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Contextualism, universal pragmatics and metaphysics[**]

RESUMO

O texto confronta a compreensão metafísica da verdade de Lima Vaz com duas das tendências mais marcantes da teoria da verdade na filosofia contemporânea: Contextualismo e Pragmática Universal.

Palavras-chave: Metafísica; contextualismo; Pragmática universal.

ABSTRACT

The text confronts Lima Vaz's metaphysical understanding of truth with two of the most remarkable trends of the theory of truth in contemporary philosophy: Contextualism and Universal Pragmatics.

Key words: Metaphysics; Contextualism; Universal pragmatics.

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Introduction

Philosophy, the knowledge of principles, more than any other form of knowledge has the duty to lay bare its basis and make its fundamental categories explicit. The category "truth" is one of the oldest and most important categories of Western thought, so its not surprising that in times when the very structure and the specific proceedings of the philosophical activity are questioned, the concern about truth is shared by contemporary philosophers just as much as it is by logicians, science theorists, linguists, etc (See Heckmann (1981), Puntel (1983, 1987) and Becker (1988). In other words, the problem of truth, its adequate treatment, and its presuppositions have implications for philosophy, logic, theory of language, theory of knowledge, and ontology (PUNTEL, 1990, p. 2). In the systematic pursue of an enlightened "concept of truth"[1] I will confront Lima Vaz's metaphysical understanding of truth with two of the most remarkable trends of the theory of truth in contemporary philosophy.

A) Richard Rorty and the substitution of transcendence for solidarity: an anti-Platonic conception of truth.

The original intuition of metaphysics (See Snell (1955, p. 258 ff), Gigon (1968) and Hölse (1996, pp. 39), as it is conceived in the Menon (82b_85b), the programmatic writing of Plato's Academy, was that human knowledge cannot be reduced to the knowledge of experience, but that one can reach an objective type of knowledge through conceptual reasoning. The basis of truth, then, is not the empirical, material world, but the world of thoughts, where there is the rational structure of reality or its essence. Thus the correspondence between spirit and nature is believed to be ontological,[2] so that logical rules reflect the laws that govern reality itself, and reason is objectively embodied in the laws of nature. According to Rorty (1991), classical philosophy intended to capture the form and the movement of nature and history with the use of concepts, and this ultimately led to the conviction that it is possible to find out how one can fix injustice and hence human history.

In Rorty's view, this is precisely the disease that undermines Western thought. His intuition is exactly the opposite of that of classical metaphysics: there is no higher reality than daily reality[3] to provide human action with a horizon of reconciliation and salvation[4]. This is why his proposal consists basically in curing humanity from the Platonic disease, that is, metaphysics[5] – something that according to Richard Rorty will come as a consequence of the radicalization of the posture of an analytical philosophy that draws on the linguistic turn (RORTY, 1970). As the linguistic turn is taken to its last consequences as a pragmatic

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[1] For L. B. Puntel, the expression "theory of truth" indicates a theory that consists of at least five parts: 1) Clarification of the concept of truth; 2) The problem of the criteria of truth; 3) Typology of truth; 4) The paradoxical dimension of truth; 5) The place of the theory of truth in the horizon of the whole of scientifical and philosophical knowledge (Cf. Puntel, 1987, p. 2-3, Einleitung).

[2] On the adequacy formula see Aristotle (Met. IV 7, 1011 b 26 ff.), Thomas Aquinas (De Veritate I 1; S.Th. I q. 16 a 2 ad 2; I q. 21 a 2 ad 2).

[3] In the case of the conception of truth this means to put it on the dependency of an instance presumptively autonomous from our beliefs, from our quests and from our use of language. The basic problem posed by pragmatism consists in knowing how to reconnect truth to intentions, to beliefs, to human desires. Thus Davidson, contrary to Nagel, who says that truth is conceived from nowhere, insists on the thesis that truth and falsehood have an essential relation to the existence of thinking creatures. See Nagel (1986) and Davidson (1990a, 1990b).

[4] According to J-P Cometti, American pragmatism, a philosophy ingrained in American culture, evolves around a philosophy of knowledge, but since the very beginning it drifted apart from conceptions that tended to prioritize the search for an absolute foundation or for a model of reason that would determine *a priori* the possibilities of inquiry and discovery. The idea according to which it´s a belief what we have in the beginning and in the end of any research is the core of Peirce's objection to Descartes (See Cometti, 1994, p. 396). Nevertheless, recent return towards pragmatism was made possible by a strong criticism against empiricism, especially in the Vienna Circle, whose influence spread like wildfire throughout the United States. Such criticism started with Quine's famous writing, Two Dogmas of Empiricism, and was carried on by N. Goodman, W. Sellars and D. Davidson. See Cometti (1994, p. 446).

[5] With a price to be paid (See Margutti, 1998, p. 34): "To leave metaphysics firm ground means to embark in a very fragile ship and face troubled waters". See also in the same volume: Ramberg (1998, p. 81); Rajagopalan (1998, p. 120).

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turn, there is the need to give up the premise that tacitly kept it connected to the western tradition of thought, namely, the idea that there are still philosophical truths to be discovered that can be grounded on arguments. Then the conclusion: the first thing to be done is to deconstruct metaphysics and unmask Platonism, and this means to demonstrate that even analytical philosophy remained tied to the metaphysical assumptions it fought, and that the western culture is rooted in the misunderstandings owed to Plato.

Analytical philosophy[6] meant, in the first place, a critique to the conceptual horizon in which modern philosophy of the subject[7] articulated itself – a critique that transformed the classical concept of objective rationality into subjective rationality but did not question its concept of reality. Reality, to be exact, was no longer the world in itself, but the world for us, the world of phenomenic objects represented by the knowing subject[8]. In this new conceptual context, the question of truth appears as a struggle to found genetically the agreement between representation and object, that is, to found it on the basis of self-evident experiences. For Rorty, what matters here is to show the insufficiency of the conception of knowledge in the "mentalist horizon", pictured as a product of the action of the individual's self-consciousness. The individual then ensures

for himself a special range of readily accessible, absolutely certain experiences, though he does not have direct access to the objects, but to his own representations mediated by reflection. This has a fundamental implication that happens to be a distinguishing feature of modern philosophy: the subject / object dualism, the separation of spirit and object, and the modern type of skepticism[9] that follows it. The mentalist perspective, whose origins can be traced back to ancient philosophy, remained untouched in modern philosophy of consciousness. For mentalism, objectivity was guaranteed as long as the subject could relate to his object[10] correctly: concepts, a subjective reality, correspond to what is "outside", the objective world.[11]

The linguistic turn consisted basically in demonstrating that the linguistic expression is the necessary mediation of all and any knowledge, the indispensable condition of our access to the world. Since language and reality interpenetrate within any comprehension of the situations and events of the world, the question about what can be known always implies the question about what can be said. Therefore, we never leave the world of language, and this implies an anti-fundamentalist concept of knowledge for, as Rorty says, one thing can only work as justification in relation to something else that we have previously accepted, which means that, outside our

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[6] Which for Rorty actually has an antifundamentalist attitude, but notwithstanding does not assure its rupture with traditional theses. See Rorty (1998, p. 17): "But antifundamentalism does not lessens the strength of the following argument: once truth is an absolute notion and consists in correspondence, there must be an intrinsic, absolute nature, detached from the description given and to which truth must correspond".

[7] About the treatment of the question of truth in the horizon of the philosophy of consciousness see Landim Filho (1993, p. 459-475).

