sorbonne university and was director of the Parisian journal *Arabica*, explained that the two key concepts, “Islam” and “modernity”, need to be elaborated in order to “sortir des confusions courantes répandues par des usages polémiques et idéologiques hors de toute analyse historique, sociologique, anthropologique, théologique et philosophique” (Arkoun, 2003). In this way, the conditions for an “integral history” of cultures and religions could be realized. Arkoun wrote in an article for *Le Monde diplomatique*:

Il est nécessaire, en effet, de mobiliser toutes ces disciplines pour expliciter les enjeux de pensée, de culture, de civilisation, généralement escamotés... les historiographies reflètent les processus de construction de mémoires collectives retranchées dans des citadelles ‘mytho-historiques’.

Against this “mythical-historical citadels”, real systems of reciprocal exclusion, it is opportune, thanks to the above mentioned sciences, give a sense to “une histoire solidaire des peuples libérée des dualismes manichéens et orientée vers le dépassement du bien et du mal, du vrai et du faux”, with the sole preoccupation of the balanced and harmonic development of men and world. Evoking the possibility of a “solidarité

dûment négociée et protégée par les Etats et les peuples qu'ils représentent" Mohammed Arkoun underlines, furthermore, that this entails "la mise en place d'une politique commune de la recherche en sciences de l'homme et de la société".

Within the 2008 financial crisis, the prohibition of the interest bearing loan, namely usury - a prohibition essential in all the three monotheisms - deserves to be deeply analyzed. This prohibition, which today is strictly implemented only by Islam, comes from the theological logics of monotheism and has important consequences, both spiritual and technical. Man cannot claim to be equal to the Almighty, by creating value from nothing. Man can create value only with his work: "To take usury for money lent is unjust in itself, because this is to sell what does not exist, and this evidently leads to inequality which is contrary to justice", as the Christian theologian Thomas Aquinas (2014, I, p. 481) wrote.

Islam attaches great importance to the economic justice, as underlined in a very precise and technical way by the second Surah of the Quran (*Al-Baqara*), which is also the longest, with 286 verses. Richness is good if it is shared and economic justice is the paradigm of justice. Trade must be strictly regulated. Only work deserves to be rewarded, as it produces value, both tangible and intangible, in the interdependence of men and nations.

1. Islamic economy

Economy must be real; it must not give room to speculation and hazard: "Sans le travail de l'homme, point de profit et nul avantage", wrote Ibn Khaldun (1967, t. 2, p. 799), whose work in the XIV century are the precursor of modern disciplines such as sociology, economics, history and geopolitics. Ibn Khaldun blames the hoarding, as destructive as speculation, because it prevents the right circulation and redistributions of goods, in accordance with the second verse:

O you who believe! Many of the rabbis and priests consume people's wealth illicitly, and hinder from God's path. Those who hoard gold and silver, and do not spend them in God's cause, inform them of a painful punishment (Quran, Surah IX *At-Tawba*, verse 34).

Supportive of economic regulation, Ibn Khaldun also stated:

S'il y a spoliation brutale, si des atteintes ouvertes sont apportées à la propriété privée, aux femmes, aux vies, aux personnes, à l'honneur des sujets, le résultat en sera la désintégration soudaine, la ruine, la rapide destruction de la dynastie, en raison des inévitables troubles suscitées par l'injustice (Ibn Khaldoun, 1967, t. 2, p. 591).

In these first fifteen years of the XXI century, new financial forms could consist of the application of a spiritual humanism, shared by cultures and religions; it could reveal to be a space of negotiation for a solidarity-based history, beyond the differences of place and time, in the several religions of the world. The current research on economics and law, the innovative approaches for an international regulation of finance within the globalization cannot neglect any more the ethical values of the cultural and religious components.

In this way, the drifts of market economy could be halted. Islam, through the personality of the Prophet - man of ethics and merchant -, through its different regional components, can play an essential role in the contemporary world, in the perspective of a spiritual humanism.

The Islamic law, the *Chari'ah*, based, as stated above, on Quran and Sunnah, introduces a very dynamic concept: a way leading to the spring where we can drink. It is necessary to renew the comprehension, to re-discover the original meanings. The Muslim exegetes define it as a "way of salvation", a source and a reservoir of sense and values (Ferjani, 2005, p. 73). Eric Geoffroy (2009, p. 148) notes:

Le terme ouvre au pluralisme des approches, en vertu de cette parole du Prophète (rapportée au IX^{ème} siècle par Tabarâni): «Trois cents chemins différents mènent à ma *Chari'a*. Il suffit de suivre l'un d'entre eux pour être sauvé». Bien plus qu'un catalogue de prescriptions et d'interdits, la *Chari'a* contient les principes intellectuels qui déterminent la connaissance adéquate et les modalités pratiques pour parfaire les «nobles caractères» de l'homme.

