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CAN THE UNITY OF THE UNIVERSITY BE RESTORED IN OUR AGE?

The life-world, as conceived of by Husserl, is the vivid realm of local experience. The philosophy of the people also needs to begin with local experience. It is from local experience that the 'sensus communis' emerges, pointing to the ultimate unity of all knowledge and reality. This unity is first revealed in the form of distinctive traditions of local experience, characteristically reflected in philosophical traditions. To develop the philosophy of the people means to rediscover these traditions and liberate them from the exploitation of intellectual and cultural invasions.

In the current paper I address the problem of the intellectual unity of the university. Intellectual unity, in my view, can mean three things: (1) the unity of research, (2) the intellectual unity of teaching, (3) the unity of a community based on a shared valid paradigm.

Obviously, universities today rarely seek intellectual unity in the third of the above meanings. If one is affiliated with a university, his or her personal and communal identity may not be defined by that fact. The unity of teaching is disrupted by a great number of disciplines taught and a multitude of methodologies used at our universities, while the unity of research is delegated to specific institutions with specific research objectives. Thus it may seem that the 'unity of university' is an empty expression.

On the other hand, it is strongly arguable that the expression 'unity of university' is not empty—not even in the third sense, to which I will return at the end of this paper. If we consider the history of universities, we can see that the idea of the university is, in fact, one of unity. It suffices to think of the Academy of Athens, the Musaeum at Alexandria, the Pandidakterion (Imperial University) of Constantinople, or the emerging Western universities of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and modernity.¹ The idea of unity has always been central to philosophical knowledge and to divine revelation, and also—from the beginning of modernity—to the project of an encyclopedia of human

¹ See *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 1, *Universities in the Middle Ages*, ed. Walter Rüegg and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 2, *Universities in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800)*, ed. Walter Rüegg and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 3, *Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800–1945)*, ed. Walter Rüegg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 4, *Universities Since 1945*, ed. Walter Rüegg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

knowledge. The latter was logically and historically dependent on the notion of divine omniscience as, throughout the centuries, the human mind was believed incapable of actual omniscience, yet able to partake of divine knowledge to some extent. In modernity the perspective changed: divine illumination was replaced by overall theories in the sciences, i.e., in philosophy, mathematics, physics, biology, or, later, in psychology and sociology. The creation of new cosmologies by Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, and Erwin Schrödinger have been driven by the idea of omniscience attainable to human beings. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the real significance of quantum physics and Gödel's theorem still raises important problems in our day.²

My point is simple: the idea of the university presupposes, historically and logically, the idea of the unity of research and teaching. I agree that this unity is better construed as the intellectual unity of teaching and research than as the social unity of a community sharing a valid paradigm, as in the latter sense unity is often conceived in terms of loose collegiality, i.e., companionship and cooperation between colleagues bearing common responsibility. As today collegiality does not mean either deeper community or intellectual unity, we can talk about the *crisis* of the university. The source of the crisis is precisely the divergence between methods and goals we can currently observe, the disunity that calls into question the very *raison d'être* of the millennia-old institution of the university.

The crisis of university reflects the crisis of the sciences. This is due to the fact that, in spite of the scientific revolutions of the past centuries, the unity of the sciences has not been properly conceived: 'the grand theory of everything' is still in the making. Research and teaching are highly diffuse, rival interpretations of quantum physics and conflicting theories in biology or in the humanities multiply. Today it has become almost a dogma that it is in vain to seek any intellectual unity at universities and that we just need to pursue our immediate study goals and thereby develop our particular research and teaching in effective ways. Powerful international companies support such an approach: they need applicable research results so that, for instance, ever more successful versions of artificial intelligence could be constructed.

There is, however, a different model of the intellectual unity of the university, namely, the Catholic university model. The Catholic university regards the requirement of intellectual unity as a standard. It is in the Apostolic Constitution

² See Arkady Plotnitsky, *Epistemology and Probability: Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrödinger, and the Nature of Quantum-Theoretical Thinking* (New York: Springer, 2009); Kurt Gödel: *Essays for his Centennial*, ed. Solomon Feferman, Charles Parsons, and Stephen G. Simpson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Karl Giberson, "Dice and Divine Action," in: *The Oxford Handbook of Divine Revelation*, ed. Balázs M. Mezei, Francesca A. Murphy, and Kenneth Oakes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

Ex Corde Ecclesiae that we can find a clear statement of this requirement. As the requirement of unity seems incompatible with the changes in the contemporary world of higher education, we can also see the struggle in which Catholic universities are engaged today: some are about to abandon their Catholic identity, others seek new ways to follow contemporary trends by changing mandatory courses and introducing diversity curricula. There are also Catholic universities where the implementation of the Great Books Program—an important initiative that involves reading classic works in literature, philosophy, and theology—has been halted, given its emphasis on Western intellectual history.³

Below I will argue that the intellectual unity of the university, and especially of the Catholic university, can and must be restored. This becomes clear in the light of a new reading of the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. Then, if the intellectual unity of Catholic universities is reestablished along the lines of this new reading, the community aspect of the university can also be addressed. In particular, I argue that the philosophical foundation of Catholic universities needs to be reinterpreted and linked to important fields of contemporary science. It is through its renewed philosophical understanding that the unity of universities can be reconsidered and rebuilt.