[8] Analytical philosophy can be considered a new form of first philosophy that, as Tugendhat thinks, radicalized the "reflexive turn" in modern philosophy and therefore reflects upon basic universal questions from the perspective of language: What can be said? What can be thought?. See Tugendhat (1976). In Dummet's, Habermas's and mostly Tugendhat's steps: Landim Filho (1984, p. 33-47).

[9] Which for him is closely knit to the mentalist model.

[10] A conception, according to Dummett, simply unintelligible, and which must be replaced by one of a justified or verified assertion, some "verificationism", in Engel's view. Such perspective found inspiration in the intuitionist philosophy of mathematics and logic, according to which the conditions for the demonstration of a statement grant its truthfulness and that determine the existence of the objects to which it refers. See Dummett (1976, 1978, 1990).

[11] Its from this viewpoint that the debate between realism and anti-realism is seen in contemporary analytical phylosophy. In Cometti's definition (1994, p. 403), realism is that posture which establishes a connection between thought, or language, and an independent reality, transcendent or not, accessible or not, while anti-realism refuses to let thought, beliefs and language submit to the authority of a presumptively external reality. See Putnam (1981, 1988, 1990). Engel (1994a, p. 363), Dummett (1991). Engel (1994b, p. 358), Cometti (1992).

language, our beliefs, and our thoughts, we will never find criteria that are independent from the criteria of coherence of our claims (RORTY, 1981, p. 199). Thus, according to the contextualist interpretation of the pragmatic turn, this means that there can be no access to reality either without the process of intersubjective understanding or outside the linguistic context of the life-worlds of historically situated (RORTY, 1981, p. 191) communities.

For Rorty, such posture brings extremely important consequences for the concepts of reality and truth,[12] since it is not possible to think reality and truth without language.[13] The first consequence is that the knowledge of objects does not provide an adequate epistemic model. This is so because what is important now is to apprehend states of affairs in view of their propositional articulations (HABERMAS, 1999, p. 236), and also because truth is just a property of criticizable claims that can be grounded on reasons. The consequence is that we move from the mere transference of "subject/object" relations to "claim/fact" relations that permit the whole linguistic turn to stick to the idea of representation, and therefore to a concept of truth as the "mirror of nature". When the linguistic turn is radicalized, the subjectivity of opinions no longer prevails due to its confrontation with an objective world, but because of the mediation of a community of public communication. The "objective world"[14] is not something that can be reproduced, but only the common reference point of a practice of reaching understanding among the members of specific communities of communication that agree over a subject matter. In this case objectivity is nothing more than the widest intersubjective agreement that is possible (RORTY, 1988, p. 14-15).

In one word, knowledge is no longer the mirror of nature, a correspondence between sentence and fact. As Rorty (1990, p. 9) says, there is no contact previous to language that could allow us to point out what is an object in itself, in contrast with what it is in the light of the different descriptions that we make of it. Knowledge is now understood as an intersubjective process of agreement in which language is no longer considered a mere grammatical form of presenting the world. Instead, one emphasizes the communicative dimension of language, and thus a life-world as an intersubjectively shared public space, in which interactions and traditions are structured as symbolic networks. Here, the dialogue among individuals (communicative model, intersubjective process of agreement) replaces the opposition between sentence and fact (representational model, language-world relationship),[15] leading to a radical rupture in the model of knowledge as the mirror of nature. This reveals the uselessness of the traditional concept of truth as a correspondence between representer and

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[12] Rorty seems not to be aware that Kant, in dealing with the issue of the constitution of the objects of experience, had already strongly criticized the naive realist conception of the adequacy rule: the object is not just simply "in-itself", for it is co-constituted by thought as long as the fundament of truth is found in the *a priori* of the laws of pure understanding, and such subjective conditions of thought have an objective value as they generate the object in accordance to the form. Therefore, there is no access to the objects of the world without the mediation of the laws of thought and understanding, i.e., without the mediation of consciousness. See Höffe (1979, p. 258.

[13] Th. Kuhn understands the "reality" studied by sciences in a similar context. See Aguiar (1998, p. 291): "The result is an interesting form of constructivism: the reality studied by science, in a way that Kuhn himself admittedly has difficulties to specify, is determined by the paradigm rightly adopted by the relevant scientific community".

[14] In Peirce's case, the association of belief as rule with action under the determination of habit allows pragmatism to avoid representation, by replacing the *external* relationship of idea and world, or of spirit and reality, for an internal relationship of belief and habit, i.e., of the *rule*. This is the origin of the criticism against a "contemplative theory of knowledge" also advanced by James and Dewey. See Cometti (1994, p. 398).

[15] For Habermas, the vertical relationship of the world of statements about something surrenders to the horizontal relationship of being amid the participants in a community of communication. The intersubjectivity of the life-world holds back the objectivity of a world opposed to that where the subject finds himself alone. See Habermas (1999, p. 241).

represented,[16] which is nothing but an illusion[17] since it implies that one can escape from language with language.

The epistemic authority thus moves from a subject that knows the objective world to a community of subjects that agree on the basis of a common ground of shared experiences of a life-world in view of which each subject justifies its conceptions. Knowledge is therefore that which is rationally accepted according to the criteria of the praxis of a given community, and this means that the objectivity of experience is replaced by the intersubjectivity of comprehension – a comprehension that is mutable in principle, since the values and beliefs that constitute the symbolic universe of the subjects that reach an agreement over something could be different from what they are (RORTY, 1989).

For Rorty, language is contingent, the self and the community are also contingent, and contingency is a basic rule of thought. Therefore, the reference to absolute norms is just a foolish dream, given the finitude of the human condition. So, instead of transcendent norms[18] that we cannot access, all we have left is the solidarity of our common beliefs and values, of our preferences and choices in the common context of our form of life. Nevertheless, Rorty claims that this does not lead into relativism and its superseded represen-

tational model of knowledge, but it follows that any justification will always depend on different criteria and vary according to the historical context. Consequently, we should stop worrying about objectivity and start feeling contented with intersubjectivity (RORTY, 1998, p. 23).

The consequences to the issue of truth are enormous: since knowledge is not the mirror of nature, but something that depends basically on dialogic practices and social context, the criticism of the different forms of social praxis loses its meaning, for we are bound to symbolic contexts, and any attempt to transcend them means a return to fundamentalist postures[19]. In Rorty's view, this new stance is where the history of western philosophy leads to, the final stage of a development that displays three basic, noncontinuous paradigms: the metaphysical paradigm, in which the thought was centered on the "essence" of things (objectivity); the paradigm of modern theory of knowledge, revolving around the ideas constructed by a finite mind (subjectivity); and the paradigm of the philosophy of language, mainly concerned with linguistic expressions (intersubjectivity). It is in the latter that the epistemic authority moves from a knowing subject that engenders within itself the means to measure the objectivity of experience, to the practice of justification of a linguistic community[20],

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[16] For Rorty, pragmatists in no way resort to a theory about the nature of reality, knowledge or man, asserting that nothing exists as truth or good. For him, this in no way implies a subjectivist or relativist theory of truth or the good, for what they wish is just to change the subject. See Rorty (1982, p. XIII). On Rorty's discussion with Davidson upon this topic see Pereira (1998, p. 265-275).

See Rorty (1998, p. 16): "philosophy will be better off without such notions as "intrinsic nature of reality" than with them".

[17] See Rorty (1998, p. 16): "philosophy will be better off without such notions as "intrinsic nature of reality" than with them".

