Especially after the historical turnovers in 1989, which averted the ideological scission of the continent, another process of historical magnitude was noted in Europe: the setting up, in 1993, of the European Union, its extension towards East and the beginning of the formation of a “European society”, on the old places of fragmentations and national conflicts. This accomplishment represents a profound and beneficial turning point in the evolution of the continent, which offers reasons of satisfaction to the one who knows the previous dramatic decades of penury, oppression and isolation in the Central and East-European history. Therefore, the glass of the European unification, initiated with the Treaty of Rome (1957), is more than half full.

Still, the anticipation of the European identity and its experience not merely as a geographical identity, but as a civil one, has remained, however, an open process, being mediated, in the reality of life on the continent, by processes eminently economic and political. Sometimes, situations are full of promises, especially during the periods of economic reviving and of affirmation of the unity of action of European countries. In reverse, circumspection and a touch of pessimism prevail during the periods of recession and political misunderstandings. During such periods, the following question is asked: has Europe overcome its
old “crisis” that Nietzsche used to place in the process of human personalization in Europe, that Husserl saw as a crisis of meaning, synonym with Europe’s “self-oblivion”, that Heidegger placed in the misunderstanding of fundaments and Horkheimer and Adorno in the “abbreviation of reason”, in its European understanding, and, more recently, that Joseph Ratzinger placed in the “narrowing of reason” mostly under the conditions of the expansion of science and technique?

We have many factual indicators showing that the glass of the European unification is more than just half full, but also that old and new problems persist. In the middle of the '90s, Stanley Hoffman talked about the “crisis of the European Union”, the indicator of which would be, first of all, the small majority with which the Treaty of Maastricht was voted in the countries of the union, as well as other indicators, such as: the backwardness of the monetary union; the commercial differences within the union; the difficulties of the social policy, of integrating the European East; the emphasis, in certain moments, in the unifying process, only on the intergovernmental action. According to Stanley Hoffman, the European Union remains covered by disjunctions it cannot overcome: between politics, which is still national, and economy, which is no longer national; between economy, which has become common, and diplomacy and defense, where the union still hesitates; between a consolidated West and an instable East. The way out of the situation, according to the same analysts, is delayed by the absence of a leading elite and of effective leaders who, having a comprehensive overview of the facts, capable to transcend the given frontiers of the reality, could inspire, just like in the '50s and '80s, a new dynamics to the European unification.

The theme of the absence of the elite capable of overcoming, through their analyses, the horizon of a situation frequently intervenes when there is a feeling of crisis and the risk of becoming a common place. On the other hand, the need for European unification and the impulses in its direction have always been acutely felt during the periods of European crisis. The developing unification project is, in fact, the outcome of a situation in which Europe, as a whole, has been and is

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3 Ibidem
4 Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Dialektik der Aufklärung, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 1967.
put in peril. Irrespective of the fact that the theme of the absence of the elite is a convenient reflex in this situation or that it has a real coverage, one thing is visibly imposed: the weakening, in some realistic considerations of the given empiric situations, of the visions anchored in values and capable of motivating actions to change the situations. In fact, people are so absorbed by the insertion in the extremely mobile contexts of the profession, the economic and institutional life, and the politics, that the aspiration to change what there is fades. If this aspiration can be called “utopian” and if the opposite of the “utopian” approach is a “historical” approach in a certain way, then we can accept the thesis that a “horizon” has been opened and has become influential over the world, a horizon that “combines” the history and the “utopian” contents. Habermas said, in his famous discourse held in the Parliament of Spain (1984), that «heute sehst es so aus, als seien die utopischen Energien aufgezehrt, als hätten sie sich vom geschichtlichen Denken zurückgezogen. Der Horizont der Zukunft hat sich zusammengesetzt und den Zeitgeist wie die Politik gründlich verändert. Die Zukunft ist negative besetzt; an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert zeichnet sich das Schreckenspanorama der wertweiten Gefährdung allgemeiner Lebensinteressen ab: die Spiral des Wettprütens, die unkontrollierte Verbreitung von Kernwaffen, die strukturelle Verarmung der Entwicklungsländer, Arbeitslosigkeit und wachsende soziale Ungleichgewichte in den entwickelten Ländern, Probleme der Umweltbelastung, katastrophenhähn operierende Großtechnologien geben die Stichworte, die über Massenmedien ins öffentliche Bewusstsein eingedrungen sind. Die Antworten der Intellektuellen spiegeln nicht weniger als die der Politiker Ratlosigkeit. Es ist keineswegs nur Realismus, wenn eine forsch akzeptierte Ratlosigkeit mehr und mehr an die Stelle von zukunftsgerichteten Orientierungsversuchen tritt. Die Lage mag objektiv unübersichtlich sein. Unübersichtlichkeit ist indessen auch eine Funktion der Handlungsbereitschaft, die sich eine Gesellschaft zutraut. Es geht um das Vertrauen der westlichen Kultur in sich selbst».7

