

THE FALL

ABSTRACTS

From the Editors – A Relativity of the Fall (P.M.)

“What if I fall? / Oh, but my darling... / What if you fly?”¹

Those words can be read on a stone wall situated along the Beach at Matosinhos, in the vicinity of Porto. The inscription is accompanied by a drawing of silhouettes as if floating in the air. In the context in which the quote have been placed, in the sun, against the vast surfaces of the sky and the ocean, and read to the accompaniment of the waves, it cannot but inspire optimism. Those undoubtedly encouraging words (‘inspirational,’ as such quotes are presently called), reproduced also on bookmarks, postcards, posters, bracelets, T-shirts, or mugs, must touch a chord in the hearts of their readers as they evidently wish to have them at hand and refer to them for support in overcoming anxiety and taking risks. The citation seems to suggest that a fall (or what seems to be one) may be the beginning of a joyful flight. It seems that the attractiveness of the quote stems from the reference to an ability to fly that human beings, as they are as physical entities, does not have, and which, as the history of mankind shows, would very much like to acquire. Flying in the physical sense is, obviously, also a metaphor that represents experiences related to what is described—in the languages of different disciplines and traditions—as human mind, soul or spirit. In fact, not only is the latter believed to be capable of an upward movement, but also, by discovering and exploiting the laws of nature, it creates a possibility to fly, though in a different way, also for the body.

In the famous excerpt from his *Confessions*, Saint Augustin (whose works have also become a source of inspirational maxims reproduced on various objects of everyday use) also seems to have expressed the human desire to fly: he wrote about love, comparing it to a gravitational force (weight, *pondus*²), different, of course, than the ‘Newtonian’ one: “Fire tends upwards, stone downwards. By their weight they are moved and seek their proper place.”³ Man—his soul, or what Augustine calls ‘heart’⁴—resembles fire rather than stone, and thus tends

¹ The words are the motto at Erin Hanson’s Facebook site “Poetic Underground,” (<https://www.facebook.com/e.h.thepoeticunderground/>).

² See *S. Aurelii Augustini Confessionum liber tredecim*, in *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 32, col. 849-850.

³ *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book thirteen, IX, transl. by Frank J. Sheed (Sheed & Ward: New York 1959), 326.

⁴ Ibidem, 327.

upwards: “My love is my weight: wherever I go, my love is what brings me there. By Your gift we are on fire and borne upwards: we flame and we ascend. ... It is by Your fire, Your beneficent fire, that we burn and we rise, rise towards the peace of Jerusalem.”⁵ Augustine, intertwining two different metaphors, compares the rise of the soul to an upward rush of fire and, simultaneously, to a joyous, rhythmical ascent, but, whatever the character of the movement, it is effected not against the specific force of gravitation, but under its influence, as the spirit soars high by its very nature, striving to reach a definite goal. At this point the Augustinian rising skywards is different from the manner of flying reflected in the words written on the wall at the Portuguese beach. The popular maxim refers to floating, gliding, ‘swimming’ in the air, flying for the sake of flying itself, while the bishop of Hippo speaks of moving towards a destination, travelling to “the house of the Lord,”⁶ which is our “proper place;” it is, in fact, the only place where we can rest, in the sense of both ceasing to move and finding our peace.

Despite this difference, the contemporary author of the popular quotation and the Father of the Church voice a universal human experience: for the human being, moving downwards—both in its literal physical and metaphysical sense, as well as in the traditional metaphysical one—is negative, inherently connected to a possibility of suffering or death. Although man’s falling into a precipice may be described in the same terms as a downward movement of a stone, e.g. as an effect of the force of gravitational attraction, such a description would be, from the vantage point of human existential experience, conspicuously incomplete. Actually, the images evoked by both the authors—images, as it were, permeated with light and joy—reveal also their dark side. An anxiety expressed in the question: “What if I fall?”, is entirely justified, as we are continually threatened by falling. We might not fully appreciate that ever-present threat, or just refuse to think about it, or even be unaware (at least temporarily) of it, but it remains present. As Blaise Pascal wrote: “We run carelessly to the precipice, after we have put something before us to prevent us seeing it.”⁷