[18] Whose possession by philosophers in the past legitimated the specific supremacy of philosophy in the debate on humanities. If this access does not exist, pragmatism assigns a more modest function for philosophy, connected to the tasks of the daily live, with no privilege and no superiority over other forms of discussion. Philosophy, then, is available for other causes, the small everyday causes, and its task is at the same time critical and constructive. What will disappear in a post-philosophical culture – in the sense of a culture that abandons transcendental, foundational, and essentialist philosophical motives – is the caste of professional philosophers who protect their corporate interests. See Rorty (1982).

[19] See Rorty (1998, p. 28): "[To give up the idea that philosophy is close to truth and to interpret it as Dewey did is to give precedence to imagination over argumentative intellect, and to genius over professionalism". For Margutti, the Pyrrhonian skeptics are distinguished by their relinquishing of philosophical investigation in favor of practical affairs, "a field where there are no radical doubts". Margutti does not see any big difference between the Rorty's ironist and this type skepticism. See Margutti Pinto (1998, p. 33).

[20] Putnam worked out the distinction between justification and truth. For him, rational acceptability based on our criteria does not allow us to go beyond justification, for the rejection of the existence of a coherent external perspective, of a theory that could be simply true in itself independently from other possible observations, does not legitimate the identification between truth and rational acceptability. Truth, not justification, is an inalienable property of propositions. If our knowledge is never definitive, even though we have reasons not to consider them arbitrary, we cannot see exclusively in those reasons the source of what we call the truth of a proposition. Truth is an idealization of rational acceptability. See Putnam (1981, p. 63).

since the linguistic turn implies the primacy of the common language (once the explanatory power of the linguistic turn is based on the primacy of the common language). For this reason, the meaning of "intersubjectivity" here changes radically. It no longer signifies an observed convergence of thoughts and representations of different persons; instead, it incorporates the perspective of participants in a common linguistic horizon in which the members of a community of communication are always already situated. This indicates the lack of meaning of skeptical views, for we as socialized individuals always already find ourselves against the linguistically interpreted horizon of the life-world. This also implies the existence of a background of intersubjectively shared assumptions that are confirmed in practice, and that consequently makes it pointless to be totally doubtful about the possibility of us accessing the world. The modern dichotomy inside/outside just simply vanishes away.

The pragmatic turn eliminated the question about the existence of a world independent of our descriptions of it, but, on the other hand, accentuated the fallibility of any knowledge and its need for legitimacy in a context where the measure of the objectivity of knowledge is the public practice of justification. This raises the important question of whether it is still possible to separate truth from its context of justification. If we cannot transcend the linguistic horizon of justified opinions, how can we combine the basic thesis of the pragmatic turn with the intuition that true statements are adequate to the facts? The central problem of Rorty's contextualism is here: how can we relate truth and justification?

B) The interpretation of truth as unconditional validity: the universal pragmatic reading of J. Habermas

Habermas starts from the same conception of a reason embodied in language: we can only clarify what a fact is with the truth of a statement about a fact that is actually true (HABERMAS, 1999, p. 246). Language therefore is an unavoidable condition of our access to the world,[21] so much so that we cannot consider experience and experimentation as means of control of knowledge absolutely detached from our linguistic system. It is language that provides the cognitive patterns of the objects of experience. In this sense, human knowledge cannot transcend the limits of language and reach the things "in themselves" because the relation with reality is built into language. As an immediate consequence, all philosophical problems necessarily entail a reflection of language on itself.

According to discourse theory we can only deal with the problem of truth by resorting to a universal pragmatics of the speech acts.[22] We have to start from the practical contexts of communication and interaction among individuals in their historical worlds, as pragmatists do. Pragmatism eliminated, by means of the idea of universal linguistic mediation, the concept of truth as correspondence, since we cannot compare the linguistic expression with a piece of "naked", non-linguistically mediated reality, i.e., with a reference that is outside the realm of language. Nevertheless, one cannot remove the question about the relationship between the linguistic system and the reality that it mediates, which means that there is at least one aspect of the theory of correspondence that persists in

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[21] See Costa (2001, p. 377): "For him ,the theory of truth as correspondence does not take into consideration the fact that the term 'reality' cannot have any other meaning than the one we link to the statements about facts, and that the 'reality' can only be determined in view of statements, i.e., only in the level of metalinguistic discourse".

[22] Linguistic action in this sense has two basic aspects: the *performative moment* in which the type of action in question is expressed (a specific type of relationship between subjects), and the propositional content that expresses an objective state (knowledge about the object). See Searle (1971), Habermas (1986b, p. 353-440), Tugendhat (1976). Apel (1980, p. 31).

discourse theory. For Habermas, pragmatism has lost an essential aspect of the problem of truth that was visible in the theory of correspondence, namely, the dimension of unconditional validity.

This is why there is a fundamental distinction, in this context, between communicative actions of the daily life and discourse. In the sphere of our linguistic actions in the everyday life, we gather information about the objects of experience[23]. Furthermore, the validity claims[24] built in statements are implicitly presupposed and acknowledged without further problems, i.e., without having their validity questioned, once human understanding cannot function unless the individuals relate to a single objective world, and thus stabilize an intersubjectively shared public space that can be clearly distinguished from everything that pertains only to subjectivity. Therefore, at the level where pragmatism is placed, the presupposition of an objective world[25] is the condition that enables all processes of cooperation and understanding among human beings.[26] In our statements we state facts about the objects in the world[27]. This means that we cannot apply the fallibilistic model of science to the life-world,[28] for this would make the actual, concrete life impossible.

Consequently, there is a "performative" need for certainty in the daily life that, in principle, makes any stock of truth unnecessary. The illocutionary force of statements is not the same in action and in discourse: whereas the truth, in the context of the daily praxis, would destroy the certainty of action, at the level of discourse it constitutes the main reference point. This is so because in discourse we abandon the actual contexts of action to exchange reasons[29] about the validity of claims, i.e., we ask ourselves about the fulfillment of the conditions to satisfy those claims.[30] In short, the use of the predicate "true" explicitly shows that the claim was satisfied by being considered intersubjectively legitimate (BECKER, p. 29). This is the reason why for Habermas the question of truth is not a

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[23] Habermas clearly distinguishes between the *objects* of experience about which we make statements, and the facts, which are what we state about the objects. Objects, thus, are something in the world, but not facts. See Habermas (1986a).

[24] In considering the pragmatic dimension of language there is a move from well formed sentences to statements made in life-world contexts and for their underlying communicative competence. Instead of sentences, it is the speech acts or linguistic actions which are taken into account. According to Habermas, for every linguistic system there are necessarily certain types of acts: communicative acts (which express the meaning of the speech as such), ascertaining acts (which express the propositional contents), representational acts (self-representation) and regulative acts (which express norms). Each one of these communicative acts is connected to specific forms of obligation, which means that *with each type of speech acts we raise a specific type of validity claim*. Thus, for instance, when I state something I take on the obligation of presenting the reasons of the *truthfulness* of the propositional contents of my statement, if I am asked to do so. See Habermas (1975, p. 111).

[25] Not every kind of pragmatism accepts this type of "realist" intuition about the everyday life. Rorty, for example, considers this posture to be a mistake and defends the re-education of the ordinary man through the substitution of the want for objectivity by the want for solidarity, and conceives truth as that which we, the members of liberal western societies, believe in. See Rorty (1995, p. 300).