How can we explain the fact that, under the conditions of the late modernity in Europe, a “non-transparency” and a fall in a voracious exploitation of the present, which discredit the possibilities of the future, are produced? Habermas has noticed the fact that the modern society disposes of determined resources from which it extracts the capacity to organize and configure the future. There would be three such resources: “money”, “power” and “solidarity”. The late modernity, which is being lived nowadays in Western Europe, has reached the “non-transparency”, in the politico-social form of the “social status”, as it has exploited only the “money” and “power” resources. It can open a new horizon and, therefore, it can break through the “non-transparency”, going towards the exploitation of the “solidarity” resource.8

7 Jürgen Habermas, Die Krise der Wohlfahrtsstaates und die Erschöpfung utopischer Energien, in Jürgen Habermas, Die Neue Unübersichtlichkeit, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1985, p. 143.
8 Ibidem, p. 147-163.
However, we cannot ask whether the interpretation given by Habermas embodies comprehensively enough the “resources” that feed modern society and whether it offers a sufficient way out of the “non-transparency” situation. I personally believe that the very important resource of “solidarity” is closely related to another resource characteristic to modernity, the “perceived meaning of life”. Modernity has not been and it is not possible without the conscience, significantly spread from the social point of view, of a meaning of life that is marked by the human being; given the situation, the exploitation of the “solidarity” and of the “perceived meaning of life” resources can reopen the horizon towards the still unfulfilled possibilities of the situations and, therefore, they can defeat the “non-transparency”.

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In recent years, against the background of a perceptible crisis of cultural resources, the systematic knowledge of the role of a leader and of successful leadership has been developed. Many assumptions of traditional political philosophy are being reconsidered. It is thus rightfully considered that leadership is a process by which a person determines others to accomplish objectives and directs an organization in a way that makes it more efficient and coherent, while leaders are persons who carry out this process by applying procedures, personal decisions, values, knowledge and skills.

Our current language – especially when it is not connected to the evolution of specialized research – tends to mix bosses, managers and leaders, as if they were the same thing: the word “boss” means “a person that leads”, “manager” is the one who exercises “the activity and the art to lead”, and “leader” means “chief”. Obviously, the distinctions, resulted from the new organizational culture, are getting away from some dictionaries. The fact that the English language makes a distinction between “boss”, “manager” and “leader” is of course not an excuse, and it is not mandatory to adopt definitions from a certain language, but it is a cultural duty to share the semantic delimitations, since these compress knowledge.

If we accept Aristotle’s argument that the presence of “reasoning spirit” (nous) allows an organization to reach its goal (and it is impossible not to accept it today, when organizations that let themselves be dissolved in the chaotic movement of components are not competitive), then the distinction between bosses, managers and leaders is worth employing. It is not a mere verbal distinction; on the contrary, this distinction allows us to shed light on the critical situations within institutions, companies, corporations, where there are bosses and infighting between those who aspire to become bosses, but where there are no managers, and where leaders have not yet arrived.

Today, in the research on organization, the leader is considered to be different from a boss. The “boss” is at the top of an organization, and the actions of his/her staff depend on his/her decisions, his/her power depending on the position, whereas the “leader” also

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has authority, but authority granted by the ability to understand the organization within a context, to orient it according to new directions, and to make these convincing for everyone else. The “manager”, in his/her turn, is something else. As compared to the boss, the “manager” has the advantage of having enough knowledge on the functioning of the organization and on competences, and as compared to the “leader”, the “manager” works in a given frame of strategic options. Only the “leader” can take the responsibility for changing major options.

Is there a need for leaders in organizations, companies, corporations? It is a fact that “bosses” there are aplenty, and that the fight for becoming a boss is a given, as soon as there is an open possibility. “Managers” are fewer, because the creation of a real decisive manager involves strenuous effort to learn and acquire the necessary abilities. With “leaders”, an organization is not only efficient, but also long-lasting, not just existent, but also competitive, not only conspicuous, but relevant as well. Especially in the context of globalization, in which, as Robert Reich argues\(^\text{10}\), success on the markets depends not on the “high volume” of the product, but on its “high value”. Therefore, the intelligence incorporated in the product, and in its productions implies qualified managers and valuable leaders (who do not lead only physically, but who are “leaders in ideas, in actions”).

The immediate question regards the leaders’ selection. “Bosses” are the result of one’s access to a position; but neither the “manager” nor the “leader” is created because they have leading positions. Actually, many “bosses” are lousy managers, and they will never get to be leaders. On the other hand, the passage from “boss” to “manager” or “leader” is not made through the simple effort of the person in question (“positions do not create leaders”); the wise saying “May God spare you of the ungifted hardworking person” is here a warning.

So how are leaders produced? Starting from recent research, we have to make three connected observations. The first refers to the fact that the leader is not self-proclaimed, but that he/she is acknowledged, and that leadership is not primarily ceremonial, but a position of hard work. The traditional work of Cartwright and Zander (Group Dynamics: Research and Theory, 1968)\(^\text{11}\) rightfully considered leadership as consisting of actions of «setting group goals, moving the group toward its goal, improving the quality of interactions among the members, building cohesiveness of the group, and making resources available to the group». The second observation is that the leader is made, not born. Miraculous endowments for leadership, a type of mysterious predestination, exist only for the naïve. The leader is the result of a learning process in at least three dimensions: knowledge that can be used from the technical point of view, interaction abilities, and self-reflexivity. The third observation is that we move in the environment of deep changes regarding the image of the leader. The leader “is made” through “continuous work and study”, and he/she does not rely on the success obtained (“Tal-


ent needs to be nurtured”). Both the traditional theory of the leader (“chieftain”, “prince” etc.), as a result of special “traits” (“the trait theory”), and the modern theory of the leader, as a product of exceptional circumstances (“the great events theory”), have lost their attractiveness when compared to the conception of the leader as a result of continuous learning (“the transformational theory”).

