

# WHAT IS ETHICS? AN ANSWER FROM A VOEGELINIAN-LONERGANIAN PERSPECTIVE

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## Abstract

*The 20<sup>th</sup> century produced a number of important thinkers, among them, Bernard Lonergan and Eric Voegelin. Condensing the significant ideas of each of them is an impossible task however, this paper develops several of their ideas. The first is Lonergan's man as a cognitional structure that is formally dynamic and self-assembling. This structure functions at five levels of awareness as it demands itself to be attentive, intelligent, rational, responsible and in love. Correct understanding is achieved when a virtual unconditioned – a conditional whose conditions have been met – is reached. The second is Lonergan's idea that freedom is possible only when a man moves from the level of rationality to the level of responsibility. Freedom has to be distinguished between essential and effective. The third is Lonergan's explanation of the structure of the human good as a three-leveled structure defined by the individual good, the good of order and value. The fourth is Voegelin's idea that ethics is a set of symbols that expresses the tension of searching for God while living in the "metaxy." This paper assumes that when Voegelin speaks about the luminosity and intentionality of human consciousness he is referring to what Lonergan explains as the formally dynamic and self-assembling nature of human awareness.*

*For Lonergan, ethics is possible because the demands stated above allow a human to see what he must do – at the level of responsibility – as he affirms –at the level of rationality. To Voegelin the experience of this demand is what is expressed in the set of symbols that we call ethics. This paper explores the manner in which the Lonerganian ideas and the ideas of Voegelin can be integrated. The result of this exploration is presented, precisely because Voegelin sees the expression of the experience as something that begins with a set of compact symbols and moves towards a more differentiated symbolic expression, as a search that moves from compactness toward differentiation.*

## Introduction: The Origins of a Conflict

A human being knows that his existence and that of those things around him are real. But unless he avoids the dynamisms of his own awareness he cannot avoid asking himself why things exist, why something and not nothing (Voegelin, 1990). He does not know the reason for his existence, or the existence of any other thing. He could be the reason. But it is possible that the cause is someone else. While

attempting to discover the answer to his question he finds that he has to die, that his death is necessary. It can happen to him at any time, and it is possible that when he dies his existence will end. It is possible that there is nothing after death. This leads him to another question: How could someone who is the reason of his own existence, and of the existence of everything else, die? If he were the cause he would never die. As long as he does not know the answer to these questions he will live "...with a profound uncertainty and ignorance of something which is so important" (Cicero, 1951: p. 5).

The uncertainty and ignorance are unbearable. He is like Œdipus.<sup>1</sup> He must know who the reason of his existence is (Sophocles, 1994). The uncertainty and ignorance that he feels produces in him an immense agitation (Liddell and Scott, 1954: p. 544). I will call it *kinesis* (Liddell and Scott, 1994: p. 443).<sup>2</sup> The experience of *kinesis* is always there and does not allow him to be at ease. He realizes that as long as he experiences it he will be unable to be happy.

But even if he cannot answer his questions about the reason of his existence, its "first cause" as Aristotle would say, it is always present in his consciousness as an operating structure. This is precisely why he is asking all the questions he is asking (Liddell and Scott, 1954: p. 354).<sup>3</sup> But he is not fully conscious of it. The reason of his existence is a mystery, it is hidden. He has to uncover it, and he feels moved to do it in two ways. The first way I will call *stasis* (Liddell and Scott, 1954: p. 743), the second I will call *exodus* (Liddell and Scott, 1954: p. 275).<sup>4</sup> His memory, the Greek goddess *Mnemosyne*, will help him choose which of the two ways he will accept (Liddell and Scott, 1954: p. 516).<sup>5</sup> If he forgets that he has to die, he will accept the way of *stasis*. If he does not forget, he has to die. Then he will accept the way of *exodus*.<sup>6</sup>

The call to *stasis* seems to come from the obscure and limitless depth that Anaximandros called *apeiron* (Liddell and Scott, 1954: p. 91).<sup>7</sup> It invites him to be happy, at last, and to declare himself to be the reason of his own existence and that of every thing else. The call to *exodus* invites him to abandon everything, as Abraham did when he left Ur, and begin a journey that will last until he finds the reason for his own existence and that of everything else, in someone other than himself who cannot die like he will. The symbolic system that expresses the experience of this conflict, and the manner to solve it, has been called ethics since classical antiquity (Aristotle, 1990).

## The Questions

A human being will continue to ask himself questions no matter which way he chooses. If he chooses to go on the *exodus* he will ask all types of questions about the existence of the gods, his own origins, the origin of the things that surround him and the beginning of everything. With these questions he will explore the totality of the primary reality of his experience (Voegelin, 1990). But because he knows that he has to die, nothing assures him that he will have enough time to find the answers. But if he chooses the way of *stasis*, he will prohibit himself from asking some of the

questions the man that chose the way of *exodus* is asking. The prohibited questions are precisely those that could lead him to discover that he is wrong, that he is not the reason of his own existence and the existence of all the things that surround him. The questions that he allows himself to ask will not permit him to explore the totality of primary reality but will lead him to reaffirm his belief that he is indeed the reason and, as Protagoras said, the measure of his existence (Freeman, 1983).