[26] On the analysis of the concept of "life-world" see Habermas (1981a, pp. 171), and Martini (1996, pp. 682-712).

[27] Habermas accuses transcendental theories of truth of mixing up the truth and the objectivity of experience, since they present the theory of the constitution of experience as a theory of truth. See Habermas (1986a, p. 151). For a comparison between Kant and Habermas see Heckmann (1981, p. 41). For the ambiguity, in this respect, of Habermas's theory of truth see Apel (1983, p. 208). On a transcendental refutation of those ideas see Höffe (1979, p. 257).

[28] For Höffe, Habermas starts from the fact that linguistic systems produce a consensus in which we are always already immersed when we produce arguments. Habermas, in his turn, thinks that the linguistic systems are the result of the historical process of formation of the species, and that the cognitive patterns they provide are the result of the clash of personality systems, the societal system, and nature – i.e., derive from a non-communicative sphere. See Höffe (1979, p. 264).

[29] On the concept of argumentation see Toulmin (1975); Kambartel (1979, p. 221); Kopperschmidt (1980, p. 85). In this respect, Habermas follows Toulmin, who uses the model of jurisprudence, not of mathematics, when explaining the logic of scientific inferences and the speech in ordinary, everyday life. On this issue and in the same sense see Perelman Ch/Olbrechts-Tyteca (1988). For Höffe, the pattern of argumentation with which Habermas works is neither something new, since it corresponds to the standard model of the Hempel-Oppenheim scheme of explanation of natural sciences plus an inductive support of legal hypothesis, nor is related to a genuine process of unification. See Höffe (1979, p. 263).

[30] These conditions are not on the level of the contents of empirical statements, for they are universal formal conditions subjacent to any statement about an object of experience, whose validity is always already presupposed and recognized. See Becker (1988, p. 30).

problem of the contexts of action in the daily life, as pragmatism puts it. Truth has to do with the problematization of validity claims and its discursive retrieval, i.e., with the distinction between opinions (the rising of a validity claim for what is stated) and knowledge (the discursive solution of the problem raised with that claim, the demonstration of the reasons of its legitimacy), between being considered true and being true.

This presupposes a fundamental distinction that disappears in pragmatism: the difference between the experience of certainty in action, that is, the experience of self-evident facts of the everyday life which are deeply rooted in our vast background of intersubjectively shared convictions (or, in other words, the objectivity of experience), and the discursively legitimated possibility of making true statements (i.e., truth)[31]. Hence truth is a validity claim that we connect to statements while we make them (HABERMAS, 1986a, p. 129), that is, it is a quality of statements[32] that exists only when generated by a speech act and inasmuch as a claim is raised whose validity may be retrieved by means of arguments. This means that truthfulness is something that concerns the speech acts in argumentation – acts through which participants in rational discourses engage in clarifying cognitively solvable validity claims by the exchange of reasons (namely, an obligation of justification) so as to reach a legitimate consensus.[33] Discourse is intended to make a factual, contingent agreement evolve into a rational one – that is, one that is reached through an argumentative procedure; thus discourse finds its place in a larger tradition of western thought by tying up true knowledge to its justification.[34]

Truth, then, is composed of three[35] basic elements: a validity claim;[36] its discursive retrieval,[37] and its relationship with objects.[38] This implies a passage from action to discourse which causes the naive reliance on what one takes as the truth that characterizes the experiencing of certainties on the level of the contexts of action to disappear, and which also produces the transformation of preexisting statements into hypothesis whose validity must be proven through an argumentative process.[39]

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[31] For Höffe, Habermas focus only on this aspect of truth and excludes the multiple senses of the use of the word 'truth' which can be found both in everyday life and in philosophical tradition. His question is whether an encompassing theory of truth should not at least inquire if this is not the case of an analogous use of the word, and how we could face it – a question that Habermas does not pose. As a consequence, Habermas narrows down the problem of truth and leaves outside his theory some important aspects, such as the ontological dimension. See Höffe (1979, p. 254-255). For some examples of the multiplicity of senses of truth in tradition see Aristotle (Nic. Et., VI); Thomas Aquinas (De Veritate I).

[32] On the discussion about the bearer of truth in modern analytical philosophy see Heckmann (1981, p. 23).

[33] For Höffe, the different consensual theories of truth have some features in common: a) They refer exclusively or primarily to the truth of statements; b) They define truth as a procedure for the investigation of true statements; c) This procedure is based on a dialogical situation, and is oriented to the reaching of an agreement; d)Agreement does not mean, in the last analysis, a historical-factual event, but should be understood in a normative way as true consensus or objective agreement; e) What stands for true consensus is the potential agreement of everyone, or everyone who is linguistically competent. See Höffe (1979, p. 252).

[34] See Höffe (1979, p. 261).

[35] Ever since Descartes there is a trend of modern philosophers who include a fourth element: evidence. See Heckmann (1981, p. 148), Tugendhat (1967), Landim Filho (1992).

[36] Landim Filho, with Searle, Tugendhat, and Habermas, clearly separates the propositional content from its claim of truthfulness. See Landim Filho (1984, p. 41): "As the single act of the speaker is divided into two moments – what is said and its claim of truthfulness – the listener's understanding of the statement is also the understanding of the possibility of adopting a posture: the propositional content can be either denied or reaffirmed, then the listener's answer is an assertion, or it can be questioned, then the answer is a question etc."

[37] See Landim Filho (1984, p. 45): "A statement is true if its claim of truthfulness is justified". At 42 we read: "The expression 'it's true' links the propositional content to reasons and thus reveals the nature of the act as an adoption of posture and a challenging inquiry". Habermas focus his systematic works on the two first and then forgets about what E. Tugendhat called 'the objective component' of his theory of truth. See Puntel (1983, p. 149). For Becker, Habermas tries to incorporate elements of coherence and correspondence theories of truth into his own theory. Nevertheless, the incorporation of elements from correspondence theories regarding the relationship between language and reality mediated by experience, as reference points for the judgement of the adequacy of a linguistic system, is incompatible with other central tenets of discourse theory. See Becker (1988, p. 321).

[38] On the logic of this argumentative process see Habermas (1986a, p. 159-174); Heckmann (1981, p. 37).

[39] Habermas speaks of a circular process involving action and discourse. See Habermas (1999, p. 254).

In short, the certainties of the contexts of action that have been unsettled for different reasons become disputable validity claims of hypothetical statements on the level of discourse. Those claims need to be substantiated and once so legitimated they can be reintroduced in contexts of action,[40] thus making it possible that a collective form of life be based on truth, i.e., on a rational consensus.[41] But the sharp distinction between Rorty's pragmatism and universal pragmatics is exactly in the role of an argumentation which clearly separates the proceedings of justification in actual contexts of action from truth and its unconditional, context-independent meaning, whose intrinsic universality claim (HABERMAS, 1975, p. 124) cannot be associated with specific peoples, groups or epochs.