A RENEWED UNDERSTANDING OF “EX CORDE ECCLESIAE” ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL LEVEL THE NEED FOR A PROPER PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNIVERSITY

The Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was written thirty years ago and since that time no comparable document on teaching and research on Catholic universities has been published by the Vatican. The issue date is important: it was in 1990 that the collapse of the Soviet system in Europe became obvious. Part and parcel of this system was the Soviet-type university with its ideological bias and forced separation of research and teaching.⁴ *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* seeks to overcome both: it argues for a sound philosophy of human personhood as the basis for the university and also for the intellectual unity of research and teaching. The philosophy of human personhood points to theol-

³ See Tim Lacy, *The Dream of a Democratic Culture: Mortimer J. Adler and the Great Books Idea* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁴ This separation was introduced when the fruitful combination of teaching and research, the great achievement of German universities during the nineteenth century, was still considered the best way of education. The strict separation of research and teaching took place first in the Soviet Union during the 1920s. The Soviets had a centralized research planning strictly separated from ideological education long before militarized Germany did. See *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 3, *Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800–1945)*, 663–7.

ogy: the dignity of human persons is grounded in their creation and salvation. All values of human societies are derived from this source. In consequence, research and teaching must be conceived in their organic unity. Faith stands in the center of the Catholic university.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae indicates the outlines of a philosophy of the university. The guiding principle of this philosophy is “the cause of truth”⁵ or “the impartial search for truth”⁶: “The present age is in urgent need of this kind of disinterested service, namely of proclaiming the meaning of truth, that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished.”⁷ Truth is one; even if there is a hierarchy within truth, all truths originate in the one divine truth. Any research attaining truth is a form of participation in divine truth. Catholic universities must serve the truth in its variety and unity, i.e., embrace the plurality of objects and methods as they are discussed in science and search for the ultimate unity of all truths in God.

This principle goes hand in hand with “the universal humanism”⁸ of the Catholic university. “The very meaning of the human person”⁹ must stand at its center. Catholic universities must follow a systematic way of research, i.e., one based on intellectual unity, to be able to achieve “integration of knowledge”¹⁰ and explore “the riches of revelation.”¹¹ As the text claims, “The present age is in urgent need of this kind of disinterested service, namely of proclaiming the meaning of truth, that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished.”¹²

This philosophy can be fleshed out in more detail. What we reach, then, is a kind of philosophy which is capable of ensuring the intellectual unity of universities, especially Catholic ones. It is of course not easy to find a common ground among vastly different disciplines, such as mathematics, the natural sciences, and the humanities. Yet the teaching of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* on the unified philosophy of truth, the center of which is human personhood, provides such a common ground. If we want to regain and even further develop the intellectual unity of the university—which is, in fact, the most important legacy of the history of this institution—the unity of truth must play a decisive role in research and teaching.

⁵ J o h n P a u l II, Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990), Section 4.

⁶ Ibidem, Section 5.

⁷ Ibidem, Section 4.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Ibidem, Section 7.

¹⁰ Ibidem, Sections 15, 16, and 17.

¹¹ Ibidem, Section 5.

¹² Ibidem, Section 4.

To achieve this a unified philosophy must be properly developed. Here again we have a basis to rely on: The Encyclical *Fides et Ratio* by John Paul II explains the nature of the desirable philosophy of truth, while at the same time outlining a viable form of the philosophy of the university.