## **The Human Being Must Die**

A human being must die because he is living flesh. With his flesh he participates in the genesis and destruction of everything (Urmson, 1990; Liddell and Scott, 1995: p. 162 and 86; ORKOS, 1972: p. 298-300).<sup>8</sup> This genesis and destruction occur, Anaximander says, “in accordance with necessity, for they (things) complete their punishment and retribute each other for their injustice in accordance with the judgment of time” (Kirk, Raven and Schofield, 1990: p. 117-118; Voegelin, 1986).<sup>9</sup>  
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The human being participates in the reality of inorganic things, which is the dominion of matter. His flesh emerges from the same elements and the same forces from which emerges everything that is inorganic. He also participates in the things that exist at a first organic level – usually called vegetal – that emerges from the inorganic level, in which appears the possibility of controlling the composition of the flesh and its growth and production. He also participates in the existence of things of a second organic level – usually called animal – which emerges from the first organic level, in which appear the structures that are specialized in the reception and response to stimuli internal and external to the flesh, and the emotions that come with these experiences. Human existence also has a fourth level of participation – that we could call psychic – which emerges from the second organic level, in which his consciousness emerges, a consciousness that is luminous and intentional (Voegelin, 1998), it intends the truth and the good (Wallace, 1989).<sup>11,12</sup> Precisely because his consciousness is luminous and intentional, he participates in the reality of things representing all of them.

## **Faith is Necessary**

A human being has to have faith to begin the *exodus* knowing that he has to die and that he can die at anytime, even before he has answered every question that he has, and has found the reason of his existence (Urmson, 1990; Liddell and Scott, 1998; Buck, 1998; Dumezil, 1988).<sup>13</sup> He begins the *exodus* believing that he will find the reason for his own existence, and the existence of everything else, among the things of his experience. He begins his pilgrimage with no guide other than a voice that speaks inside him.<sup>14</sup> The voice seems to be his, but it may not be. It guides him with five imperatives that define the way that he must follow. The first is “Be Attentive!” The pilgrim obeys by paying attention to all of the data offered to him through his experience. But data and understanding are two different events. Now he hears the second command. The voice says to him “Be Intelligent and Understand!” He obeys by asking himself what the data mean. The question is

followed by an act of intelligence that puts him in a direct relationship with the data. From this relation, “suddenly and unexpectedly”, emerges an insight which makes the data intelligible (Lonergan, 1997), but what is intelligible or may not be correct.<sup>15</sup> Thus, once he has understood the pilgrim hears the third, “Be rational, judge if your understanding is true!” ( Lonergan, 1997; Dumézil, 1988). The pilgrim obeys by asking himself if there is sufficient reason to affirm that his intelligible is true. To determine if there is sufficient reason, he erects a heuristic structure that transforms the intelligible into a conditioned that is true only if the conditions for its affirmation are given in the data of his experience. The pilgrim now needs a reflex insight that will allow him to hold simultaneously in his consciousness the data of his experience and the intelligible, to determine if the conditions to affirm its truth are given (Lonergan, 1997).<sup>16</sup> If they are, the intelligible becomes a virtual unconditioned.<sup>17</sup> Now he can judge that his understanding is true and that he has sufficient reason to affirm it. This judgement puts him, as the goddess put Parmenides, face to face with the way that “...IS and it is impossible for it NOT TO BE...” (Kirk, Raven and Schofield, 1990: p. 245).<sup>18</sup>

A human being is not only a knower of the reality that IS, he is also an operator who transforms reality from what it is into what IT CAN BE. He has only one consciousness and that is why his knowing and his doing must be congruent. This is precisely what the voice that guides him asks him to do when it pronounces the fourth imperative, “Be Responsible and act according to what is true!” Just as it is only in the data that the pilgrim can find sufficient reason to affirm the truth that he affirms, it is also only in the truth that he already affirms that he can find the reason for doing what he may choose to do. When his doing conforms to his knowing his consciousness is of one piece (Lonergan, 1997).<sup>19</sup>

To obey this imperative he also must deal with his freedom, for now he discovers that, even if he already knows the truth, he can choose between acting responsibly and irresponsibly. He also discovers that there are occasions in which he chooses to be responsible and, like Saul of Tarsus, he ends up deceiving himself and doing otherwise (Paul: Ch. 7, vs. 15-16). Thus, he finds the difference between his essential freedom to choose either of the two options and his effective freedom that allows him to choose only in accordance with the manner in which he is accustomed, his *ethics* (Liddell and Scott, 1995).<sup>20</sup> This is why Heraclitus said that “his character to a man his destiny” (Kirk, Raven and Schofield, 1990: p. 210).