It must be observed that leadership is inseparable from values. Any decision or action of a leader has inevitable ethical consequences so that – as the mission statement of the Harvard Business School says – «the teaching of ethics has to be here explicit, not implicit, and the community values of mutual respect, honesty and integrity, and personal accountability support the learning environment».

The need for leaders in the institutions operating in our complex environment has been felt for several decades. Today, this problem should be solved by taking into account the context of globalization and that of its inherent multiculturalism. On the agenda of formation we find today in some universities global leadership, and, of course, intercultural leadership, which cannot be left out of the university programs. I would like to provide four remarks concerning these two themes, from the point of view of university formation.

The first remark refers to the need to accommodate an increasing number of universities with the situation of globalization and multiculturalism, taking into consideration the fact that new generations of graduates will be operating inside this situation, and that universities themselves are successful if they approach their own performance globally.

The second remark refers to conceiving organizations run by competitive leaders. The metaphor of the organization as a “machine” that can be projected, measured, directed, obviously a modern metaphor relegitimated by cybernetics, is no longer working. It needs to be replaced by the metaphor of the organism, which is more capable of acknowledging the circumstance that efficient organizations are nowadays networks, communities, knowledge and learning systems. Leadership includes, as the Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management (2007)\textsuperscript{12} shows, questions such as: what needs to be done? What can and should I do to make a difference? Which are the performances and results? What can and should I do for stimulating diversity of approaches? How can I strengthen the role and the responsibility of the followers? Am I the most proficient in my position? It is nowadays true that «change and global leadership are inextricably linked. The key change challenges which face global leaders are linked to the changes that are occurring as organizations move from being bureaucratic machines to being knowledge-based networks. Specifically, leaders must guide their organizations to produce results today, even as they push for transformation which will positively impact the future»\textsuperscript{13}.


The third remark is that global leadership today deals with cultural, ethnical, political representations, which are larger than those with which we have been accustomed, and that formation for intercultural leadership becomes part of university curricula. It is no longer sufficient to accept cultural differences, it is necessary to know and understand them. That is why, if we accept that universities form “competences” – which means „the knowledge, general and technical skills required for superior performance” – then the formation of global competences and, at the same time, of intercultural competences should become part of university programs. The Global Competence Development Program and the Intercultural Competence Development Program become indispensable for a competitive university.

The fourth remark is that today we have available factual research devoted to establishing intercultural leadership competences, which is informative as to what needs to be done in the university. We should distinguish, nevertheless, between “intrapersonal competences” (self-awareness, flexibility, curiosity, patience, imagination etc.), “interpersonal competences” (“perspective taking”, “nonjudgmental”), “intercultural competences” (“effective communication”, “appreciation of difference”, “local-global perspective”, “understanding of how leadership is conceptualized in other cultures”)\(^\text{14}\). The one who acquires “intercultural leadership competences” is required to perform specific tasks: to clarify his own notion of culture, which has to be well formed; to be able to apply it; to understand its own cultural background; to be able to analyze and evaluate intercultural situations, to be able to negotiate in these situations, and to take decisions in a multicultural environment; to motivate participants in these situations; to form intercultural teams; and to exert intercultural leadership.

Data on the Earth’s climate which does not fit at all with routine of the indicators has been recently made available. The planet is currently undergoing the severest climate change in the last 10,000 years. The 20th century has brought about a real mutation regarding the relationship of humankind to its natural environment: in fact, everything has changed completely. Since 1760, the growth of the population, which had been constant for centuries, has started to accelerate. Economic activity has accelerated as well, leading mankind to the usage of “animated energies”. During the last century, world population has increased four times, the economy fourteen times, the energy consumption sixteen times, the industrial production forty times, the emission of carbon dioxide thirteen times, and used water nine times.

These growths have brought changes to the spheres in which human life is lived, changes that have to be sternly taken into consideration\(^\text{15}\). The lithosphere


(the rocks which form the surface of the Earth, with a thickness of several kilometers) does not raise any severe problems yet, but the pedosphere (the membrane between the lithosphere and the atmosphere that actually sustains the lives of plants and organisms) is altered by hundreds of millions of tons of artificial fertilizers that leave their mark on the composition of water and food, and that ultimately find their way into our bodies. “Soil erosion” already affects one third of the agricultural surface of the Earth, while food quantity for every inhabitant is today bigger than at any other time in history. The atmosphere is affected by “pollution”, and it also being “cleaned” of the microorganisms which ensured the emergence of life. “Climate change” and, finally, “global warming” come as consequences to the increase of atmospheric carbon dioxide emissions, methane and ozone, but the exact causes are subject to dispute. Agriculture, human health, and even the existence of our species will be affected more and more. The hydrosphere is already so polluted that “the change of the hydrologic cycle” has occurred, and the supplying of drinking water becomes ever more difficult. The biosphere suffers the consequences of the anti-microbial offensive, which has annihilated certain diseases, but also of the re-emergence of old diseases, considered to be extinguished, and of the appearance of new diseases. On the other hand, the “agricultural system” already has a lot of problems.