REFRAMING OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL MESSAGE OF “FIDES ET RATIO” ON THE BASIS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION

The Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio* contains an overall attempt to redefine philosophy not only in the Catholic context, but also in that of the complexity of contemporary theoretical attempts to understand the world. As an important text in the history of philosophy, *Fides et Ratio* provides a roadmap to the renewal of philosophy. In our present discussion, the following points made in the text are the most important: (1) Philosophy needs to regain its original *courageous* character: it needs to be ‘audacious’ in discovering new problems and fields of research, (2) philosophy has to take into consideration the Christian traditions, namely, Christian philosophy, not as the official philosophy of the Church, but “rather to indicate a Christian way of philosophizing, a philosophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith,”¹³ (3) philosophy must be based on fundamental facts, such as “the notion of a free and personal God,”¹⁴ “the reality of sin,”¹⁵ “the notion of the person as a spiritual being,”¹⁶ and “the Christian proclamation of human dignity, equality and freedom, which has undoubtedly influenced modern philosophical thought,”¹⁷ (4) moreover, “in more recent times, there has been the discovery that history as event—so central to Christian Revelation—is important for philosophy as well.”¹⁸

Twenty years after its promulgation, *Fides et Ratio* needs to be reconsidered. Most importantly, we need to recognize that the encyclical may highlight the general form of philosophy related to faith. Even if there is no ‘official philosophy’ of the Church, there is nevertheless a ‘philosophy of philosophy,’ as it were, common to the most important thinkers throughout the ages. Not only does this philosophy express “the unity of philosophical experience,”¹⁹ as Étienne Gilson held, but it also exhibits the unity of form, indicating the possibility

¹³ J o h n P a u l I I, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), Section 76.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ See Étienne G i l s o n, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1938).

of developing *the philosophy of possible philosophies*, the ‘implicit philosophy’ of humanity. As *Fides et Ratio* does not elaborate on the form and content of this implicit philosophy, let me daringly identify it with the notion of *the philosophy of divine revelation* I have developed during the past years.²⁰ Philosophy of revelation is also briefly alluded to in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* when the document declares the importance of “the exploration of the riches of Revelation.”²¹

I use the term ‘philosophy of revelation’ to refer to a kind of metaphilosophy, a ‘philosophy of all possible and actual philosophies’ developed on the basis of the ultimate source of human knowledge. I call this ultimate source ‘revelation’ and offer thereby an interpretation of the received meaning of the term. Originally, i.e., in the sense of the Greek *apocalypsis* or the Hebrew *gala*, ‘revelation’ refers to the ultimate divine disclosure of the meaning of being, human existence, history, and nature. In a more concrete sense, ‘revelation’ refers to the teaching of the ultimate verities of being, especially the verities concerning the Trinitarian structure of the divine in itself and in its relations. In this sense, revelation cannot be properly understood by the innate powers of reason; seen as a gift, however, revelation in an overall sense becomes accessible to reason. In other words, reason points to a higher level of understanding, the understanding given in faith in the genuine sense of the word, i.e., faith given by and in God.²² Thus a philosophy of revelation points to faith, at the same time conceiving what cannot be reached by the philosophy’s innate power. In this conceiving, a sort of rational illumination takes place and reason is capable of its reception. A philosophy of revelation is a systematic explication of what is received in illumination and what is referred to in faith.

The noun ‘revelation’ and the verb ‘to reveal’ are used one hundred and fifty-two times in the Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*. This shows the importance of these expressions in the text. However, it is not only philosophy in its various forms that is inspired by and directed at revelation, but there is a radical form of philosophy which permeates all forms of philosophical thought: a radical philosophy of divine revelation. In fact, it is philosophy’s manifold dependence on revelation that makes philosophy genuinely philosophical; for the unity of truth, the formal object of philosophy, cannot be anything else than the ultimate truth of divine revelation. A philosophy of revelation, therefore, is the most basic, most important, indeed the ultimate form of philosophy, which conceives and explains the reality and various forms of revelation. To

²⁰ See Balázs M. M e z e i, *Radical Revelation: A Philosophical Approach* (London: T&T, 2017); Balázs M. M e z e i, “Revelation in Phenomenology,” In: *The Oxford Handbook of Divine Revelation*.

²¹ J o h n P a u l I I, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Section 5.

²² See Balázs M. M e z e i, Francesca A. M u r p h y, and Kenneth O a k e s, *Illuminating Faith: An Invitation to Theology* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015).

some extent this insight has been described, before and after the publication of *Fides et Ratio*, by a number of thinkers, for instance Michel Henry,²³ Jean-Luc Marion,²⁴ William Desmond,²⁵ and myself.²⁶

Revelation by definition transcends reason, also theological reason. This, however, does not mean that reason is not capable of conceiving revelation. Reason conceives revelation and, at the same time, recognizes that it is not itself capable of fully understanding revelation. In the very act of conceiving revelation reason recognizes revelation's infinite excess. Inspired by revelation and directed at revelation, philosophy is also compelled to understand that revelation is a gift. A gift is not made in a void, but it is embedded in a structure of presuppositions and takes a number of forms. There must be someone—or a body of someone—with the capacity to receive a gift; there must be the capability of recognizing the gift as gift; and there must be the giver that is categorically similar to, yet also different from, the recipient of a gift. Making somebody a gift is not like hitting them with a stone, but rather, to use an ancient metaphor, a gift resembles light falling on a flower, an organism, or an eye. In order that a gift may be given, there must be a certain structure of ontological and epistemological qualities and a metaphysical community which makes the fact of gift meaningful.