While he is facing the difference between his essential freedom and his effective freedom, the voice pronounces the fifth imperative “Be in Love!” He now discovers that under the light of this love his accustomed manner of being changes and he begins to be a new person. He has new habits, and Heraclitus would say a new destiny. These habits have been called “virtues” since classical antiquity (Voegelin, 1986).<sup>21</sup> Since that time the fundamental virtue has been the one called prudence (Voegelin, 1990; Liddell and Scott, 1995).<sup>22,23</sup> The new habits allow the range of his effective freedom to widen and approximate that of his essential freedom.<sup>24</sup>

As the pilgrim travels he progresses and his progress accumulates. He is ever

closer to finding what he is looking for, because his obedience to the imperatives has transformed his way of living into the method for living and finding the reason of his existence and of the existence of all things (Lonergan, 1972).<sup>25</sup> But, when the pilgrim disobeys, all progress stops and he walks without method because he becomes someone who is inattentive, unintelligent, irrational, irresponsible and unable to love.

The human being who chose the call to *stasis* experiences the same reality that is experienced by the pilgrim, because there is only one reality. But, because he prohibited himself from asking certain questions, he does not hear the voice that guides the pilgrim along his *exodus*. Thus he cannot be like the pilgrim that obeys. He can only be like the disobedient pilgrim: inattentive, unintelligent, irrational, irresponsible and unable to love. His is not the method of his reason, but of his passions. He is like the Don Juan, in Bergman's movie, that spends his time looking at his image in the mirror and hating himself, everybody, and everything else (Bergman, 1960).

## **The Transformation of the Pilgrim and of Reality**

The obedient pilgrim transforms reality in two ways. The first transformation occurs in him, the subject, as Bernard Lonergan would call him (Lonergan, 1974). He has gone from the data of experience, to understanding, to making a judgment, to responsibility, to freedom and love. All of these experiences have changed his consciousness, it has differentiated. And, because he is able to love his effective freedom has begun to widen and to approximate the range of his essential freedom. He is a different human being. The second transformation occurs to reality itself, of which the pilgrim is an inseparable element. Reality now includes him, the transformed human being. Because the transformed human being is attentive, intelligent, rational, responsible and able to love, he can now choose what before he was unable to choose, and now a reality can happen what was previously impossible. Love has become operative. It is enough to see all the things that were transformed thanks to the transformation of a Basque, whose name was Ignatius. He went alone, on foot and in love to his *exodus* (Idigoras, 1994). Reality changed and with it the experience that the pilgrim and all those with whom he walks in *exodus* also changed and is different from the first experience they had.<sup>26</sup>

The human being that chose the way of *stasis* also transforms reality in two ways. He believes he transformed himself into something that he really is not – the cause of his own existence and of the existence of everything around him. He is not a pilgrim, he is a *pseudos* (Urmson, 1990: p. 144).<sup>27</sup> And his interventions can only transform reality into a *pseudo* reality. In the *pseudo* reality, love cannot operate, only hate can. I take Hitler and his reality of Nazi Germany to be an example of this (Hillberg, 1985).

Reality changes whether the human beings who are part of it choose to obey the imperatives said by the voice or choose to not obey.<sup>28</sup> Truly we can say, with Heraclitus that “upon those that enter the same rivers flow waters which are

different and different” (Kirk, Raven and Schofield, 1990).

## **The Great Temptation in the Middle of the Exodus**

The road, which the pilgrim must follow, is long and after a time it begins to seem as if it will take him nowhere. He is tempted to believe that he will never discover the reason of his existence and the existence of everything around him. Thus, even Abraham, the man who left behind everything in order to search for the reason of his existence, begins to fatigue and say (in a poem written about 100 years BC):

More venerable indeed than all things is fire  
for many things subject to no one will fall to it...  
More venerable indeed is water  
for it overcomes fire...  
Still I do not call it God  
for it is subject to earth...  
Earth do I call more venerable  
for it overcomes the nature of water.  
Still I do not call it God  
as it is dried up by the sun...  
More venerable than the earth I call the sun  
the universe makes light by his rays.  
Even him I do not call God  
as his course is obscured by night and the clouds.  
Yet the moon and the stars I do not call God  
because they in their time, dim their light by night....(Voegelin, 1990: p. 96-98)

The reality that seemed to have a reason for its existence at the beginning of the exodus now seems to have no reason. The pilgrim knows that he is not the reason but he is now tempted to believe that there is no reason at all. He feels the temptation to lose his faith, for he has searched for the reason of his existence among the things of his immediate reality and has not found it.

During his temptation and in spite of it, the pilgrim continues to hear the voice that has been guiding him. The voice asks him to love and to continue to be attentive, intelligent, rational, responsible and in love. The pilgrim knows that as long as he hears the voice his *exodus* has not come to its end even if he has already looked for the reason of his existence among all of the things around him.