The word *Chari'ah* does not concern only Muslims, but includes all the "religious ways" of humanity. In this way the Islamic "economy" is part of a cosmic order. The *Chari'ah*, even in its legislative sense, is completely adaptable.

Elected on 22 June 2008 as president of the *Conseil français du culte musulman* (French Council of the Muslim Faith), Mohammed Moussaoui

underlined his commitment for an Islam which respects “founding and contextualized texts”.

The aims of the *Chari'ah -Maqâsid al-Chari'ah-* are to be re-discovered, on the heels of Umer Chapra (2008- pp. 9 e 13-14):

Les enseignements islamiques ont pour finalité ultime d'être une miséricorde pour l'humanité... L'imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (m. 505H/1111G), un éminent érudit et réformateur du cinquième siècle de l'Hégire, a regroupé les *maqâsid* en cinq catégories. Il précise que le but de la *Chari'ah* est la promotion du bien-être des gens qui consiste à préserver leur foi, leur vie, leur intellect, leur progéniture et leurs biens. Tout ce qui garantit la préservation de ces cinq intérêts est souhaitable, et tout ce qui leur nuit est un mal qu'il faut chasser.

Chari'ah, aiming at ensuring and preserving faith, life, intelligence, lineage and goods, takes care of this general interest, free and undetermined (*al-Maslaha al-Moursala*). There is no explicit mention in the Quran or in the Sunnah, but it entails the ethical creativity (Khallâf, 2004, pp. 119-122).

Therefore, Islamic “economy” is a real economy for the welfare of people, societies and world.

2. *Islamic banks, participative finance*

It is known that in origin the Islamic bank aimed at reducing poverty by easing the access to the credit system to the most disadvantaged people. Since the 1950s, in different regions of the world Muslims have laid the foundations of a market finance that is an alternative to the conventional finance and economy, mainly established in the Anglo-Saxon countries. This finance is committed to respect the Islamic principles for the real welfare of mankind. First attempts took place in Malaysia in 1959 (*Tabung Hadji*) and in Egypt (*Mit Ghamr*) in 1963. These experiences have determined the deep heterogeneity of the history of the Islamic finance. The purpose, however, is always the same - to ensure the access to credit to disadvantaged people and aid their development -, even if the outcomes of the two attempts have been different. We find here the basis of the moral and juridical Islamic system: justice. Islam is a rule of life and the respect of its principles must create an homogenous society, transforming the life of

everybody, giving him access to the real welfare of body and soul, in order to form a unique organism, a sort of collective "me", in a logic of service and brotherhood. The poverty leads to immobility and dependence on the other (Chapra, 2008, p. 31).

The recommendations of the *Chari'ah* prevent to receive or give interest because the use of the interest rates transfers the risks only to debtors. They also prevent to make transactions not connected to the real economy or for mere speculation, which entails that any financial transaction must be based on a tangible good. The *Chari'ah* prevent the investment in non ethical activities, such as tobacco, alcohol, pornography, gambling and weapons.

The *Councils of Conformity Chari'ah*, established in 1970 e composed by theologians - the *ulema* - validate the religious conformity of the financial products and act as a guarantor for the Muslim investors. In the Muslim world there are differences in the interpretation of the Islamic law applied to the financial activities, due to the diversity of the models of social development and to the opposition that they can provoke. These models are far from the alleged intransigence of Islam toward the cultural immutable features.

The so called ethic funds of "socially responsible investments", often of Christian origin, share the Islamic preoccupations for all that concerns the responsibility in relation to the management of richness and to the purification of money. The sovereign fund *The Government Pension Fund-Global* (former Norwegian *Petroleum Fund*), that manages 260 billions of euro, must respect a specific ethical code, with social and environmental rules. However, the Islamic investment fund need to be provided with specific information about the target societies in order to verify the consistence with the Islamic precepts. It would be possible to imagine the sharing of common information among financiers eager to profess their faith and their law both in Christianity and Islam.

Here it is opportune to remind how the care of body and soul, the role of faith and that of intelligence and reason are essential for realizing the Islamic view of development. Faith raises ethical vigilance; reason gives faith to its dynamism, which allows it to understand the evolution of the social, economic and cultural environment. Reason, both intelligent and spiritual, can work to realize *maqâsid*. The educational system must combine modern and religious sciences. It is an essential project for a fair

“economy” of the world. The knowledge the otherness and the heritage of our existence, which give sense and deepness to our history, decisions and actions, include us in a solidarity-based history, which will enable us to become a virtuous man/woman. This knowledge of cultures and religions, this reasonable appropriation of texts urge us toward this spiritual humanism that attributes all their deepness to cultures and religions.