Similarly, revelation is realized within a structure of presuppositions and takes a number of forms. Divine revelation is given and received on the basis of a common structure containing substructures and even sub-substructures to which various forms of revelation correspond. 'Radical philosophical theology of revelation' is the name of the endeavor to demonstrate the ultimate importance, the structures and forms of revelation from the philosophical point of view. I also have to add that it is a 'nonstandard' philosophical theology, because it does not remain in the framework of various fragmented notions of philosophy that are mentioned in *Fides et Ratio* but transcends them to reach a unified form. This form of philosophy, in my estimate, may be considered to be the realization of the audacious 'new path' for philosophy encouraged by the encyclical. However, I do not suggest that this new path for philosophy can embrace and understand in a materially proper sense the full reality of revelation. Although it may be conceived and explicated to some extent, revelation essentially transcends reason. Yet this transcendence is conceived on the basis of a common structure shared by reason and revelation.

²³ See Michel Henry, *C'est moi la Vérité: Pour une philosophie du christianisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1996).

²⁴ See Jean-Luc Marion, *Givenness and Revelation*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

²⁵ See *The William Desmond Reader*, ed. Christopher B. Simpson (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012).

²⁶ See Mezei, *Radical Revelation: A Philosophical Approach*.

This partial overlapping is the overlapping of the finite and the infinite: the finite is defined by and contained in the infinite, whereas the infinite infinitely transcends the finite. Nevertheless, the infinite cannot be strictly separated from the finite; if such were the case, then the infinity of the infinite would be limited, which is impossible. As the medieval dictum says, *infiniti ad finitum nulla proportio*, that is, there is no proportion between revelation and reason. The meaning of *nulla proportio* is not that revelation is isolated from reason, but rather that they are related to one another in such a way that the thesis *nulla proportio* is preserved in the framework of an overall relationship. On this basis, revelation is such that it is already given. In the notion of revelation, we possess the notion of the ‘existence’ of God, but this existence should not be interpreted in line with traditional notions of being. God is revealed, given, self-revealed, and self-given. He is given to himself and he is given to the non-divine. In this full givenness we may determine a certain aspect as ‘being,’ but beyond being, God is given in his self-revelation as an absolute fact.²⁷

THE EXPANSION OF A PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION ON THE BASIS OF A PHILOSOPHY OF THE PEOPLE OR A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF LIBERATION

Radical philosophy is to elaborate the original form of human thought as related to the self-disclosure of ultimate reality, i.e., revelation. On the conceptual level we can reach the insight into the necessity of this philosophy by analyzing the striking evolution of the notion of revelation in the history of ideas. More concretely, the history of phenomenology can be reconstructed in terms of the emergence of the understanding that phenomenology is, in its essence, the phenomenology of revelation. From Franz Brentano,²⁸ through Max Scheler²⁹ and Martin Heidegger,³⁰ to Emmanuel Lévinas,³¹ Michel Henry

²⁷ See *ibidem*, xix.

²⁸ See Franz Brentano, *Religion und Philosophie*, ed. by Franziska Mayer Hillebrand (Bern: Francke, 1954); Franz Brentano, *On the Existence of God*, ed. and trans. Susan F. Krantz (Dordrecht, Boston and Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987).

²⁹ See Max Scheler, *Vom Ewigen im Menschen*, vol. 1, *Religiöse Erneuerung* (Leipzig: Verlag Der Neue Geist / Dr. Peter Reinhold, 1921).

³⁰ See Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1993).

³¹ See Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini: Essai sur l'extériorité* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961); Emmanuel Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

and Jean-Luc Marion, the development of philosophy shows the emergence of revelation as the central subject of philosophical thinking.³²

However, it seems that there is another way to properly elaborate a philosophy of revelation, that is to take the path of the *filosofía del pueblo*, ‘philosophy of the people.’ I include this path not only because the thought of Pope Francis emerged from this context, but also because it opens up a possibility to elaborate the question of the sources of a philosophy of divine revelation. As Rocco Buttiglione³³ and Rafael Luciani,³⁴ among others, have shown, the *teología del pueblo*, one of the developments of liberation theology, contributed to the formation of the intellectual background of Pope Francis. Instead of *teología*, however, I wish to speak of *filosofía* because, logically speaking, if there is a *teología del pueblo*, there is also a *filosofía del pueblo*, a kind of philosophy of liberation. By entering this realm, we perform a move parallel to the discovery and elaboration of the notion of the life-world by the later Edmund Husserl. Husserl recognized that, in order to properly reach the transcendental realm, we need to begin with the most basic experiences and beliefs of our everyday life. This discovery resulted in his writing *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, published in 1938.