Where could the voice that he continues to hear come from? Perhaps there is a reality beyond all things from where the voice comes. Perhaps it is there that he will find the reason for his existence and that of all of the things. But, how will he get there? The only thing that he can do is to pause to wait for the reason to reveal itself. Abraham now says:

Hear this Terah my father,

that I announce to you the God, the creator of all,  
not those we deem gods!

But where is He?  
And what is He?  
- who reddens the sky,  
- who goldens the sun,  
and makes light the moon and the stars?  
- who dries up the earth in the midst of many waters,  
- who put yourself in the world?  
- who sought me in the confusion of my mind?

May God reveal himself through himself! (Voegelin, 1990: p. 96-98)

## **The Construction of the Human Good**

A human being can search for the reason of his own existence and that of all things, and in the end wait for it to reveal itself, because he is alive. To stay alive, searching and waiting, he needs the air he breathes, the food he eats, the clothes with which he is dressed, and ultimately, the companionship of other human beings. The pilgrim is, as Lain Entralgo says, an indigent being (Entralgo, 1964). He needs everything. The things that he obtains in order to satisfy his needs are individual goods, they are good for him. But, the pilgrim is not at ease because he satisfied his needs of only one day. He wants to satisfy them every day. This leads the pilgrim to cooperate with others in the construction of something that will allow them to fill all of their needs every day. What they construct is called the *good of order*. It is the very large set of cooperating relations among human beings.

In order for the cooperations to occur everyday those who cooperate must have a group identity. The group itself must be part of an institution such as the family, the city, education, government, which gives meaning to the cooperations. In these groups and institutions there appears a division of labor and to each laborer is assigned a set of tasks. The human being now has the opportunity to be oriented and become a certain type of laborer and to cooperate in a certain way. He also has the opportunity to develop the skills, feelings, beliefs and values that he needs in order to complete the tasks that have been assigned to him.

But, even this is not enough. A human being cannot avoid asking himself if his labor, and the *good of order* that it helps to construct are really worthwhile. He asks himself if the *good of order* will allow him to devote his life to the most important thing that he can spend his life in, his exodus, the search of the reason of his own existence and the existence of all the things that surround him. This question allows him to discover that he is an originating value, because he is the origin of the value of the things that he does when he does them in a manner that is attentive, intelligent, rational, responsible and loving. It also allows him to discover that he is an originating value only because there are terminal values, the values that are intended by his luminous consciousness and that led him to begin his

exodus: the truth and the good. He now discovers that he, like Socrates, must put himself at risk and become the voice that guides others and to call them to cooperate in the construction of a *good of order* which is truly good (Plato, 1990). In order to be able to live up to this he must go through a conversion.<sup>29</sup> He must go from being a Socrates to being a Saint Socrates. He has to change his character in a radical way. He has to leave behind his old skills, feelings, values and beliefs in order to develop new skills, feelings, beliefs and values. Soon he realizes that in order to undergo this conversion he needs help (Lonergan, 1972).

The human being that chose the way of *stasis* can cooperate with other human beings. But, he does not construct a *good of order*. He can only help them construct a pseudoreality that is like the mirror in front of which he spends his time looking at himself. He can only cooperate in constructing a reality in which he sees his reflection everywhere. He does not need conversion and prayer for this.

## **The End of the Exodus and the Beginning of a New Adventure**

When the Reason of his existence and the existence of all things finally reveals itself to the pilgrim the exodus ends. At this moment he discovers that Reason was also looking for him and expecting to find him. Abraham says:

When thus I spoke to Terah, my father  
in the court of my house,  
The voice of a mighty-one fell from heaven  
in a cloudburst of fire and called  
Abraham! Abraham!

I said: here am I!

And he said:  
You seek the God of gods  
the Creator ,  
in the mind of your heart,

I am He! (Voegelin, 1990)

In the encounter in which Reason reveals itself by itself to the pilgrim he discovers that the voice that guided him during the exodus and the voice of reason that speaks to him and pronounces his name from a cloudburst of fire are the same. Also, he recognizes the voice as the structure that was present and operating in his consciousness from the beginning; the structure that led him to ask himself the first question he ever asked. The only thing that he can do is to be responsible and to order his life and his relations with everything in accordance with their reason (Voegelin, 1990). This is a human being that can say, as Ignacio did:

That I may not desire more health than illness, wealth than

poverty, honor than dishonor, long life rather than short, and by consequence in every thing else, only electing that which is conducive to the end for which reason has created me (Loyola, 1895: p. 22; Pelikan, 1984).<sup>30</sup>

When the pilgrim says this he begins an eternal adventure that gives his existence a new dimension, its history (Voegelin, 1999; Voegelin, 1990). His history, has two grand moments. The beginning in which, facing the necessity of his death he asked, "Why do I exist? Who is the reason of my existence" (Liddell and Scott, 1995: p. 122) and went to the exodus in search of the answer, and the moment in-between in which he now lives.<sup>31</sup> This is the time between the "time of things" and the "time of eternity," between the things that he represents and the Reason that created every thing. Because this time is in-between Plato called it *met axial* (Plato, 1925; Liddell and Scott, 1995: p. 503).<sup>32</sup> This time is the time of a movement of search and encounter which can happen only in someone and to someone who is alive. It is precisely because of this that Plato called soul the "place" where the movement occurs. The soul is a sign of life and the movement is a sign that he is alive (Voegelin, 1999; Liddell and Scott, 1995: p. 903).<sup>33</sup>