In an argumentative process, the force that generates consensus has to do with the consistency between language and the corresponding conceptual system. One can only speak of a satisfactory argument when all parts of that argument belong to the same language, since the basic concepts of a legitimating procedure are predicated upon the linguistic system in such a way that a statement can only function as justification when it is part of a linguistic system. From the vantage point of discourse theory, justification has nothing to do with the relationship between single statements and reality, but first and foremost with the consistency of sentences in a linguistic system. To put it in a nutshell, the consensus among the parties of an argumentative process can be effectual only insofar as one manages to demonstrate through argumentative procedures that what one states is consistent with other statements in the linguistic system.[42]

The argumentative answer to validity claims must lead to consensus, but a justified form consensus, otherwise we would still be moving amidst the unquestionable truths of the everyday life. The most important question in this context is: how can one distinguish the factual, variable consensus common to contexts of action from a justified consensus that claims immutability?[43] What are the formal qualities of a justified consensus?[44] How can one tell true statements from false ones? The first task of a theory of truth in the sense of universal pragmatics is to thematize the formal requirements of all substantive truth. For Habermas, a genuine consensus can only be reached under the counterfactual conditions of an ideal[45] speech situation (HABERMAS, 1986a, p. 174), which means that the unavoidable requirement of true statements is that they could be accepted by everyone (HABERMAS, 1986a, p. 137). This unavoidable presupposition associated with consensus has four major features (HECKMAN, 1981, p. 21), all of them related to equality of chances: a) equality of all participants in discourse in the use of communicative speech acts; b) equality in the thematization and critique of preceding opinions; c) equality in the use of representational speech acts; d) equality in the use of regulative speech acts. The ideal

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[40] Which cannot be explained by merely logical motives or by the evidence of experiences, but through the formal-logical properties of discourse. The logic of the discourse, in Habermas's view, has three distinctive features: a) A specific scheme of argumentation; b) Substantial criticism of language and self-reflection; c) The conditions of the ideal speech situation. See Höffe (1999, p. 262).

[41] See Habermas (1986a, at 165). For Becker (1988, p. 318), this means adopting elements from coherence theories into discourse theory. Höffe (1979, p. 264) in turn maintains that the logic of discourse cannot go without some element from coherence theory in the explanation of validity claims.

[42] See Habermas (1986a, at 165). For Becker (1988, p. 318), this means adopting elements from coherence theories into discourse theory. Höffe (1979, p. 264) in turn maintains that the logic of discourse cannot go without some element from coherence theory in the explanation of validity claims.

[43] See, on this 'eternity' claim and the ontological problem there implied, Heckmann (1981, p. 206).

[44] According to Becker, Habermas reverbs Peirce's pragmatic theory of truth here. See Becker (1988, p. 315).

[45] This is what Habermas calls the epistemic concept of truth seen from a pragmatic perspective. He identifies this view in Putnam (utterances are true when they can be justified under ideal epistemic conditions) and in Apel (truth springs from an argumentative consensus in an ideal community of communication). See Habermas (1999, p. 256).

situation of speech as a necessary reference is neither a phenomenon nor sheer construction, but an essential, unavoidable assumption that provides the normative foundations of linguistic comprehension. It is always necessarily given in advance in speech and as such it operates in human life.

The basic question (BECKER, 1988, p. 321) here is whether under the conditions of an ideal speech situation we can obtain a satisfactory formal basis for the rational agreement of all those involved in discourse, and thus, as Habermas believes, a satisfactory criterion for determining truth. First of all, according to Becker, it is obvious that a participant in discourse cannot turn either to an argumentatively reached agreement or to the existence of symmetrical relations so as to make his agreement intelligible from a formal perspective.[46] This is so because when one makes use of consensus one cannot avoid the question about what provides the basis for the agreement of all other participants in discourse, just as in the case of symmetrical relations one cannot avoid the question about which symmetrical conditions may give rise to an agreement about the legitimization of a statement. In both cases we have to make use of a basis of agreement that is not sufficiently determined by purely consensual reasons, i.e., that does not derive from the structure of consensus itself. Consequently, we have to look for ways to transcend the integrative force of the criterion of truth of a consensual theory and reach the justification of a rational agreement.[47] As a result we have that the conditions of an ideal situation of speech constitute the universal premises of argumentation and the requisite conditions for the participation in discourse, but they do not provide a sound basis for the judgment of the legitimacy of a claim.[48] This means that the potential agreement of all possibly affected people is not the deciding formal requirement,[49] and therefore that consensus cannot be the criterion of truth[50] or the foundation of the justification of validity claims. Grounded consensus, the rationally legitimated agreement of all affected people is the form in which the result of argumentation is expressed, the manifestation of a rational judgment of the justification of validity claims. The thesis according to which truth is what could be acknowledged as such by all rational beings (HÖSLE, 1990, p. 198) in an ultimate rational consensus is correct, but it does not provide a formal requirement of truth modeled on the characteristics of an ideal speech situation.[51]

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[46] Which means consensual theory of truth cannot provide a criterion for truth., for an ultimate rational consensus cannot be anticipated, once we don't even know whether it will actually take place. See Hösle (1999, p. 198).

[47] For Hösle, a consensus is only rational when it meets certain criteria that precede consensus, *evidence* and *coherence*. See Hösle (1990, p. 199).

[48] For Alexy, the conditions of an ideal speech situation can be fulfilled in part. They are an instrument of criticism, and provide at least a negative criterion for correctness and truth. See Alexy (1983, p. 170).

[49] For Puntel, Habermas's formulations express an extraordinary global intuition that Habermas does not work out rationally. When one intends to determine more concretely what consensus means as a criterion for truth, one has to say that it is a manifestation of the 'essence' of truth in the pragmatic-intersubjective dimension. This is certainly a primary dimension, though not the only one. To deal with the revelation of truth in this sphere means that it has a concrete meaning. The corresponding abstract meaning is the idea of coherence. In this context, it is possible to say that a statement is true when we can reach a universal consensus about it. In other words: a statement is true when it can be integrated in the total system of statements that can be coherently demonstrated. See Puntel (1983, pp. 162-163). On his coherence concept of truth see Puntel (1990, 1996, p. 371-387). For Hösle coherence theory of truth is correct in saying that there is a reality independent from all theories and all experience, but we can only say that a theory expresses such reality if it manages to integrate all data collected from reality into a coherent whole. See Hösle (1990, p. 198).

[50] For Landim Filho this is not a criterion, but rather a consequence. See Landim Filho (1984, p. 45): "Instead of seeking for a criterion for truth through the concept of grounded consensus, we could change our inquiry and conceive such consensus as a consequence of a true statement". In the same sense Hösle says that one could see an equivalence between truth and recognition through an unlimited community of communication when one says that truth does not depend on such recognition, but rather that such recognition presupposes criteria for truth that represent more than the mere factual agreement. See Hösle (1990, p. 198).

[51] For Höffe, the ideal speech situation produces only what one could call the "political bypassing conditions" so that argumentation is possible and we can reach an agreement without much pressure. The elimination of obstacles to communication is not the same as providing a basis for the legitimation of a truth claim. In his view, Habermas actually takes the moments of coherence and correspondence in his theory for criteria for truth. See Höffe O., note 4 supra, p. 270-271. Against the idea that the conditions of the ideal speech situation can provide solid foundations for validity claims see Skirbeck (1982, p. 63).

C) An ontological-metaphysical concept of truth: Henrique Cláudio de Lima Vaz.

1. The ontological concept of reason: ontological premises of the question of truth

Lima Vaz's thought belongs to the great Western metaphysical tradition[52] as contemplation or theory of the totality of being, of the reasons of beings, their principle and their concept of truth as correspondence.[53] The main purpose of his theory – at least in its metaphysical version – is not so much to give an account of the nature of that correspondence, but rather to thematize its deepest foundations. Lima Vaz's effort is twofold: first, he makes the ontological dimension[54] explicit by thematizing the being to which human reason is fundamentally open;[55] second, he demonstrates the existence of ultimate metaphysical foundations by thematizing the absolute being as the ultimate basis of truth, i.e., as the primordial truth.[56] He addresses the subject of ontology in a manner similar to that of J. Maréchal (1949) and J.B. Lotz (1957, 1965), i.e., through a reflexive analysis[57] of the act of judging in Aquinas' philosophy (AQUINO, 1990, p. 31-54). This reflexive analysis conduces him to demonstrating the absoluteness of the principle of contradiction with the mediation of counterargumentation.