The importance of the full magnitude of the human intervention in the environment has been correctly underlined by John McNeil, in *Something New under the Sun*. This approach inevitably interferes with the trends we already know. For instance, McNeil implicitly disproves Heidegger’s a priori skeptical diagnosis, from *Die Frage nach der Technik*, motivating that the technical and economic development has saved humankind from worldwide hunger. When he admits that the “gamble” of humanity, which dominated the last century, does not justify the ideology of the progress inherited from the previous centuries, but that it demands a deep meditation, the American historian actually prolongs the warnings of Jose Marti and H.G. Wells who, as everyone knows, were the first to ask themselves if the great development of human activities was possible without “degrading” the environment. But, compared to Heidegger, Jose Marti and H.G. Wells, John McNeil salutary brings the answer of a far-reaching historian (even though his world prestige is only growing now!). Evidently, the theorems of philosophy always need a historical check.

But, the “collision” apparent in the ecologic indicators from *Something New under the Sun* is even more important. In his argument, McNeill adopts Pythagoras’ idea about the “harmony of the spheres” as an explicit “paradigm” of his analysis. In a very ingenious way, he emphasizes a brilliant intuition, assuming the necessity of harmony among the lithosphere, the pedosphere, the hydrosphere, the at-

16 J. McNeil, op. cit.

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mosphere, the biosphere, and mankind’s activities and initiatives powered by interest and values. In the 20th century, humanity reached a profound disturbance of the correlation between the above-mentioned spheres, and today’s problems and those of tomorrow are mostly its outcomes. These problems are not old and unimportant, since “in the 20th century, humanity has rearranged the atoms and has altered the chemistry of the stratosphere”. The connection between the “spheres” has been affected in a risky way, and thus individuals have become for the first time “significant ecological agents”.

Punctual action is encouraged today as a solution. But, as the 2006 State of the Future declaration concludes, humankind has the resources to approach the global challenges it gives rise to, but, unfortunately, it is not yet clear how much vision, goodwill and intelligence will have to be concentrated on these challenges. And such persistent vagueness affects not only humankind’s relationship with the environment, but also the relationships within humankind itself.

For instance, not even today can the international community give proper solutions, answers that could change the situation significantly, to recurrent conflicts, recidivist aggressors, or stable poverty. For now, one may draw a conclusion which is obviously not the solution: «There is a growing hunger around the world to do what is necessary for our common future, but there is a lack of an efficient leadership, with details for the actions. We have a competition between the growing proliferation of dangers and our growing ability to improve human condition».

Which one of these two growths will be bigger? It remains an open question, without a certain answer.

However, we cannot deceive ourselves when we look at what is happening around us: a wide-spread discredit of the concern for your fellow man and a visible erosion of the conscience of moral duties. Gilles Lipovetsky impressively surprised this phenomenon, in a memorable book, Le crépuscule du devoir. L’éthique indolore des nouveaux temps démocratiques19, when he talked about the passing, for now in modern democracies, to the “postmoralist society”: «pour la première fois, voici une société qui, loin d’exalter les commandements supérieurs, les euphémise et les décréabilise, qui dévalue l’idéal d’abnégation en stimulant systématiquement les désirs immédiats, la passion de l’ego, le bonheur intimiste et matérialiste. Nos sociétés ont liquidé toutes les valeurs sacrificielles, qu’elles soient commandées par l’autre vie ou par des finalités profanes, la culture quotidienne n’est plus irriguée par les impératifs hyperboliques du devoir mais par le bien-être et la dynamique des droits subjectifs, nous avons cessé de reconnaître l’obligation de nous attacher à

18 Ibidem, p. 21.

But this phenomenon of “destruction of sacrificial values”, which brings the amplification of the “exclusion and social marginalization tendencies”, is not, however, the ultimate reality, beyond which one could not pass. Actually, people are not for one moment dispensed of the obligation to choose between concise alternatives, and their choices depend on how they will live. Anyway, to promote “intelligent ethics”, as Gilles Lipovetsky recommends, without excessive hopes and without disarming, to activate ethics attached to the «humanist principles, but take into consideration the efficacy performances, interests and exigencies», always remain at hand. Only that the “intelligent ethics” as well need plansibility and, for this, they need foundation.

After the First World War, Europe was no longer the economic and political world center. After the Second World War, Europe ceased to be the cultural center as well: Europe continuously depended on the U.S.A. Only that, once with the setting up of the European Union – which, however, could not have been made without the American impulses and support – Europe became a more profiled actor on the world scene. The European Union and the U.S.A. are related through numerous connections and they develop in a unity full of differentiations, in which one’s view over the other is important for each one of them, as well as for the development of the world we live in.

How is Europe seen in the current American views? Let’s look at the reference analyses consecrated by historians, economists, philosophers in the U.S.A. to the European situation and evolution during the past three years.