The in-between moment ends with the death of the pilgrim. But now death has a meaning, which is very different from the meaning it had at the beginning. Back then death represented the possibility that his existence would end in nothing. Now death is the beginning of an eternal adventure of being in love with the reason of his own existence and the existence of all things. As long as he is alive, the pilgrim can say, "I live without living, and in such a manner I wait, that I die because I am not dying (Avila, 1971: p. 123).<sup>34</sup>

The pilgrim cannot wait to die, but nevertheless and in spite of all that has happened to him, his exodus has not finished. As long as he is not dead he continues to be free and he can rebel against the Reason of his existence, and be disobedient. Besides, he still hears, often enough, a convocation which seems to come from the same darkness from which the convocation to *stasis* came. This convocation invites him to commit parricide, to assassinate the Reason of his existence and the existence of every thing ( Voegelin, 1999). That is why he must pray with all his heart. Only through this prayer will he receive what he needs to discern the manner, in which the voice will guide him until the moment of his death (Valera and Eduardo, 1988).

Meanwhile, the human being who chose to remain in the *stasis* has no history because for him there is only a protagonorean present in which he lives believing that he is the reason of his own existence and that of everything (Voegelin, 1999). Like Marcello Ruffini in the final scene of Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* de Fellini, he cannot hear the voice of reason. Because he is deaf to it he can only order his life and his relations with everything in accordance with his inattentive, unintelligent, irrational, irresponsible and hateful desire to be the reason of all things and to have absolute dominion over them (Voegelin, 1968; Fellini, 1960).

## **Ethics is expressed in a Symbolic System**

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle gave the name “science of order” - *episteme politike* (Urmson, 1990; Liddell and Scott, 1995) - to the science that allows a human being to move to the exodus and to the encounter with the Reason of his own existence and that of all things (Aristotle, 1990).<sup>35</sup> We call this the science ethics. Ethics is expressed in a symbolic system. It is a symbolic system because it expresses, like any other such system, the experience of reality in such a manner that the relations between reality, the experience of it, and the language in which the experience is expressed are such that they become present as a unit whose elements cannot be analyzed apart from each other (Voegelin, 1987).

The relations between the elements of this symbolic system – reality, experience and language – are paradoxical. Voegelin says, “...there is no language which is autonomous and non-paradoxical which is ready to be used by humans as a system of symbols when they want to refer to the experience of reality and to the structures of human consciousness” (Voegelin, 1987: p. 17). At the moment when a human being has an experience he has to invent the language with which he will express it because the old symbols cannot do it. Probably in the majority of cases the “invention” consists simply in giving a more precise meaning, or a new meaning to a word that he already pronounced. Thus, the original meaning of the word *ethos*, from which we get our word ethics, was that of an abode where humans and animals could be protected from the weather, later it meant a habit, and eventually it meant the character of a human being (Liddell and Scott, 1995).

Words and their meaning, like the humans who pronounce them, are elements of reality. Reality differentiates through and throughout the exodus and becomes fully differentiated at the end into three different realities. There is a reality-of-things in which the reason for their existence is not to be found. There is a reality-beyond-things in which the reason for the existence of everything is to be found. There is an in-between-reality, which is the reality of the soul – the sign of the life of the pilgrim – where the search and encounter occur along with the mystery and epiphany.<sup>36,37</sup> A human being expresses his experience of these three realities in several languages.

## **Humans Speak Several Languages**

The first language, which a human being speaks, is that of his experience of the things in whose existence he participates (Voegelin, 1987). This language, as it is said in Spanish, calls bread “bread” and wine “wine.” This is the language of common sense. But when his consciousness differentiates he asks “What is bread and wine made of?” Thus he finds that bread is made of starch and wine is alcohol. This is the language of theory (Lonergan, 1972), but in truth the language of common sense and the language of theory are two versions of the same language, the language of the human experience of things. In the common sense version a human being speaks of things as he experiences them in relation to himself. In the version of theory, a human being speaks about things as they relate to each other, independently of his

experience of them. But, this language of things, and precisely because it is of things, it cannot go beyond them. With this language bread will be bread even if it is made up of starch and wine will be wine even if it contains alcohol. This language cannot express the in-between reality where exodus and encounter occur, nor can it express the reality-beyond-things, which is revealed to a human being from a cloudburst of fire (Liddell and Scott, 1995). The experience of these realities expresses itself and can be expressed only in a language which is metaxial. This is the language of the soul where search and encounter occur, soul that cannot be understood separate from the reason for its existence.