According to Lima Vaz this procedure is developed in three steps: a) The specificity of humans in their relationship with the world appears above all in their intellectual[58] capacity of elevating what is in the perceptual level to the universalistic level of meaning – where meaning is to be understood as a necessary intelligibility that is at the basis of the understanding of perceptions. In a final analysis, this is the same as introducing the given in the sphere of being to produce an intelligible order of beings in such a way that the universe of ideas coincides with the totality of what is intelligible. But the whole of Western metaphysical thought springs from Plato's discovery of a realm of Ideas[59] where we can

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[52] For Lima Vaz the many, mostly anti-metaphysical revolutions of the 20th century ended up by showing the unavoidable advent of metaphysical problems. The theory of knowledge was the field where metaphysics was destroyed, but was also the province where metaphysical questions reappeared. See Lima Vaz (1998b, p. 431). On the current negation and the future of metaphysics see Lima Vaz (2000b, p.149-163).

[53] For Lima Vaz, one cannot face the problem of truth outside the ontological horizon and, in a final analysis, outside the metaphysical horizon, as the Greeks had already understood. This means that the ontological dimension cannot be considered as something outside the concept of truth. See Lima Vaz (1968, p. 15-66).

[54] On a different conception of the relationship between the issue of truth and ontology in view of the opposition between the "principle of semantic-sentential compositionality" and the "context principle". See Puntel (1996, p.371-387, 2001, p. 221-259).
 Which means that the metaphysical tradition has placed knowledge in the symbiotic convergence of being and knowing, and thus as the interpenetration of noiesis and metaphysics. Modern nominalist philosophy, on the contrary, has thought of this problem based on the opposition between being and representation, and this implied the separation of metaphysics and the theory of knowledge. See Lima Vaz (1998b, p. 431-432).

[55] See Lima Vaz (2000b, p. 154): "[...] to think and to enunciate Being in its full intelligibility is only possible as a discourse on the reasons of Being if there is a starting point, that is, an insight (noeîn) of Being as absolutely intelligible or as Absolute thought (Parmenides), and also if the intentions are directed towards an end, towards the Absolute *known* as *real* Absolute".
 Which as philosophical reflection is rooted in the very original reflection of the intellect upon its own action as intentionally bound to the object. See Thomas Aquinas (DE VERITATE, q. 1 a 9), Lotz (1978).

[56] This is what Lima Vaz calls "spiritual intelligence". See Lima Vaz (1996, p. 173): "The adventure of Western metaphysics [...] was performed by a certain concept of intellect (or *nous* in greek) whose usage allowed the philosopher, by following Plato's route, to extend his inquiry beyond the sensorial level (...) Metaphysical intelligence [...] is most suitably qualified as a spiritual intelligence".
 See Lima Vaz (2001, p. 7). For Lima Vaz, the discovery of the world of ideas means that Plato found out what he calls the "ideonomic paradigm", which is distinguished precisely by its grounding rational knowledge in the world of ideas, where universal, transempirical concepts are to be found that relate to intelligibility as such. See Lima Vaz (2000a, p. 27).

[57] See Lima Vaz (1992b, p. 444): "[...] the first meaning of transcendence [...] is intended to designate an apparently unstoppable intentional movement by which man oversteps the bounds of his position in the world and history and moves towards a supposedly trans-worldly and trans-historical reality which represents the highest point of the symbolic system societies use to express the reasons for their beings".

[58] For L. B. Puntel, this stance presupposes an ontology whose basic elements are objects (individuals) and their attributes (properties and relations), i.e., *an ontology of substance*. In his view, this type of ontology should not be accepted. On the arguments supporting an alternative ontology whose basic elements are not substance, but "behaviors" (Verhalte) see Puntel (1990, p. 220 ff., 1993, p. 123-125).

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find the true essence of all beings (LIMA VAZ, 1992a, p. 111), as well as the articulation of a new form of language intended to express in discourse an insight into the new reality,[60] which is "transnatural, epistemologically transempirical and ontologically transcendent" (LIMA VAZ, 2000a, p. 98). The discursive knowledge of ideas consists in the negation of the qualities of perception so that the Idea appears as singular (by the negation of plurality), immutable (by the negation of change), simple (by the negation of composition), incorporeal and indivisible etc.; b) This knowledge takes place in judgement through a process of unification of the plurality of the formal determinations of the object by the mediation of the synthesizing activity of an intellect that thematizes the basic ontological core within substance, that is, the essential configuration of reality expressed in judgments by the predicate, whereas the subject expresses the singular substance,[61] the fundamental unity with which mental activity is primarily concerned in this synthesizing process; c) Being reveals itself in judgment firstly within that process of synthesizing unity

and multiplicity as essence, i.e., as the organized structure of reality. Nevertheless, judgement is characterized by the fact that it goes beyond the level of mere logic and beyond the level of the epistemological composition and division of "quiddities" to reach the affirmation of being.

For Lima Vaz[62] what makes Aquinas unique in Western philosophy and sets him apart from the essentialist tradition of Greek metaphysics is that for him being ultimately reveals itself as the action of existence under the form of "the first, constitutive act of the reality-in-itself of being" (LIMA VAZ, 1998a, p. 38), the actuality of all actions and the perfection of perfections (AQUINAS, De Pot. Q. 7, a 2 ad 9m),[63] and whence as absolute perfection – so that the judgement no longer concerns essence, but existence.[64] Here is the starting point of metaphysics, for its object, being as being or as universal being, appears in each act of judgement[65] and in the self-affirmation of being, which is the substitute for the intellectual intuition of being in pure intellect. The affirmation of being[66] which is precisely the passage from representation to being is irrefutably

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[62] Following E. Gilson's interpretation. See Gilson (1948). In the same sense see Siewerth (1959), Lima Vaz (1998a, p. 38 ff.).

[63] On the difference between this metaphysics of the act of existing and the hermeneutical ontology that puts being as condition of the possibility of understanding *ens* see Müller (1964), MacDowell (1993). For Lima Vaz, modernity is characterized by the precedence of subject over being, and this is precisely what the so called anthropocentric turn of thought consists in. Lima Vaz's thought is clearly part of the metaphysical tradition, not the anthropocentric, as A. J. Severino believes. See Severino (1999, p. 134-139), but particularly Severino (1999, p. 138).

[64] Puntel would certainly ask if the centrality of the act of existing in the thought of Aquinas – even though we acknowledge its originality in view of the essentialism of Greek philosophy – really calls into question the traditional ontology of substance or is just a new version of that same ontology in spite of its novelty. Is not the object as a central category preserved in Aquinas? Does he break with the object-centered ontology of tradition?