It is worth mentioning since the beginning the ample monograph Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945 of Tony Judt. A striking observation of the historian is that of the latest apparent “irrelevancy” of intellectual debates for Europeans: not only that the Michnick-Glucksman talk did not succeed in attracting the attention of the public, but neither did the Habermas-Derrida debate manage to give media coverage to it22. However, in depth, has the very “problem of Europe” changed: this is no longer “Socialism or Capitalism” and neither the “Left versus Right”, or the “Third Way”, not even “Europe versus America”, but a new one: what is Europe doing with its cultural traditions, with its national states? On the other hand, from now on, Europe has to maintain itself in a threesome competition, together with America and China. However, only Europe can offer another «serviceable model to propose for universal emulation». One cannot overlook the fact that European countries have difficulties in processing and assuming their past and, consequently, in ensuring “civic health”. But, above all, one can say what more than sixty years ago few could foresee – i.e. that «the twenty-first

20 Idem, p. 15.


22 Ibidem.
century might yet belong to Europe» 23.

In The Cube and the Cathedral. Europe, America, and Politics Without God 24, George Weigel invokes many facts – the decrease of work productivity in Europe, which makes Germany reach the level of Arkansas; bureaucracy suffocates democracy in many places; the weakening of decisional courage under the excuse of procedures; the lack of courage in the stigmatization of crimes in different parts of the world; population “depolitization” (Pierre Manent); “intellectual’s Christophobia”; “anonymization of death”; “demographical suicide”, etc. – for a severe prognosis: «In brief, while the United States may eventually be headed for a crisis of civilizational morale, Europe is in such a crisis today» 25. The distant cause is on the road taken ninety years ago – when European cultures started to describe themselves as “post-Christian” 26. «That crisis of civilizational morale, in turn, helps us understand why European man is abandoning the hard work and high adventure of democratic politics, seeming to prefer the false domestic security of bureaucracy and the dubious international security offered by the U.N. system» 27. George Weigel considers Europe has given up to a «falling in love with the present» (Rémi Brague) that indentures it from what it is and detains it from assuming new civilisational initiatives.

The absence of well enough defined projects in today’s Europe is the angular reference point of Glen Morgan’s argumentation, in The Idea of a European Superstate. Public Justification and European Integration 28. The author makes clearer than anyone else the distinction between “justification” (the enunciation of purposes and the description of objectives) and “legitimization” (establishment of the source of power) of institutions and decisions, often confused in European practices. Glen Morgan considers that nowadays «the European project suffers from a justificatory deficit» 29 and is confronted with five “challenges”: “demographic decline”, “globalization”, “rivalry of the great powers”, “energetic dependency”, “difficulty of civic integration”. Based on those things, however, «the great weakness of the E.U. as it presently operates is that it decentralizes functions that ought to be centralized, such as, most importantly, foreign and defense policies» 30. Anyway, Europe has to strengthen its “justification” and to clarify what it has to do.

23 Idem, p. 800.
25 Idem, p. 27.
26 Ibidem, p. 40.
27 Ibidem, p. 53.
29 Ibidem.
30 Id., p. 204.
Joseph Stiglitz takes to another point the talk about Europe: the impact of Neoliberal policies, applied in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989, under the surveillance of international financial institutions. In *Marketing Globalization Work*[^31], the famous economist writes: «The capital market liberalization pushed by the IMF made matters worse because it made it easier for the oligarchs who had stripped assets from the corporations they controlled to take their money offshore, to places where secure property rights were already well established. They enjoyed benefits of weak legal frameworks at home and strong property protections abroad»[^32]. Obviously, the problem does not consist in avoiding privatization, but in placing “sound regulations and strong tax laws”[^33] before it. However, in comparison to Russia, China’s experience offers arguments in order to put in defensive the protectors of approaching liberalization only from its strict economic dimension. According to Joseph Stiglitz, a comprehensive approach of the situations, seriously taking into consideration the legislative dimension, would be the best solution.

If Tony Judt still considers there is a chance for the 21st century to be the “European century” – after the 20th century was the “American century” – Walter Laqueur thinks the perspectives are darkened. In *The Last Days of Europe. Epitaph for an Old Continent*[^34], the famous American historian accuses the fact that community Europe is more concentrated on expansion than on integration. Even worse, Europe ignores the unavoidable demographic decline of indigenous Europeans (the book of J.C. Chesnais, *La transition démographique*, Paris, 1986, is eloquent) and the weakening of the new immigrants’ will to integrate and, of course, their consequences. The thing is that, however, «until about the year 2000, most thinking about the future of Europe, political, social, economic, or cultural, ignored demography»[^35]. Walter Laqueur insists on the idea of not giving up, in the reflection upon Europe, that “wishful thinking” that impedes the notice of difficulties which result from the “demographic decline” and from the non-integration of immigrants in the European values.

With *L’Era della turbolenza*[^36], Alan Greenspan draws the attention on another decisive aspect for the future development of Europe: «il declino della forza lavoro europea»[^37]. Unquestionable achievements in the process of European unification are reached, and the fact that, in 2006, Euro represented 25% of the

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[^33]: Ibidem.
[^35]: Id., p. 33.
[^37]: Id., p. XII.
reserves of central banks and 39% of the fluid credit of the international private sector, the trends being favorable to the European currency, is eloquent. However, those trends do not have to impede us from observing the problems of the united Europe. For instance, related to the well-known “strategy from Lisbon”, one has to admit that «attualmente, il progresso di quei lodevoli intenti è piuttosto arretrato»\(^{38}\). The European unification is, undoubtedly, a well performed work, but it is not exempt from major difficulties.