At this point we need to clarify some concepts. The life-world, as conceived of by Husserl, is the vivid realm of local experience. The *philosophy of the people* also needs to begin with local experience. It is from local experience that the ‘sensus communis’ emerges, pointing to the ultimate unity of all knowledge and reality. This unity is first revealed in the form of distinctive traditions of local experience, characteristically reflected in philosophical traditions. To develop the philosophy of the people means to rediscover these traditions and liberate them from the exploitation of intellectual and cultural invasions. A good example is the philosophy of the Vienna Circle. This philosophy is deeply rooted in Central-European traditions, specifically in Austrian philosophy, yet it has been instrumentalized in a philosophy foreign to these traditions and characterized by a naïve realism instead of critical thinking. The basis of the thought of the Vienna Circle was provided by the theory of objects proposed by Alexius Meinong³⁵ and others—the theory in which also phenomenology is rooted. That is to say, the natural context of the Vienna Circle

³² See Mezei, “Revelation in Phenomenology.”

³³ See Rocco Buttiglione. “Revelation and Theology of the People,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Divine Revelation*.

³⁴ See Rafael Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017).

³⁵ See Alexius Meinong, “The Theory of Objects”, trans. Isaac Levi, Dailey B. Terrell, and Roderick Chisholm, in *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*, ed. Roderick Chisholm (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview, 1981), 76–117.

type of positivism is phenomenology and hermeneutics, the philosophies of life, history, and being. The ‘sensus communis’ of these forms of thought is that truth and reality are unequivocally given in these realms in such a way that a certain kind of perception—characteristically ‘intellectual insight’—is capable of recognizing them.³⁶

The ‘philosophy of the people’ as a *philosophy of liberation* intends to reclaim the traditions of Central-European philosophy, i.e., the forms of thinking that originated in the distinctive cultural context of the countries situated between the East and West and North and South of Europe. Central-European philosophy includes Austrian, Southern German, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Croatian philosophy.³⁷ However, I am not suggesting a geographical or historical approach to philosophy here. I am merely pointing out that phenomenology is the natural context of a philosophy of revelation, while different philosophies of Central-European origin (criticism as opposed to dogmatism, transcendentalism as opposed to local realism, ontology as opposed to epistemology, etc.) constitute the natural context of phenomenology. It is important to rediscover those traditions and formulate their central message: the message pointing to the radical philosophy of divine revelation.

This philosophy of liberation receives a meaning somewhat different from the meaning of the *filosofia del pueblo*. We need to return to the things themselves, but also to our own traditions in philosophy; we need to liberate them from misunderstanding and misuse. If this endeavor is successful, the result will be a form of philosophy of divine revelation, an audacious philosophy of truth and reality, indeed the implicit philosophy *Fides et Ratio* talks about. There is much work to be done here, and this work requires further interpretation of the work of John Paul II.

If we find the way to this understanding of philosophy, we can hope to regain the very meaning of truth, the meaning of philosophy; and consequently, the meaning of the unity of research and teaching at a university. Just as

³⁶ Historically, the concept of intellectual insight is a follow-up of the ancient notion of illumination, continuously present throughout the history of philosophy. Illumination resurfaces in German philosophy as *intellektuelle Anschauung*; later, it has its incarnation in Husserl’s ‘categorical intuition’ and ‘intuition of essences.’ As traditional epistemology develops into existentialism, ontology, and hermeneutics, the notion of intellectual insight becomes obsolete. However, some works, such as Bernard Lonergan’s *Insight*, offer further interpretations of this tradition. See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto, Buffalo, London: Published for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto by University of Toronto Press, 1992). In the framework of a philosophy of revelation, we do not need such categories, because revelation cannot be conceived but by revelation itself, i.e., by what is disclosed in revelation as the reception of revelation.

³⁷ See Balázs M. Mezei, “Austrian Theism and the Catholic Principle,” in Mezei, *Religion and Revelation after Auschwitz* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 201–19.

through his discovery of the life-world Husserl has made an important step on the way towards overcoming the crisis of the sciences and towards the restoration of the meaning of philosophy, we can contribute to reclaiming the meaning of philosophy and to the intellectual unity of the university by liberating our philosophical life-world, i.e., the Central-European traditions.