In 1979, during the first Congress of the Union of Islamic Banks, a proposal was launched to implement an effective mechanism for the redistribution of wealth. Today - and this is the great challenge for Muslims - the objective is not only to *hallow* the ways of funding, without paying attention to the social objectives of the Islamic economy. Finance, to be in accordance with the principles of *Chari'ah*, must be plural and participative and must not limit itself to the financings to consumption. It is clear that finance, in itself, is neither ethical nor non-ethical: its target is profit, enrichment. On the contrary, the men who practice it are able, thanks to their faith and intelligence, to imagine right and fair behaviours that match the real needs of people with participative forms of funding.

Islamic banks, insofar as they are established by Muslims eager to apply the principles of their faith and their law, have the mission to promote a “participative finance”, appropriate to fight poverty and exclusion in a globalized world. Three paths of action are essential for its actual realization:

- a banking pedagogy, for example a new pedagogy of saving, of material immobilizations, in short a new culture of bank;
- techniques that respect the ethical values of the *Chari'ah*;
- the promotion of a real accountability in the Islamic banks by establishing mechanism that respect these ethical values.

Looking for allowing everybody to access to the necessary tangible and intangible goods, the “participative” Islamic finance could be a real space of mediation, not only among the different cultures of the Islamic world - from Malaysia to United Arab Emirates, to Africa, Maghreb and Europe - but also among the different cultures, even conflicting, of the three monotheisms and of the other religions of the world. Starting from the Muslim worlds, it could indicate a new way to the “conventional” finance, whose drifts have proved to be catastrophic. This is, as stated above, the basic sense of *Chari'ah*, the way toward the spring, toward life. Jews and

Christians would be urged to join Muslim in this space of participative finance, which is a right and fair application of a spiritual humanism. In the long run the funding of economy would be ensured in the best conditions; in the short term, it could enable the creation of jobs in the Islamic financial sector and establish closer relations between the Muslim worlds and the other worlds.

Conclusions

If a culture, a religion and an economy do not stop to intertwine in the context of globalization and competitive market economy, Islam provides for conceptual tool that we can call humanist, like a necessary stance of intelligence and reason, appropriate to propose new tasks to a solidarity-based history of people, through an economic ethics. It is a humanism that, without excluding a monotheistic transcendence, gives the men his real greatness and enables him to develop all his potentialities, his capabilities, in the sense given by Amartya Sen to this word. Against a materialist modernity, the stress on the *maqâsid* of the *Chari'ah* also means to rediscover the essential modernity of Islam and its emancipative character.

D'une certaine manière, l'islam, plus peut-être encore que le christianisme, pourrait être considéré comme la «religion de la sortie de la religion» et comme une religion pour les temps modernes: confession d'un Dieu démythologisé et quelque peu abstrait, rituels simples et universels, abolition de la distinction entre la foi et la raison, entre la révélation et la création", writes the pastor Alain Houziaux (Israël Houziaux Bentounès 2004, p. 92).

Islam and Islamic economy pays attention to the urgency of justice and fairness in the contemporary world. Could not the spiritual humanism, beyond the differences of cultures and religions, include, cover the material globalization (Bentounès, 1998)? The diplomatic and former Iranian minister, prominent economist, Majid Rahnema, states that

Pour contrer la misère mondialisée, il est illusoire d'attendre une solution miracle venue des institutions d'une société soumise aux seuls impératifs économiques. L'espoir d'un véritable changement ne peut venir que des résultats d'une patiente «révolution intérieure», une révolution permettant à un nombre de plus en plus important d'acteurs sociaux de porter un regard nouveau sur leurs propres pauvretés et richesses. Seule cette vision les conduirait, non seulement à ne plus participer à la production de la misère, mais aussi à comprendre tout le

bénéfice qu'il y aurait à réinventer les grandes traditions de simplicité et de convivialité en les adaptant aux exigences de la vie moderne... [...]Si nous définissons la pauvreté comme un mode de vie simple et libéré de tout superflu, rien n'interdit de penser, au moins théoriquement, que pourrait voir le jour un monde plus clément pour la majorité de ses habitants, un monde moins pollué, un monde, enfin, où l'éthique de vie en commun permettrait à chacun de vivre au diapason du Dieu qu'il s'est choisi" (Rahnema 2003, pp. 27; 311).