The American analyses of reference are worth being taken into consideration not only because, after all, they can be found in the decisions of the U.S.A. – which would be, of course, a sufficient reason. Those analyses are, first of all, particularly qualified, which is a crucial fact in a world in which communications tend to suffocate the information and, most of all, the argumentations.

One who would try to build an opinion about our current intellectual life is faced with two facts: on the one hand, globalization, the spreading of communication, connect people from all around the world, from different cultures, and also internationalize solutions, and, on the other hand, when people take reference points of evaluation and behavior, they relate, first of all, to their own culture. Thus, despite the pressure of creating a global identity, a lot of people come up with particular identities (ethnic, religious, of gender etc.). In *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*\(^{39}\), Richard Rorty expresses, in a very coherent philosophical manner, the individual’s contextual anchorage (to their own, particular, cultural standards), and the rejection of the universal reference points. Rorty makes our entire reality dependent on our own cultural arsenal. We have become, he says quite contentedly, “commonsensical finitists”\(^ {40}\), and the only thing we have left is to promote a “tolerant conversability”\(^ {41}\), without assuming any other intrinsic nature of the reality. Thus, contextual relativism is inevitable.

Even granting this intelligent philosophy the merit of expressing, better than any other one in the Modern Era, the possibility of the different conceptualization having a series of facts as its object, we cannot shun a deeper insight into the unacceptable consequences of relativism. The spokesmen of great trends, thinkers with different platforms, from Karl Popper\(^ {42}\) to Haber-
mas and to Joseph Ratzinger, have evoked them convincingly. Relativism is quickly converted into a dogma that contradicts its principle (“all is relative”), and stimulates the destruction of the unity of humankind, with all the implications that result from it. Relativism does not adequately take into consideration the human process of learning, which does not reduce itself to information, but which means the change of thinking frames or “boxes”. Relativism, by its own principle, does not take into consideration the natural telos of conversation, of speaking in general – that of obtaining the understanding between different rival points of view.

Today, Relativism may be overcome if it is faced not only with arguments brought against it, but also with alternative conceptions. We have at our disposal several proposals to date: such as to re-establish the motto “unity in diversity”, to weigh in a “view from nowhere”, to exploit the new continent of “communication”, to articulate a “fallible absolutism”, to consider the unavoidable consequences of Relativism. I believe that Relativism cannot be overcome without accepting two assumptions. The first represents the passage from the classical “universalism of norms”, which is challenged by the cultural diversification, to a “universalism of generative structures” – a universalism of those conditions that make a certain performance possible. The second assumption acknowledges the need to move from descriptions, poems, oral expression, dialogue, essay, journal, aphorism, epistle, to mathematic exposures to theories, knowledge systems and comprehensive visions. Nowadays we need not only knowledge, in its general meaning – which, of course, remains indispensable – but also visions capable of realizing what is the meaning of the actions, of the institutions, of life, of society, of the world, and what is the meaning of knowledge inside them.

Recently, a remarkable physicist reminded us that, due to several factors – the competition in research, the pressure from the society to transfer scientific knowledge, the search for funds, the unstable work situation – the new generations engage in more factual research, finding solutions for problems on short term, without committing themselves to far-reaching projects. We may add that this is the situation not only in the field of scientific research, but it is connected to a more comprehensive orientation of culture towards facts, immediate, cus-

43 J. Habermas, Nachmetaphysisches Denken, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1988.
46 J. Habermas, op. cit., p. 179.
toms, and to the predisposition towards what lies at the origin of the fact, of the immediate, of the custom, which implies a reduction of the appetite for theory, system, project. In the 80s, Habermas identified as one of the consequences of this orientation the apparent “exhaustion of the Utopian energies (Erschöpfung der utopischen Energien)”\textsuperscript{49}. The dominant direction in today’s culture is that of exploiting what is given, rather than asking what is possible. Moreover, a “negative futurism” is developed: “let’s leave things the way they are, because it may be not so good”.

Anyway, the physicist I have quoted, Paolo Blasi, after having analyzed the application, salutary of course, of the Bologna Declaration (1999), draws this conclusion: “the challenge of the European society today is to go beyond ‘the knowledge society’, and to evolve into what could be called a ‘wisdom society’; Knowledge is a conscious use of information; ‘wisdom’ means choosing one’s behavior based on knowledge and shared values, in order to enhance the well-being of all, and the awareness that personal actions have social consequences”\textsuperscript{50}.

Indeed, this is an effective and pressing problem. Let us put in motion a wisdom capable of enlightening people about their own responsibility. I believe that Paolo Blasi is too optimistic when he speaks about the “restoration of some medieval values – the quest for truth, the unity of knowledge, the openness to the unknown and to other cultures”, as simple “restoration” has grown improbable for reasons of the new situation’s complexity. Still, the Italian author is right when he considers that today’s universities have the responsibility of setting a larger and greater goal than producing and transmitting knowledge, in the projection of a “developed and peaceful world”.