However, the Augustinian image of an ascent, under the influence of the Spirit, to the Heavenly Jerusalem, points to the condition described by Christian theology as *status naturae lapsae*, the condition of man after the original sin, that first ‘non-physical’ fall that was the origin of evil and, in consequence, of all kinds of falling that have become our share. The fervor of Augustine’s narrative diverts our attention from the starting point of our journey, from the fact that we begin our ascent from the ‘place’ into which we had fallen. We might, for a while, forget our drama and the toil of the way, not to think about our stumbling, falling to the ground, or perhaps even rushing down into an abyss⁸. Reading the *Confessions*, however, it is virtually impossible to ignore

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts*, 183, transl. by William F. Trotter, Bartleby.com, 2001 (<https://www.bartleby.com/48/1/2.html>)

⁸ *Confessions* also include the descriptions of such an experience, as well as of the effects of a different ‘force of attraction’ on the human being: “I ... was ravished to You by Your beauty, yet

the restlessness of the author's heart⁹ and his longing to return to his heavenly home; it would also be difficult to forget that among the assumptions of the Augustinian vision there is not only the doctrine of original sin, but also the Good News of Redemption.

The Augustine's image, deeply rooted in the theological and philosophical context of Western culture, aptly reflects the ambivalent experience of man: by interpreting the human condition as marked by sin, it is an expression of a nostalgia for completeness, for perfection. This nostalgia, as it were, a trace of paradise in our inner selves, or—as Plato might have said—a vague memory of “beholding the plain of truth,”¹⁰ of seeing the world of eternal ideas, gives an impulse to constantly renewed efforts to rise and return to the good. Moreover, it indicates the direction of human actions, providing them, in fact, of a norm. The metaphor of the fall, apart from being part of a metaphysical and theological ‘grand narrative,’ of an all-encompassing vision of the world and human existence, finds also numerous ‘local’ applications. It is the category with which we describe a variety of events, processes, and states we encounter in everyday life: in fact, our life may perhaps be described as a series of falls: from the moment we fall over for the first time while learning to walk, to our death—our last fall. And although describing events in our lives as ‘falls,’ one refers (perhaps indirectly, obscurely, so that it neither shocks nor even provokes a serious thought) to the image of the lapsed human condition and flawed nature of the reality in which man exists, the falls in question are not necessarily of negative character. Learning to walk—and, actually, any other process of acquiring knowledge or a skill—can hardly be imagined without falling down, however unpleasant or dangerous it might prove. It is not only the fact that there is often no other way to learn than from mistakes that shows a relativity or a positive nature of falling. Let us call to mind not a very distant historical fact that is so often described with the term ‘fall’: the demolition of the Berlin Wall. It was one of the events that symbolically marked an end of a certain structure of evil, opening, at the same time, the possibility to create a new context, an environment in which the human person should flourish. Perhaps it would be correct to say—in the spirit of the inspirational quote found at the Portuguese beach—that in that case a fall might have become the beginning of an upward flight towards the good.

Remembering the collapse of the Wall, which provided, at the time, an occasion for a joyful festival (let us think, for instance, about Mstislav Rostropovich, playing Johann Sebastian Bach's cello suites in front of the not-yet-demolished Wall¹¹), one cannot forget about the demolition of what is precious, what helps us develop. “The law of the fall” seems to pervade the whole scope of human experience; as if

soon was torn away from You again by my own weight, and fell again with torment to lower things” (*The Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book seven, XVII, 149).

⁹ Ibidem, Book one, I, 3.

¹⁰ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 248 B, transl. by Benjamin Jowett (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html>).

¹¹ See a short video registration of this event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiwXUJJjL6g>.

anything we have created, being an imperfect reflection of the Good, were doomed to destruction.

The authors of the articles collected in the present volume of *Ethos* both analyze the category of the fall, examining its range and limitations of the metaphor in question, and discuss its applications to the interpretation of human experience. At the same time, they give witness to an unceasing human struggle against evil in its various historical forms, to sustained efforts to overcome it, also by understanding the role of the human being in bringing it into existence. Perhaps, they express an awareness that the ‘fallen’ condition is neither our natural nor ultimate one, at the same time revealing the nostalgia—like the longing alluded to by Plato, Augustine, and maybe by the author of the popular inspirational quote—evoked in us by the force of attraction (and that of obligation) exerted by the Good.