Someone who has had the experiences that are expressed with it can speak the metaxial language with authority. This is the human being whose consciousness has differentiated because he asked all of the questions and fell in love (Voegelin, 1990). On the other hand, the consciousness of the human being who accepted to prohibit himself from asking some questions will not be able to experience consciously the totality of reality nor will he be able to speak about it. He can only claim to experience a reality that Voegelin calls "secondary," which eclipses primary reality, and which is expressed in the protogorean language of the human being who believes that he is the measure of everything (Voegelin, 1999). This is the language of the human being that spends his time looking at himself in the mirror. With his language he expresses the hatred he feels towards the reality of things and the reality of the Reason of their existence. I believe that the best symbol that we have to designate this human and his language is the word "narcissist" (Kerenyi, 1995: p. 172-173; Liddell and Scott, 1995: p. 525; Proctor, 1988).<sup>38</sup>

The language of the narcissist was considered the expression of an existential disease, a sick desire, since classical antiquity (Liddell and Scott, 1995: p. 566, 535).<sup>39,40</sup> In the tragedy of Æschylos Oceanus says to Prometheus that it is his "disordered temperament" which has led him to commit the fault for which he is being punished. Later the chorus tells him: "you (who should have been the most intelligent of all) (Liddell and Scott, 1995: p. 680) have abandoned your intelligence and have become lost; as an artless eel, you have become sick and cannot find with what remedies to cure your own disease" (Æschylus, 1956: p. 249,257).<sup>41,42</sup>

## **Final Comments**

To become a pilgrim in exodus requires, as we said earlier, an act of faith. But it is an act of faith that can happen only to someone who has already begun to be in love. Saint Augustine says "he begins to leave who begins to love, Many are those who leave without knowing it, For the feet of those who are leaving are the motions of the heart, And then, they are leaving Babylon" (Voegelin, 1990: p. 140).

A human being wants to know the reason for his existence and the existence of every thing. He hears two convocations. One invites him to go on an exodus in search of the reason of his existence; the other invites him to consider himself as the reason for his own existence and that of everything. Ethics is the metaxial symbolic system that expresses the conflict between these two convocations and the method to

resolve it. Precisely because ethics is a symbolic system that expresses this, ethics expresses it in the symbols of a consciousness that is already in love and its symbols can have authority only for a human being who is ready to fall in love. The human being who speaks with these symbols is someone like Abraham. He is willing to abandon the city where he was born and raised in order to place his finite existence in the in-between reality - the *metaxy* – face to face with the eternal presence of the Reason of his own existence and the existence of everything else (Voegelin, 1990). He is willing because he is in love!

Ethics is a manifestation of the life of the soul. But the life of the soul, as Voegelin says “...is not a treasure of information to be stored, it is the struggle in the *metaxy*, a struggle for the immortalizing order of the soul that resists the forces of apeironic luxury of its existence in time. Existence between what is divine and human, perfection and imperfection, reason and passions, knowledge and ignorance is not abolished when it is illuminated” (Voegelin, 1990: p. 89-115).

What Voegelin says reminds me of two things. One is something, which my teachers, the Jesuits, taught me: *Militia es vita*, life is a struggle.<sup>43</sup> Ethics is the expression of a struggle that lasts all life and how to fight it. The other is a conversation I had with a professor at the Harvard Medical School. During the conversation he told me that when they invited Mother Theresa to speak at their graduation she said “God did not call us to be successful, he called us to be faithful.”

## Notes

1. The name Oedipus (••••••••) means Swollen Foot. The name was meant to indicate a fundamental fault in his character.
2. The word kinesis (κίνησις) movement and it is generally contrasted with the word stasis (••••••) which means to be standing.
3. A question can be asked only of the person already has in his consciousness some structure that allows him to be curious about reality and some experience about which he can ask: What is it? Curiosity or wonder (••••••, to wonder) was for Aristotle the beginning of all philosophical activity.
4. The meaning of the word stasis (στάσις) is standing. I chose this word because its meaning has a relation with the meaning of the words Narcissus, the man who fell in love with himself when he saw his own reflection in the water. The name Narcissus derives from the word ••••• (narke) and means to be like dead.
5. The word Mnemosyne (••••••••••) means memory and remembrance, but it was also the name of the mother of the muses. Philosophers have been preoccupied with the role of memory beginning with Hesiod’s writing of his *Theogony* about 700 years BC and extends to Eric Voegelin’s *Anamnesis* (1990).

6. The word exodus (εξοδος) means the way through which one exits, it later meant a military expedition. I use it because it is also related to the saying *militia est vita* , which appears almost at the end of the paper.

7. The word apeiron (απειρον) means unlimited, that which has no end or cannot be counted.

8. The word participation is being used here with the same meaning of the Greek word methexis (••••••••).

9. The words that Anaximandros used when he wrote the extant fragment, about 500 years BC are son genesis (••••••••) y phthoran (••••••••). The first word means generation or productive cause; its meaning is opposite to that of the second, destruction, ruin and death. It must be noted that in the original text of the Medical Oath, the word phthorion (••••••••) means abortion, which is something that the physician promises not to perform.