Meanwhile, problems of the civilization we live in continue to grow worse, problems not related to “ideologies”, or the “divergence of great visions”, but that touch upon the very understanding of human life, and question not so much some specific orientation in life but life itself. In the first instance four such problems come to mind: first, the new clarification of what inevitably is “the cell of the society”, against the backdrop of the dissolution of the family, around which the culture we share has been built; second, the new explanation of “human nature”, in the context of the explanation that can prevent the foreseeable danger of enabling the human being to become the raw material for its technologies; third, the clarification of the mediating role of moral, civic, and esthetic values in society, considering the continuous rise in the conversion of values to functions; finally, a new explanation of the meaning of human life, in circumstances in which, on the one hand, we cannot part with its uniqueness, and with meaning, as long as the human condition is a feature


common to all of us; on the other hand, no substitute for the “redemption” of the Judeo-Christian tradition was found. Such problems are in no way ordinary, and they require the presence of cultural commitment and capacity to provide answers to such questions, in the new situation of humanity\(^51\). They cannot be properly solved without new visions.

What happened, not long ago, at “La Sapienza” University of Rome – when a small group of people tempted to impede the Pope’s discourse – arises inevitable serious questions: isn’t that democracy itself has become vulnerable before small but offensive groups of people, in the era of maximum promotion through the media? Isn’t that the quest for truth is nowadays used as an ideology to impede the debate?

One can long discuss about each question. I limit myself to evoking, with comments inevitably concise in this situation, the facts that increase the gravity of the theme of the relation between reason and faith, and that confer it new solving horizons.

Chronologically, one has to begin with the years 1971-1973, when several physicists (Robert H. Dicke, Brandon Carter, Paul Davies) from the U.S.A., Israel and Australia, noticed that what has been assumed in the construction of the theories in physics and biology (constant speed of light, Planck constant, Boltzmann constant, etc.) as “constants of nature” are measures convergent with the appearance of life and human mind. Therefore, arguments were formulated in order to accept the “anthropogenic principle” of universe organization. Who could, however, set the universe on anthropogenic foundations? The physicist Paul Davies\(^52\) found in evolution the signs of a “mind of God” and so he brought again into discussion the relation between religion and science\(^53\).

Another physicist, Frank Tipler\(^54\) argued that the laws of physics should be accepted irrespective of their compatibility with the Genesis, the famous book of the Bible (“A law of physics should never be denounced just because of the religious objections against the consequences resulting from it”), but he drew an unexpected conclusion: in the virtue of the well-known laws of physics themselves, the universe exists from a certain moment, and, this way, the laws of physics themselves presuppose the intervention of someone from outside the space and time. In brief, the laws of physics themselves presuppose the existence of God! A biologist, Rupert Riedl\(^55\), has already argued that “no one can think without metaphysi-


\(^{53}\) Ibidem, chapters 8, 9.

\(^{54}\) F. Tipler, Ein – Designer Universum, 1973

cal premises”, so that not even the understanding of a law of environmental sciences, be it from physics, can be reached without assumptions that go beyond that law.

Encouraged by the latest debates in environmental sciences, Hans Küng saw the “miracles” narrated by the Bible not as “interruptions of the course controlled by the laws of nature”, but as “interpretations”, therefore not as “narrations of events”, but as “signs” of the presence of a supreme power in the world56.

The purpose of many of today’s physicists, biologists, philosophers, theologists is no longer to establish clearly once and for all the relationship between science, religion and philosophy and they do not support the exclusivism of any of them. They propose, however, their cooperation. Habermas pleads for the continuous open “dialogue” of the great forms of the spirit, Joseph Ratzinger has talked about the “imperious correlation between reason and faith”57, and Hans Küng has talked about their “complementarity”58. A new solidarity between reason and faith has arguments.

The relation between reason and faith worsened from another perspective as well: the emergence of the religious fundamentalism, which relaunched the formula of an “absolutely transcendent” God, an “arbitrary deity”. As a reaction, Pope Benedict XVI (with two memorable books: Glaube und Vernunft; Gott und die Vernunft) argued, more than anyone else, three cardinal theses: “to act despite reason is contrary to the essence of God”; to conceive God as a logos is related not only to the impact of Hellenism upon Christianity, but also to the Judaic ancestry of the Bible; nowadays, there is a need for “self-criticism” of the modern understanding of reason itself, in order to make it conscience of its sense, its legitimate application sphere and its limits59.

Irrespective of our point of view, we cannot avoid a considerable difficulty: the “good” specific to Europe coexisted with the “bad” which is nevertheless specific to it or, perhaps, has been produced by it. “Europe is the spirit of the Greek state, of the state of citizens, but also there is the possibility of tyranny. It is patient waiting for the tyranny of God, but also has the impatient will to create it by spiritual or worldly power. Europe is faith, but also Enlightenment. Europe is the authority of religion, but also, the continuously renewed striving of the spirit of knowledge, for judging things and for admitting only that which has been known by itself. Hence the grandeur of European science, to the extent it is based on reason and experience instead of revelation. But Europe is also the domination of doctrine

58 H. Küng, op.cit., p. 57.
and submitting to the general line. Europe is belief in the power of spirit, idealism, but no less is it materialism. Europe means people’s rights (...) but Europe has also discovered the totalitarian state, the principle of the leader; it drowned personal liberty in the sea of collectivity in the name of nation, people, class or mass. Face to the situations mentioned above – and others perhaps that could be discussed – perplexity is the first feeling that even the skilled specialist has: how can we finally reconcile “European characteristics” under the common title when opposite terms are presented historically by European reality? There is a temptation to answer that Europe does not have a specific character, but only some peculiarities, more exaggerated perhaps than those of other places. Probably we have to deal with a group of diverse and divergent realities instead that lead to a concept.