[65] Which means that, for Vaz, the insertion of human being in the historical contexts of its ordinary life does not deny, as for Rorty, the existence of its metaphysical dimension. On the contrary, it necessarily points to it. See Lima Vaz (1992a, p. 112): "In fact, there is no possibility of thinking any human experience without its contingency and ephemerality being pervaded by specifically transcendental questions about the unity, truthfulness, goodness, beauty, and, last but not least, the *being* of the always-fleeting reality of experience". See Lima Vaz (1998a, p. 39): "Aquinas, specially in the aforementioned passage of the commentaries on Boecio's *De Trinitate*, emphasizes that the synthesis of judgment and the affirmation of the *esse* (existence) in judgement provide the intelligible site for the intersection of *intellect* and *being* in their existential plenitude, so that such intersection operates the *identity*, on the *intentional* level, between the knowing *subject* and the real *object* known".

[66] For Lima Vaz, this is the core of the counterargument against the attempts to introduce contradiction into the straightforward affirmation of being. Negation always takes place inside the original affirmation of being, which entails negation but remains untouched by it. Inside affirmation, negation exercises its power. See Lima Vaz (1992a, p. 133, note 93). See on this issue in transcendental tomist debate: Holz (1966). And in the thought of K-O Apel: Oliveira (1997, p. 57).

established by the counterargumentation directed against skepticism (ARISTOTLE, Met. IV, 4, 1006 a 13-28): the negation cannot grasp being since it would deny itself by denying being.[67] We could say that "as a being-of-language and bearer of the logos the human being necessarily experiences the infiniteness of being and therefore its transcendence of all finite beings" (LIMA VAZ, 1992a, p. 111). Here,

> absoluteness as form (the absolute truth of the contradiction principle) and as act (the absolute necessity of existence) emerges as necessary condition for the stating of judgements to have an ontological scope as well as for the metaphysical discourse to be possible. (LIMA VAZ, 1996, p. 186).

The force of the argument[68] stems from the nature of the relationship that weds the finite human intellect to being as such[69] - a relationship marked by the finitude of an intellect that needs to act so as to move from the possibility to the activity of knowing. To do that, it has to unite itself intentionally with being, implying a necessary minimal determination of its object – something is. This makes the skeptical contradict himself when he means and says that nothing is. In short, finite intellect needs to act in order to know, which in turn leads to a minimal determination of its object and to a meeting with elementary determinations of being. For Vaz the originality of Thomas Aquinas' thought

> resides in this ingenious intuition according to which the very object of metaphysics is not to be found in the end of an abstractive process of the intellect as a universal notion of being (ens generalissimum ut nomen), but appears in the dynamic intentionality of an act of judgment as dialectical identity between the form of judgment (est) and the supreme act or perfection (existing, esse). (LIMA VAZ, 1996, p. 181).

This is exactly what the metaphysical structure of judgment and consequently the structure of human knowledge consist in: judgment firstly takes its object to the level of formal universality of being. This means that the being asserted in a judgment (the predicative being) (LIMA VAZ, 1996, p. 184; see also note 111) is sublated in the transcendental being, i.e., in the horizon of being as such,[70] which is the same as to detect the Absolute (formal Absolute) in the immanence of a free (freedom, will),

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[68] Lima Vaz always refers to counterargumentation as the argument that legitimates the necessary affirmation of being, and consequently provides the basis, in a first moment, for metaphysical discourse. Lima Vaz's thought is analogous and in close proximity to transcendental tomism, particularly to Maréchal's and Lotz's thought, but he makes no reference to the need of using the transcendental method to reach and develop metaphysical discourse, a need that Lotz, Rahner and Coreth explicitly accept (the question about whether he would accept Maréchal's view, according to which the transcendental method is not necessary, except in a cultural sense, due to its influence in contemporary philosophical culture, remains unanswered). As a consequence, there is no further explanation of the semantic and epistemological presuppositions of metaphysical discourse but for its foundation on counterargumentation. In this case, it is difficult for him to establish a dialogue with the theories of truth marked by the linguistic turn, even because he understandably rejects those philosophies that, as the ones mentioned above, limit themselves to the analysis of the semantic and logical forms, as incapable of thematizing the ultimate question about being. Since this question is irrefutable due to the inevitable affirmation of being, the metaphysical horizon is the inescapable horizon of the ultimate philosophical questions. Nevertheless, one can and must, in principle, present a metaphysical theory of truth as an explanation of the ultimate dimension of truth, one that is capable of comprising all other aspects of truth that have been worked out by other theories, once the discussion itself demonstrates the complex character of truth, and once the metaphysical horizon is the horizon of totality.

[69] See Lima Vaz (1992b, p. 448): "... the evident finiteness of our spirit, which placed in the contingency of world and history, can only be harmonized with the also evident infiniteness of our intentionality, which is asserted in the thought of Being, if we obey the logical and existential requirement that we affirm Transcendence as the Absolute of being".

[70] For Lima Vaz, what distinguishes contemporary philosophy is its effort to prevent any passage to transcendence and to reduce metaphysics to anthropology. See Lima Vaz (1992a, p. 121): "The philosophies of history, culture, and existence, on one hand, and the different versions of positivism, on the other, as well as the more recent philosophies of language, and the exemplar case of Heidegger's project of moving back beyond Plato in search of the 'unthought' of Being in the pre-socratic universe, testify to the several different forms of this huge rite of exorcism of Absolute which contemporary philosophy has turned out to be".

intelligent subject (rationality, intellect) who thinks it.[71] But being is in itself and subsists in itself,

> which means that it possesses intrinsic intelligibility or ontological reflexiveness (being is understood on the basis of its self, for there is nothing that precedes it logically that has any explanatory power upon it) (LIMA VAZ, 1992a, p. 111).

Being is then essential identity with thought[72], that is, it is interchangeable with truth and, as such, transcendental truth[73], which is the grounding of true logic, the truth of human spirit, the intentional identity of intellect and object (LIMA VAZ, 2000a, p. 60), for it is structurally underpinned towards the universality of being as such and therefore intentional universality and total coextensivity in relation to the totality of being and ontical truth (the truth of things, because they participate in being).

In view of its being subordinate to being as such, human spirit faces an open horizon of unlimited intelligibility within which each and every particular entity can be known. Pure being then presents itself as truth (identity between truth and being) and through counterargumentation it appears as perfect unity and perfect goodness – transcendental concepts[74] that are logically equivalent to that of being, that are identical to it in reality though presenting formal differences. Those provide the metaphysical foundations of human thought so that the core of philosophy is the discourse about the singleness, truthfulness and goodness of being.

Human intellect, inasmuch as it correlates with being as such, also correlates with the unity, the truth (the object of theoretical reasoning), and the goodness (the object of practical reasoning) of being. That is why the basic structure of human beings can be said to be a synthesis of unity, truth, and goodness or liberty:

> "From the perspective of the intellect, human beings as spiritual beings must be defined as beings-towards-truth; from the perspective of liberty, beings-towards--good. These two intents of man's spirit or of the man as an intelligent and free spirit intersect in the unity of the spiritual movement, for truth is a good of the intellect and goodness is the truth of liberty. Such is the intersection of the finite spirit which in the infinite spirit is the absolute identity of truth and goodness" (LIMA VAZ, 1991, p. 213).

Truth in the sphere of human life is the reception of the intelligible form or the perfection of the act of the ens into the spirit. And the received ens is also said to be true since as long as it takes part in being it also takes part in truth and is thus open to the intellect, and through the act of cognizing it then becomes intentionally present in spirit. The ens is subordinate to intellect, and intellect is subordinate to the ens: such is the correspondence that constitutes the (logical) truth of intellect and the (ontological) truth of ens.