In this way, cultural and religious values can promote a development, which does not pass through the satisfaction of material needs, more and more growing, but through simplicity, solidarity and ethics. This is one of the most qualifying challenges of modernity and one of the conditions of a lasting and sustainable development of the world. Islam can give an essential contribution to the formation of the universal community and to the education of every man to his responsibility: "We did not send you except as mercy to mankind" (Quran, Surah XXI – *Al-Anbiyâ*, verse 107).

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Report of the Conference Cultures, Hopes and Conflicts. The Mediterranean between Land and Sea

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Abstract

Report of the Conference about the Mediterranean held at the University of Salerno in September 2017, involving scholars of several disciplines.

Keywords: ICSR Mediterranean Knowledge; Medworlds Network; Mediterranean; Social sciences.

On 26-28 September 2017, University of Salerno hosted the Conference "*Cultures, Hopes and Conflicts. The Mediterranean between Land and Sea*" jointly organized by the ICSR Mediterranean Knowledge and the International Conference of Mediterranean Worlds. Being the 8th of the MedWorlds conferences, the aim was to create a multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach to the issues surrounding the past, present and future of the Mediterranean.

The conference was opened by Emiliana Mangone, the director of ICSR Mediterranean Knowledge, and on behalf of the MedWorlds consortium, Prof. Thomas Dittelbach followed by Claudio Azzara, vice director of the Department of Human, Philosophical and Educational Sciences, of University of Salerno whom presented the keynote speaker, Pietro Corrao from the University of Palermo. His speech titled "*The Mediterranean at the end of Middle Ages: conflicts, equilibria, hegemonies*" focused on the approaches to the study of the Mediterranean from the 20th century, surveying the seminal works of Pirenne, Lopez, Abulafia, Bartlett and Braudel. Indeed, in the second part of his speech, these theories were examined through the example of the Crown of Aragon and its

contextualisation in the Mediterranean equilibrium. Overall, it was an enlightening speech, which framed the Mediterranean from different perspectives, contributing to the conference remarkably.

The parallel sessions gave the participants the opportunity to follow the speeches that were the most interesting to them. Often the first sessions focused on a historical perspective where the empires of the Mediterranean were under scrutiny; meanwhile the second ones were on contemporary challenges in the Mediterranean, such as religious conflict and refugee crisis. This contributed to the interdisciplinary aspect of the conference, as bringing out different perspectives and methodologies is one of the pillars of the MedWorlds conferences.

The first parallel sessions took place in the afternoon of the first day, Session A1 titled “From Rome to Byzantium” focused on the issues regarding Late Antiquity, bringing together different disciplines of archaeology, literature and history. The following panel explored the political issues concerning the Byzantines and the Normans, and investigated religion, urbanism and identity. The parallel session, Session A2 titled “Middle East and Islam” addressed the 20th century, focused on subjects, such as the Arab-Israeli Wars, utilising the analysis of media, literature and sounds. Panel II of the same session also approached contemporary issues regarding the Mediterranean basin and identity clashes, including the problems of migration.

The following parallel sessions took place on the next day, Session B1 questioned the “Long Middle Ages”, surveying the Mediterranean from the year 1000 to the 17th century, investigating intercultural elements in the Middle Ages, such as ambassadors, object exchange and accommodation of foreign merchants. The following panel also commented on the theoretical approaches to the history of the Mediterranean, as well as presenting works on literary sources, including Esiri Hasan Ağa’s “Advises to the Commanders and Soldiers”. The parallel session, B2 titled “Political and juridical strategies for the future of the Mediterranean” was opened with the first panel in which the participants dealt with the legal issues with an emphasis on refugees and borders, followed by another panel

focusing on similar issues supported by case studies, such as the Valetta Summit.

The following session, C1 commented on how the political developments between 18th and 20th centuries transformed the Mediterranean from the centre to the periphery. The speakers in the first panel presented their research on the transformations of the Mediterranean through the interaction between the Kingdom of Naples, the Ottomans and the Americans. The following panel included research focusing on more contemporary issues, investigating topics of conflict from WWI to the Cold War. The parallel session, however, was more migration oriented, a crucial issue especially for the contemporary Mediterranean. The legal challenges faced by both states and the migrants were voiced, as well as issues regarding border security. The following panel also focused on the refugee crisis as well, presenting its representation in the media and press.

The last parallel sessions of the conference were held on the 28th. The first panel encompassed the region diachronically while addressing both macro and micro histories of representation and cultural transmission. In the second panels, various elements of culture were discussed and contextualised within the Mediterranean's history, such as architecture and music. Overall, Session D1 focused on visual arts, music and architecture and how they represent the Mediterranean through their transformations, assimilations and preservations. The parallel session, D2, centred on challenges to migration, with the first session investigating the challenges that the migrants face, including legal, religious and cultural aspects, while the second panel specifically focused on issues minors and students face as refugees.