10. Anaximandros seems to be articulating an old Indo-European idea. However, it is interesting to note that for him injustice occurs both when things are generated and when things are destroyed; but there is Justice in the generation and destruction when they are seen as inseparable. Anaximandros, as Voegelin clearly says in his writings, established a “Noetic Horizon” which was still operating during the time of Aristotle and must have influenced him in the writing of his book *On Generation and Corruption*. See the references to Anaximander in Voegelin’s *The World of the Polis* (1986).

11. The emergence of one level from the level below it is understood through the notions of Emergent Probability and Probability of Survival. See Bernard Lonergan’s *Insight: a Study of Human Understanding* (1997).

12. From Classical Antiquity until the time of Descartes the human body was understood as a microcosm, which reflected the totality of the macrocosm. With Descartes and finally with de la Mettrie, the body came to be understood as a machine ruled by the same forces which Newton explained in his “natural philosophy.” Today the body is understood as an organism, that is, some sort of a mechanism, not a pure machine perhaps, capable of reproducing itself.

13. The Greek word for faith is pistis (••••••••). It is translated into Latin by the word *fides*. However, the common understanding is that faith has to do with belief, whereas in Greek, in Latin, and even in English, the word faith means belief but it is connected to the word persuasion and to “steadfast affection and allegiance,” that is to loyalty. The root of *pistis* and *fides* is the Indo-European word *sraddha*, which is also linked to the Indo-European principle of obligatory exchange of gifts: *do ut des*.

14. The voice is the voice of the structure that operates in his consciousness, but he does not know it yet.

15. Bernard Lonergan identifies in his *Insight: a study of human understanding* (1997) four other characteristics of an act of insight besides its coming suddenly and unexpectedly. They are: (1) it comes to liberate the subject from the tension of the inquiry; (2) it is the product of circumstances internal to the subject, not external; (3) it is a pivot between the concrete and the abstract; and (4) it becomes part of the texture of the mind of the subject so that he does not have to understand again what he has already understood. See pages 27-31 of the Toronto University Press edition of *Insight*.

16. Here I could have used either of two words “correct” and “true.” I chose “true” for esthetic reasons. I fail to see any fundamental difference in their meaning, since both of them derive from the Indo-European word RTA, as you can see in correct, and truthful. RTA designates the harmony of the gods with all of the things they have created and the harmony of all things with the gods that created them. See the work of Dumézil and other Indo-Europeanists.

17. The conditions that must be met in order to affirm that the intelligible is correct are essentially those that Lonergan calls “canons of empirical method.” These conditions are: the intelligible must emerge from the data, must be congruent with other intelligibles which have already been verified, it must explain the data completely, it does not add to the data something which is not there and it must recognize the possible occurrence of an empirical residue which needs to be explained and a statistical residue which makes a set of data not be systematically different from another and similar set of data.

18. It is interesting to note that Parmenides contrasted truth (aletheia (••••••)) with opinion doxa (••••), not with what is false (pseudos (••••••)).

19. When a pilgrim does not do on the basis of the truth that he knows he knows that he has been irresponsible. He now faces a choice. He can choose to acknowledge his irresponsibility and try to make amends. Or he can choose not to acknowledge his responsibility by avoiding self-consciousness, by rationalizing his choice or by renouncing to ever meet the standard of congruence. See the chapter on “The Possibility of Ethics” in Bernard Lonergan’s *Insight: a study of human understanding* (1997).

20. The word “ethics” (•θoς) originally meant “the usual site,” then it meant whatever was customary, and eventually it came to mean the habits and dispositions of a human being.

21. The Greek word for these habits is aretai (pl) from arete (•••••). The Greeks believed that in order for a human being to bring himself to develop the aretai he had to believe that they were an expression of his faith in the “unseen measure.”

22. The word “prudence” is a contraction of the word “providence.” Neither of these two words translates adequately into English the word that was used by Plato and Aristotle. They used the word phronesis (••••••••) which means a commitment to be intelligent and make things happen at the right time with a correct intention.

23. There are many virtues. I usually speak about the virtues following a variance of an old tradition which classifies them into existential (Prudence) dianoetic (science, understanding and wisdom) and moral (Temperance, justice and Fortitude) I usually speak of Prudence as an existential virtue which is necessary for the development of all the others (In this I follow Voegelin, Lonergan does not think much of this virtue). I speak of three other virtues as moral: (1) temperance (sophrosyne), which I present as the habit of putting aside one's desires and aversions in order to choose and do what has sufficient reason to be done; (2) justice, (dikayosine) which I present as the habit of considering another human being and all human beings as equal to me; and (3) fortitude (andreia), which I present as the habit of putting aside my own fear or fearlessness.

24. The difference between essential and effective freedom is explained in the third section of Bernard Lonergan's *Insight: a study of human understanding* (1997). I disagree with him in one fundamental aspect. He does not assign any role to the virtues in it.