JOHN PAUL II – The Anthropological Basis of the Fall of Oppressive Regimes

It is on the basis of the world situation ... already elaborated in the Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, that the unexpected and promising significance of the events of recent years can be understood. Although they certainly reached their climax in 1989 in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, they embrace a longer period of time and a wider geographical area. In the course of the 80s, certain dictatorial and oppressive regimes fell one by one in some countries of Latin America and also of Africa and Asia. In other cases there began a difficult but productive transition towards more participatory and more just political structures. An important, even decisive, contribution was made by the Church’s commitment to defend and promote human rights. In situations strongly influenced by ideology, in which polarization obscured the awareness of a human dignity common to all, the Church affirmed clearly and forcefully that every individual—whatever his or her personal convictions—bears the image of God and therefore deserves respect. Often, the vast majority of people identified themselves with this kind of affirmation, and this led to a search for forms of protest and for political solutions more respectful of the dignity of the person. From this historical process new forms of democracy have emerged which offer a hope for change in fragile political and social structures weighed down by a painful series of injustices and resentments, as well as by a heavily damaged economy and serious social conflicts. Together with the whole Church, I thank God for the often heroic witness borne in such difficult circumstances by many Pastors, entire Christian communities, individual members of the faithful, and other people of good will; at the same time I pray that he will sustain the efforts being made by everyone to build a better future. This is, in fact, a responsibility which falls not only to the citizens of the countries in question, but to all Christians and people of good will. It is a question of showing that the complex problems faced by those peoples can be resolved through dialogue and solidarity, rather than by a struggle to destroy the enemy through war.

Among the many factors involved in the fall of oppressive regimes, some deserve special mention. Certainly, the decisive factor which gave rise to the changes was the violation of the rights of workers. It cannot be forgotten that

the fundamental crisis of systems claiming to express the rule and indeed the dictatorship of the working class began with the great upheavals which took place in Poland in the name of solidarity. It was the throngs of working people which foresaw the ideology which presumed to speak in their name. On the basis of a hard, lived experience of work and of oppression, it was they who recovered and, in a sense, rediscovered the content and principles of the Church's social doctrine.

Also worthy of emphasis is the fact that the fall of this kind of 'bloc' or empire was accomplished almost everywhere by means of peaceful protest, using only the weapons of truth and justice. While Marxism held that only by exacerbating social conflicts was it possible to resolve them through violent confrontation, the protests which led to the collapse of Marxism tenaciously insisted on trying every avenue of negotiation, dialogue, and witness to the truth, appealing to the conscience of the adversary and seeking to reawaken in him a sense of shared human dignity.

It seemed that the European order resulting from the Second World War and sanctioned by the Yalta agreements could only be overturned by another war. Instead, it has been overcome by the non-violent commitment of people who, while always refusing to yield to the force of power, succeeded time after time in finding effective ways of bearing witness to the truth. This disarmed the adversary, since violence always needs to justify itself through deceit, and to appear, however falsely, to be defending a right or responding to a threat posed by others.¹ Once again I thank God for having sustained people's hearts amid difficult trials, and I pray that this example will prevail in other places and other circumstances. May people learn to fight for justice without violence, renouncing class struggle in their internal disputes, and war in international ones.

The second factor in the crisis was certainly the inefficiency of the economic system, which is not to be considered simply as a technical problem, but rather a consequence of the violation of the human rights to private initiative, to ownership of property and to freedom in the economic sector. To this must be added the cultural and national dimension: it is not possible to understand man on the basis of economics alone, nor to define him simply on the basis of class membership. Man is understood in a more complete way when he is situated within the sphere of culture through his language, history, and the position he takes towards the fundamental events of life, such as birth, love, work and death. At the heart of every culture lies the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God. Different cultures are basically different ways of facing the question of the meaning of personal existence. When this question is eliminated, the culture and moral life of nations are corrupted. For this reason the struggle to defend work was spontaneously linked to the struggle for culture and for national rights.