Here a short overview of the kinds of philosophy referred to in this paper seems in place. Philosophy as the ‘love of wisdom’ has been variously developed during the two and a half millennia of its history. While even for Plato philosophy was “a gift from the gods to the mortal race whose value neither has been nor ever will be surpassed,”³⁸ the unique importance of philosophy was increasingly well understood during and after the Renaissance period. This understanding led to reformulations of the importance of philosophy in itself and in its relationship to other scholarly disciplines, such as theology and the sciences. In the Cartesian turn, the paramount importance of philosophy came to the fore and redefined philosophy as the utmost peak of scholarly endeavors. This kind of approach was further developed in the works of modern philosophers who attempted to redefine philosophy in the context of its traditions, yet in view of a new understanding. It is particularly in the German context that philosophy has become metaphilosophy, a system of understanding comprising all possible and actual branches of knowledge and being. Philosophies of special fields abound, whereas proposing a genuine metaphilosophy, such as the ones developed by Hegel, Husserl, or Heidegger, has proved to be a difficult path. Especially in Catholic circles, however, where traditional conceptions of philosophy survived and were brought to new life, the importance of a fundamental philosophy has always been clearly recognized. This was shown in the Encyclical Letters *Aeterni Patris*³⁹ of 1879 and *Fides et Ratio* of 1998. While the former argued for an invigorated Thomistic philosophy, the latter emphasized a more complex understanding of philosophy. Nevertheless, both documents agree that it is necessary to revitalize philosophy and express it in new forms, going beyond the needs of special disciplines, methodologies, or particular branches of knowledge. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* makes it abundantly clear that what is needed is an overall theory of truth; and *Fides et Ratio* urges, as mentioned, an audacious thinking that goes beyond particular problems to comprehend the unique problem of reality. The philosophy of revelation, as presented briefly here, continues this metaphilosophical endeavor supported by important traditions constituting its heritage, and in particular by phenom-

³⁸ P l a t o, *Timaeus*, trans. Donald J. Zeyl, in *The Complete Works of Plato*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997) 47 b, 1250.

³⁹ L e o XIII, Encyclical Letter *Aeterni Patris* On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy, 1879, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris_en.html.

enology. In this sense, philosophy of revelation emerges as the unique kind of thinking which (1) is rooted in the intellectual traditions of the past millennia, (2) offers a new endeavor to redefine philosophy as the overall discipline going beyond particular fields, and (3) develops a new understanding of human thought rising above the traditional distinctions and definitions to create the framework of the intellectual unity of teaching and research in the new millennium.

ORGANIZING UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND TEACHING
AT THE CUTTING-EDGE THEORETICAL ISSUES
WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON AWARENESS RESEARCH
AND QUANTUM MECHANICS

As soon as we have secured the framework of the kind philosophy which ensures unity, Catholic universities are in a position to regain their meaning. The fact is, however, that no university can avoid embarking on a similar journey towards reframing the intellectual unity of research and teaching.

The process may then involve the humanities, such as psychology, sociology, linguistics or history (this has in fact happened, to some extent, in the history of phenomenology), as well as mathematical and natural sciences. I shall highlight here only two disciplines that are of a special importance in our perspective: the so-called awareness research (especially the study of near-death experience) and quantum mechanics. Let me explain the reasons why I think these are important fields and in which way they contribute to the unity of university.

Awareness research is a relatively new field, created in the 1970s and developed by, among others, Bruce Greyson (psychiatrist), Kenneth Ring, Melvin Morse (psychologists), and Michael Sabom (cardiologist).⁴⁰ They introduced the study of near-death experiences into the academic setting. Awareness research entails specific expertise in the life sciences and in thanatology. On the one hand, awareness research investigates death, dying, and resuscitation, adopting a ‘hard,’ scientific approach to these issues,⁴¹ on the other hand, it also addresses language, culture, and religion. Thus awareness research is a complex field of scientific investigation into the nature of consciousness, drawing also on cultural studies.

⁴⁰ See *Foundations of Near-Death Research: A Conceptual and Phenomenological Map*, vols. 1 and 2, ed. Alexander Batthyány (Durham, NC: IANDS Publications, 2018).

⁴¹ See Sam P a r n i a, Ken S p e a r p o i n t, Gabriele d e V o s, et al., “AWARE—AWAreness during Resuscitation: A Prospective Study,” *Resuscitation: Official Journal of the European Resuscitation Council* 85, no. 12 (2014): 1799–805.