Naturally, those who are tempted to give this answer are right in some points. In the following case, anyway: we would exaggerate if we would ignore the dark side of Europe and take into account only the glorious one which is mainly the result of the dreaming of some intellectuals. Generally speaking, Europe has two faces. It always presents excellent service but not long afterwards the opposite service as well. In this way, the first feeling of the analyser is not a good adviser. Europe, which is a complex constellation, differentiated and consisting of counterparts, can be defined only respectively in terms its specific characteristics. Hans Küng, op.cit., p. 57.

Treated reflectively, European culture shows that its counterparts never did have equal roles. Max Scheler observed for example that “nationalism” had been the catalyst of a significant cultural dynamics, in modernity, at least, but it had accompanied the European concept of man’s natural freedom, as a restriction of it. However, the recognition of personal liberty which was really European, became dominant after all, repressing “national” limitations. “The national «historical» schools of law could not repress the universality of Roman law”. This is the case with the other polarities of European culture. The specific character of European culture gained the upper hand over that which was contrary to it or came from outside without completely removing it. The state of citizens replaced tyranny on the greatest part of the continent, religious tolerance is an imposing fact, the respect for particularity is indubitable, the domination of ideological dogmas had been undermined and reduced.

But what is specifically European in the field of spiritual culture? We can answer this by referring to symbols (Faust for example has been used as specific symbol of modern European culture) or invoking the great frames of interpretation of the world (“the Copernican space” for example) but the discussion is more precise and verifiable if it is centred round concepts. European culture developed the implications of some great options defined by some pivotal concepts: the concept of truth as a basic value understood as a correspondence between propositions and facts, verifiable by expe-

rience; the concept of knowledge aimed at solving people’s problems of life which consists of calculation and is defined by results; the concept of rights as a set of rules that are general and formal; the concept of personal autonomy as a form of his freedom; the concept of public sphere as a medium of defining political will; the concept of the human being as an individuality destined for creating a superior meaning to his mere living.

All these concepts belong to what we call the European tradition in the sense that they have been formed in European history and mark it up to the present. European history had been for a long time the locomotive of world history. Europe has been the main scene of world history. The former “powers” and “superpowers” extended on large areas of the world from Europe. The situation of the continent radically changed after the Second World War. “Europe built the system of its world interests on an Earth which was empty from a political point of view. Now it finds itself at once among the grandest powers, in the middle of a world politics which has new reference points. Two spheres, two dimensions, two rhythms move dangerously towards each other – dangerously for Europe, beyond doubt: great tensions and previous decisions of a world history of the future has been mixed with un settled European contradictions and vice versa, in an acute way”\textsuperscript{62}. The new situation of Europe sorely tries the whole of its tradition. This latter is no more valid in the new circumstances. Undoubtedly, traditions can always be called upon. This is otherwise done in epochs of spiritual crisis, mainly, in which appealing to traditions is like a superficial solving of problems. Traditions generally lack the sense of reality and, unobserved, rather complicate than solve the problems. Anyway, the new situation of Europe asks for a reflective use of traditions.

The reflective use of traditions is also asked for by another powerful fact: the duality of Europe, the existence or perhaps even the generating of polarities of that which is specific to European culture. This duality led Europe to a crisis just before the superpowers which were to put it under control, emerged at its borders. In a way, Europe itself indirectly contributed to the development and establishment on the world arena of the two superpowers which controlled the postwar period. The European crisis prevented the mature approach of the imposing European tradition (an approach responsible from the point of view of the consequences) be a direct one: it could only be reflective. In fact, no one can stop us taking again the bigotry of isolated communities in the Middle Ages, restoring the premodern belief in the “mission” of leaders, thinking of the “mission” of nations, as it was two centuries ago, separating again thinking from the problems of life in the golden age of inner philosophies. But we shall not have desirable results if we thoughtlessly undertake again certain traditions. We shall have only an old Europe, again.

If “non-transparency” has installed in the culture of late modernity and if the “negative futurism” gains ground; if the transition from boss to manager and

leader has become indispensable; if the relations with the environment have become a pressing issue; if punctual actions are no longer enough to find solutions to crucial problems; if the motivation crisis spreads; if Europe is facing structural difficulties; if relativism is another dead end; if we are at the end of the secularization era in today’s connotation of the term; so, if those indicators are sure, then the following question must be asked: aren’t we dealing, more profoundly than the difficulties mentioned above, with a vision crisis? My thesis is that, based on the “cultural turn” itself of the civilized world, we are living a vision crisis that contributes most of the above-mentioned indicators.

Translation by Roxana-Maria Gâz.