25. I believe this is the meaning of philosophy, the method of living in order to be prepared to die. See Plato's dialogues on the death of Socrates.

26. In my own lifetime and experience Martin Luther King is one of the greater transformers. I still remember that all of downtown San Antonio, the city where I grew up, was segregated. It has not been so for many years. I know that he inspired the students who initiated the desegregation process by demonstrating in front of the Majestic Theater.

27. The word pseudos (•••••) means in this case deceptive or spurious.

28. In the movie *The Legion*, Charles Boyer plays the role of a Jesuit priest. When he is confronted with the choice between obedience and disobedience he says, "Jesuits choose to obey." The idea is that one is as free to obey as one is to disobey!

29. The process of conversion may require him to go through: (1) a somatic conversion in which he comes to understand his "bodyness" in an appropriate manner and makes a commitment to be healthy; (2) a psychic conversion in which he comes to understand his intentional responses to things (emotions) in an appropriate manner and makes a commitment to foster those which support his exodus and to suppress those who do not support him in his exodus; (3) an intellectual conversion in which he comes to understand the workings of his "mind" in an appropriate manner, with this he establishes a "Basic Horizon" and makes a commitment to be always in pursuit of the truth; (4) a moral conversion which commits him to be always in pursuit of the good, (5) a religious conversion which commits him to always surrender to love. See Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology* (1972).

30. This quotation is translated directly from an edition of the *Spiritual Exercises* that was printed in Mexico City towards the end of the XIX Century. The book belonged to my great-grandfather Jose Apolinar Rivera Casasola, mestizo of

Spaniard-Xochimilca ancestry, who was educated by the Mexican Jesuits of the period. I have dedicated this article to honor his memory. I write this note because in it you can see that the construction of the human good which is really worth the effort requires not only the cooperation of all those who are alive at any given moment; but the cooperation of one generation with the next. I believe that it is to this cooperation between generations that Jaroslav Pelikan has called “living tradition.” It is also interesting to note that the Latin word for tradition is *traditio*, which comes from a word (*tradere*) which signifies exchange and has to do with one of the fundamental norms for interpersonal relations among the Indo-Europeans which in Latin is expressed by the words *do ut des* (I give you that you may give me). Showing what I consider a great poetic-ironic insight the Romans dropped the letter *d* from the word *traditio* and got the word *traitio*, which means treason. The person who does not live in accordance with the principle *do ut des* becomes a traitor. He who does not live the tradition that was shared with him becomes a traitor.

31. Here I am using the word “principle” with the same meaning that the Greek word *arche* (••••) has. This word serves as the root for a multitude of words that have related meanings: to begin, from, prepare, govern, and make the rule be obeyed.

32. The word “metaxial” derives from the Greek word *metaxu* (••••••) which can mean the place in between or the time in between Plato used it with that meaning.

33. The word *psyche* (••••) means something that is alive or an indication that something is alive.

34. With these words I have the clear intention of making a reference to the chapter of The Discernment of Spirits in the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius.

35. The word *episteme* (••••••••) means scientific knowledge. In a strict sense it means knowledge of things that are necessary. The word *politike* (••••••••) makes reference to the city and its citizens. When the two words appear together they mean the science of government or the science of putting things in order.

36. The word *mystery* (••••••••••) means divine secret.

37. The word *epiphany* is derived from the Greek word *epiphaino* (••••••••). It means to go out to the light.

38. What I am trying to do here is to establish the difference that exists between an understanding of the way words are used (syntactic understanding of the symbol) and the critical understanding the symbol, which is that of someone who has had the appropriate experience, has understood the experience and has judged his understanding to be correct. Said in another way, critical understanding is syntactic, but it is also semantic and pragmatic.

39. The word and the name *Narcissus* (••••••••••) mean “he who is narcotized” or “he who is motionless and appears to be dead.”

40. I consider Nazism the expression of a very peculiar form of narcissism. In Nazism those who looked in a certain way (tall, blond, blue eyed, dolichocephalic Aryans) wanted the whole world to look like them and believed that only those who looked like them had right to live freely.

41. The words that Æschylus uses on his son *οργες νοσοιες*, which literally mean desire which is sick. The first of these words comes from *orge* (••••) which means the natural impulse of something or someone's temperament, disposition or nature. The second word comes from *nosos* (•••••) which means disease.

42. Prometheus should have been the most intelligent of all because that is what his name means. It comes from the word *prometheia* (••••••••••) which means prudence and consideration. In contrast his brother Epimetheus was careless.

43. I have a very special place in my heart for men like Alfonso Castiello, SJ, Salvador Alvarez, SJ, Jorge Lopez Moctezuma, SJ, Rafael Diaz de Leon, SJ and Ezequiel Morales, SJ. I also have a special place in my heart for Carlos de Maria y Campos, Alfonso Ramirez, Guillermo Villaseñor, and Manuel Rodriguez Lapuente, who taught me when they were Jesuits.

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