As such, awareness research cannot be consistently carried out without properly formulated cosmology and biology. This leads us to the next decisive field of research contemporary universities must focus on, i.e., quantum physics: not only the mathematics of quantum physics, so important in understanding this groundbreaking field of science, but also the assessment of the interpretations of quantum experiments, such as theories proposed by Ervin Laszlo,⁴² Robert Lanza,⁴³ and Pim van Lommel.⁴⁴

In the present context, I cannot discuss in detail the two important aspects of awareness research, namely, the scientific and the humanistic. It is clear, however, that awareness cannot be analyzed merely on the basis of a simple typology, but we need a higher typological theory, and ultimately phenomenology. On the other hand, quantum mechanics should not be considered as the end of the history of the natural sciences, and although it is the prevailing paradigm today, it must be seen in the context of all the paradigm changes the sciences have produced throughout centuries. Three conclusions are particularly relevant: (1) awareness research offers a springboard to a higher level typology pointing to phenomenology, (2) awareness research reaches into quantum biology and quantum cosmology, i.e., applications of quantum theory, and (3) by connecting these fields, we can achieve a certain unity in research based on the intellectual unity of universities grounded in an overall philosophical understanding.

Such a philosophical understanding can be developed on the basis of the philosophy of human personhood or, more generally, on the basis of the philosophical traditions preserved in Central Europe. The Central European philosophy is a treasury of original insights and systematic developments which, in view of the special importance of this philosophy among other traditions, need to be rethought and further developed.⁴⁵

The steps towards regaining the intellectual unity of research and teaching presented above referred to the context of Catholic universities and were based on the doctrine of the Magisterium. However, it is hardly deniable that other universities have to follow a similar path. The central importance of human personhood in research and teaching is not open to serious dispute. The proper understanding of human personhood, however, must be assessed philosophically. We are all aware of the debates around this question and we know that numerous contemporary authors advance strong arguments against

⁴² See Ervin Laszlo, *What is Reality? The Map of Cosmos and Consciousness* (New York: SelectBook, 2016).

⁴³ See Robert Lanza and Robert Bernan, *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe* (Dallas: Bonbella Books, 2009).

⁴⁴ See Pim van Lommel, *Consciousness Beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011).

⁴⁵ See Mezei, "Austrian Theism and the Catholic Principle."

the human specificity. However, without acknowledging the unique nature of human personhood we cannot organize our philosophical and scientific knowledge around a center. The “abolition of man,”⁴⁶ as C. S. Lewis had it, the reduction of the mind to the brain, is equivalent to losing the organizing center of human knowledge—in fact, the organizing center of truth.

As to these debates, let me say briefly the following: if philosophy is dead, as the late Stephen Hawking claimed, then we are in a logical contradiction, as the statement itself is a philosophical proposition. Saying that philosophy is dead we are actually doing philosophy, and so philosophy is alive. Similarly, if the mind is fully reducible to the brain, then there is no truth. The notion of truth entails the existence of mind, spirit, or intellect; if there is truth, there is the mind as distinct from the brain. The brain as a biophysical and chemical entity does not contain or produce truth; it produces biophysical and chemical processes, the establishing of which stands by definition beyond the physical-chemical process. Thus, to say that the mind *is* brain is self-contradictory.

This and similar contradictions confirm the point that all our knowledge about specific fields in the sciences presupposes not only the existence of truth as such but also the possibility of a theory of truth, i.e., philosophy. What we need is indeed the proper development of this philosophy. We have to do this for the sake of truth, for the sake of the theory of truth, but also for the sake of human knowledge as such. In other words, the theory of truth, i.e., philosophy, and the human person, i.e., a being capable of performing this unique kind of activity, must be at the center of the university. The concrete form and content of such a philosophy are, as I have argued, those of the ‘radical philosophical theology of revelation.’ If we possess such a philosophy, then we also have the opportunity to reorganize the intellectual unity of universities. Advancing all these arguments, we find ourselves in a situation not dissimilar from Husserl’s position when he argued against naturalism and historicism in his famous paper entitled “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science.”⁴⁷

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The steps we need to take to regain the intellectual unity of the Catholic university can be shown on a Venn-diagram (figure 1). The diagram describes the movement from the core reflection to the ever-wider elaboration of the re-

⁴⁶ See C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Or, Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

⁴⁷ See Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” trans. Marcus Brainard, *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* 2 (2002): 249–95.

lated dimensions of knowledge. These dimensions and the movement inherent in them portray the parallel developments of research and teaching—within the philosophical framework of the traditions we strongly need to liberate from problematic influences.