There is a reciprocal relationship here that is essential for both ens and intellect, a relationship that Lima Vaz calls "categorical truth." This, in turn, is firstly founded on the

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[71] This is a proof that metaphysics is not the alienation of human life, but a deep plunge into the "roots of our being, where the Absolute appears as its principle and source". See Lima Vaz (1992b, p. 447).

[72] See Lima Vaz (2000b, p. 154): "The intelligible, in its first manifestation to thought, can only be conceived as absolute Being: the absolute *one*, which means an immediate identity with thought itself, according to Parmenide's famous proposition: *Veritably, thinking and being are the very same*".

[73] Which Lima Vaz also calls *noetic experience* of truth. See Lima Vaz (1992a, pp. 102). In E. Coreth's version, being is primarily and properly knowing itself, being aware of itself before itself (ein wissendes Bei-sich-Sein), and thus *identity of being and knowing*. See Coreth (1964, p. 354). See also Oliveira (2000, pp. 56). The main feature of modernity, in Vaz's view, is the passage of the sense of transcendence from ontology to epistemology, and its transformation into a subjective condition of the possibility of the objects of human experience. See Lima Vaz (1992a, p. 104-105).

[74] See on the 'doctrine of the transcendentals' Lima Vaz (1992a, p. 129, note 42, 1992b, p. 455-456).
See Lima Vaz (1992a, p. 128, note 40): "The logical problem of truth, which ended up prevailing in the philosophical literature on the subject, presupposes, in the final analysis, the *ontological structure of the true being*, as first established by Plato".

truth of being as such: the truth of intellect and the truth of ens are rooted in the truth of being, i.e., in the "transcendental truth."[75] That is to say, truth is the relationship of human being to being: the relationship of transcendence is the ontological constituent of humans as spiritual beings and thus irreducible to the somatic and psychic dimensions. Since the human being is spirit, its primary determinateness is transcendental in the sense of a radical openness to being and of a formal identity with being as truth and liberty.[76] On the other hand, as that human spirit is finite, it moves within the sphere of categorical truth, i.e., within the opening to the finite and contingent inner and external worlds, where truth is made relative in the multiplicity and fluidity of things. This is what makes man a basic inner tension between transcendental openness and categorical openness, and thus a tension between transcendental truth and categorical truth: in other words, "the paradox of a subject placed in the externality of world and history, but innerly open to the universality of being." (LIMA VAZ, 1992b, p. 446). That is why human spirit is characterized by a dual structure: it is understanding (categorical openness) and reason (transcendental openness).

2. Metaphysical truth as ultimate foundation of transcendental truth and categorical truth (logical and ontological).

To demonstrate the real Absolute – the primal truth, the ultimate foundation of all truth – is the end and fulfillment of a metaphysical discourse that starts, in a first stage, from the original understanding of the Absolute found in the affirmation of being that occurs in each act of judgment. Metaphysical discourse starts precisely with a reflexive analysis of the acts of judgement intended to show the conditions for the possibility of demonstrating the Absolute in a formal manner,[77] which are to be found a priori in the very structure of human intellect. In short, this is a question of showing that the dynamic nature of judgment is the condition for the possibility of demonstrating the existence of the real Absolute, since, given the finite and measurable character of the intellect, subordination to the formal Absolute (Unity, Truth, Goodness) implies subordination to the real Absolute.[78]

Lima Vaz, following Aquinas' steps in his metaphysical discourse, states that

> the positioning of being in judgment reflexively denotes: a) the separatio of the existent (esse) as supreme perfection of being and the impossibility of identifying esse and essentia in the finite being which is structurally subjected to the eidetic limitation that occurs in the formation of concepts; b) the reference to the Absolute in the dynamics of the spirit that moves the judging activity of the intellect. (LIMA VAZ, 1996, p. 187).

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[75] See. Lima Vaz (1991, p. 223):"That man is spirit then means the transcendental openness of man to the universality of being, according to the double movement of the receiveing and the gift, reason and liberty". This has ethical consequences. On page 224 we read: "… the transcendental opennes to the universal horizon of being (as Truth and Good) burdens man with the task of self-realization, in accordance with the norms of such universality."

[76] See. Lima Vaz (1991, p. 223): "That man is spirit then means the transcendental openness of man to the universality of being, according to the double movement of the receiveing and the gift, reason and liberty". This has ethical consequences. On page 224 we read: "… the transcendental opennes to the universal horizon of being (as Truth and Good) burdens man with the task of self-realization, in accordance with the norms of such universality."

[77] Those conditions are the predominance of existence on the level of metaphysical intelligibility and the dynamics of the assertion of judgement oriented toward absolute Existence. See Lima Vaz (1998a, p. 40). Such stance, in which the formal demonstration of the real Absolute takes place a posteriori, is a consequence of the non-acceptance of the validity of the ontological proof, although Lima Vaz states that "such counterargumentation, which forces negation to negate itself, may be understood in comparison with the so called 'ontological argument'" (LIMA VAZ, 1992a, p. 126, note 16). See also Henrich (1967).

[78] See Lima Vaz (1998a, p. 39): "[…] such theory offers the possibility of an intrinsic articulation between the thesis of the predominance of existence and its metaphysical consequences. In fact, the affirmation of the esse (existence) in judgement necessarily goes, in its intentional dynamics, beyond the eidetic limitation of the finite objects to which it applies, and, in virtue of the thetical unlimitedness of the very act of affirming, unavoidably establishes, as an ultimate, non-contemplated but dialectically implied horizon, the infinite subsistent Existence in its absolute transcendence, whose existence, on the level of analogical intelligibility, is formally demonstrated in the classical proofs of the existence of God."

The real Absolute as subsisting being or Absolute-of-existence is the absolute One from which all unity in the level of beings originates. It is expressed as intellectual intuition due to the identity between intellect and the intelligible as real identity and formal difference – thus as absolute intuition of itself, a thinking about thinking. As absolute intelligence and primary truth, it is the radical principle of all intelligibility, i.e., the reciprocal relationship of human intellect to its objects is based on the truth of the very being, which in its turn is grounded on the subsisting truth, which is the ultimate foundation of the discourse of the intelligibility of everything, namely, metaphysics, which culminates in the passage from transcendental truth to infinite truth. The Infinite Spirit therefore reveals itself as absolute identity of Truth and Good, Intelligence and Love, as the basis of transcendental truth and categorical truth. To put it in a nutshell, "as the act of existing is absolute perfection in itself, its primacy in the dialectical structure of the spirit leads us to affirm the absolute Spirit as absolute Existence (Ipsum esse subsistens), in which the difference returns as absolute identity of intellect and intelligibility (Truth) and of liberty and loveliness (Good), so that intellection and love interpenetrate in the infinite totality of existence" (LIMA VAZ, 1991, p. 221). When one locates the theory of truth in a metaphysical horizon as a theory of correspondence it then necessarily incorporates core elements of coherence theories, once the relationship of correspondence is introduced in a global metaphysical constellation, i.e., in the horizon of the totality of beings.[79] In such horizon the human being and his truthfulness and goodness understands himself as a result of the "superabundance and infinite ontological generosity of the Absolute" (LIMA VAZ, 1992a, p. 122), so that the transcendental relationship of man and being reveals here its deepest foundations.

"Man is because the Absolute is: as First Cause, Infinite Perfection and End." (LIMA VAZ, 1992a, p. 124); human being as finite subject, as unity of truth and liberty, is constitutively referred to the Absolute, i.e., it is a being-for-the-Absolute, for absolute Truth and absolute Goodness.

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[79] On an alternative interpretation of totality see Puntel (1990, p. 251).

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