The Venn-diagram below outlines the intellectual unity of the university translated into the unity of research. Whether this intellectual unity can lead to ‘the unity of a community based on a shared valid paradigm’ is a more complex question. It seems that a community that goes beyond a rather formal collegiality would be difficult to achieve at the university with its multiple faculties and disciplines. However, the ‘valid paradigm’ has been outlined in the present paper. It is indeed ‘valid’ in accordance with the insights from which my approach proceeds. The paradigm in question provides the basis for a community of those who share the understanding of the intellectual unity of the university. By outlining the intellectual unity, not only do we work together in a community, but we also presuppose the existence of human persons capable of understanding this unity and sharing it in an important way. Thereby we have created the context of a human community that is needed for the third meaning of the unity of the university.

In my conclusion, then, the unity of the university—especially of the Catholic one, but also that of any other university—can be restored on the basis of all three factors, i.e., intellectual effort, the structure of research, and the genuine community of researchers. I add that this is only an outline and the workable community must be formed in the cooperation of scholars, researchers, and intellectuals in the framework of the university as the most important institution of human understanding.

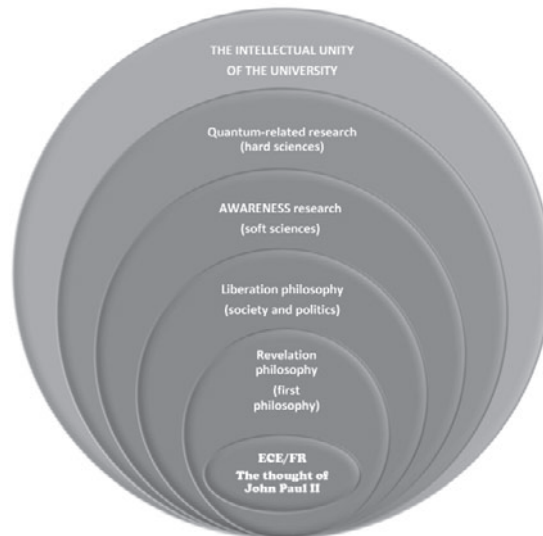


Fig. 1. Steps towards the intellectual unity of the Catholic University.

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ABSTRACT / ABSTRAKT

Balázs M. MEZEI, Can the Unity of the University Be Restored in Our Age?

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In this paper I argue that the intellectual unity of the university, in particular the Catholic university, can and must be restored. This becomes clear in the light of a new reading of the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*—both promulgated with the intention to reform university research and teaching. I offer a reconsideration of these documents on the basis of what I call a ‘radical philosophical theology of revelation,’ and also on the basis of a ‘philosophy of the people’ developed with respect to the intellectual background of Pope Francis. If the intellectual unity of the Catholic university is restored along these lines, the question of the genuine community of university researchers and teachers can be addressed anew. In particular, I argue that the philosophical basis of Catholic universities needs to be reinterpreted and linked to important fields of contemporary science, especially quantum theory and awareness study. As I show in a Venn-diagram, the various layers of the unity of university research, teaching and community can be connected to one another in a systemic way in which philosophy, in particular the philosophy of revelation, plays the fundamental role.

Keywords: university, renewal of the Catholic university, philosophy of revelation, philosophy of the people, quantum physics, awareness research, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, *Fides et Ratio*

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Balázs M. MEZEI, Czy możliwe jest w naszych czasach przywrócenie jedności uniwersytetu?

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W artykule wykazuję, że intelektualna jedność uniwersytetu, a zwłaszcza uniwersytetu katolickiego, może i musi zostać przywrócona. Staje się to jasne w świetle nowego odczytania konstytucji apostolskiej *Ex corde Ecclesiae* oraz encykliki *Fides et ratio*, które zostały ogłoszone w celu zainicjowania reformy badań i nauczania prowadzonych na uniwersytetach. Proponuję nową refleksję nad tymi dokumentami opartą na radykalnej teologicznej filozofii Objawienia oraz „filozofii ludu” wyrosłej z intelektualnego kontekstu, w którym osadzone jest nauczanie papieża Franciszka. Jeśli jedność uniwersytetu katolickiego zostanie odbudowana zgodnie z tymi wytycznymi, można będzie również ponownie podjąć kwestię prawdziwej wspólnoty badaczy i wykładowców. W szczególności twierdzę, że należy dokonać reinterpretacji filozoficznych założeń uniwersytetu katolickiego i odnieść je do ważnych obszarów współczesnej nauki, zwłaszcza do teorii kwantów i badań nad świadomością. Jak pokazuję za pomocą diagramu Venna, różne płaszczyzny jedności uniwersytetu: badania, nauczanie i wspólnota, mogą zostać powiązane w system, w którym filozofia, a zwłaszcza filozofia Objawienia, odgrywa podstawową rolę.

Słowa kluczowe: uniwersytet, odnowa uniwersytetu katolickiego, filozofia Objawienia, filozofia ludu, fizyka kwantowa, badania nad świadomością, *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, *Fides et ratio*

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