But the true cause of the new developments was the spiritual void brought about by atheism, which deprived the younger generations of a sense of direction and

¹ See John Paul II, "Truth, the Power of Peace" (Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace 1 January 1980, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19791208_xiii-world-day-for-peace.html).

in many cases led them, in the irrepressible search for personal identity and for the meaning of life, to rediscover the religious roots of their national cultures, and to rediscover the person of Christ himself as the existentially adequate response to the desire in every human heart for goodness, truth and life. This search was supported by the witness of those who, in difficult circumstances and under persecution, remained faithful to God. Marxism had promised to uproot the need for God from the human heart, but the results have shown that it is not possible to succeed in this without throwing the heart into turmoil.

The events of 1989 are an example of the success of willingness to negotiate and of the Gospel spirit in the face of an adversary determined not to be bound by moral principles. These events are a warning to those who, in the name of political realism, wish to banish law and morality from the political arena. Undoubtedly, the struggle which led to the changes of 1989 called for clarity, moderation, suffering and sacrifice. In a certain sense, it was a struggle born of prayer, and it would have been unthinkable without immense trust in God, the Lord of history, who carries the human heart in his hands. It is by uniting his own sufferings for the sake of truth and freedom to the sufferings of Christ on the Cross that man is able to accomplish the miracle of peace and is in a position to discern the often narrow path between the cowardice which gives in to evil and the violence which, under the illusion of fighting evil, only makes it worse.

Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten that the manner in which the individual exercises his freedom is conditioned in innumerable ways. While these certainly have an influence on freedom, they do not determine it; they make the exercise of freedom more difficult or less difficult, but they cannot destroy it. Not only is it wrong from the ethical point of view to disregard human nature, which is made for freedom, but in practice it is impossible to do so. Where society is so organized as to reduce arbitrarily or even suppress the sphere in which freedom is legitimately exercised, the result is that the life of society becomes progressively disorganized and goes into decline.

Moreover, man, who was created for freedom, bears within himself the wound of original sin, which constantly draws him towards evil and puts him in need of redemption. Not only is this doctrine an integral part of Christian revelation; it also has great hermeneutical value insofar as it helps one to understand human reality. Man tends towards good, but he is also capable of evil. He can transcend his immediate interest and still remain bound to it. The social order will be all the more stable, the more it takes this fact into account and does not place in opposition personal interest and the interests of society as a whole, but rather seeks ways to bring them into fruitful harmony. In fact, where self-interest is violently suppressed, it is replaced by a burdensome system of bureaucratic control which dries up the wellsprings of initiative and creativity. When people think they possess the secret of a perfect social organization which makes evil impossible, they also think that they can use any means, including violence and deceit, in order to bring that organization into being. Politics then becomes a ‘secular religion’ which operates under the illusion of creating paradise in this world. But no political society—which possesses its own autonomy and

laws²—can ever be confused with the Kingdom of God. The Gospel parable of the weeds among the wheat (cf. Mt 13:24-30; 36-43) teaches that it is for God alone to separate the subjects of the Kingdom from the subjects of the Evil One, and that this judgment will take place at the end of time. By presuming to anticipate judgment here and now, man puts himself in the place of God and sets himself against the patience of God.

Through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, the victory of the Kingdom of God has been achieved once and for all. Nevertheless, the Christian life involves a struggle against temptation and the forces of evil. Only at the end of history will the Lord return in glory for the final judgment (cf. Mt 25:31) with the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth (cf. 2 Pt 3:13; Rev 21:1); but as long as time lasts the struggle between good and evil continues even in the human heart itself.

What Sacred Scripture teaches us about the prospects of the Kingdom of God is not without consequences for the life of temporal societies, which, as the adjective indicates, belong to the realm of time, with all that this implies of imperfection and impermanence. The Kingdom of God, being in the world without being of the world, throws light on the order of human society, while the power of grace penetrates that order and gives it life. In this way the requirements of a society worthy of man are better perceived, deviations are corrected, the courage to work for what is good is reinforced. In union with all people of good will, Christians, especially the laity, are called to this task of imbuing human realities with the Gospel.³

The events of 1989 took place principally in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. However, they have worldwide importance because they have positive and negative consequences which concern the whole human family. These consequences are not mechanistic or fatalistic in character, but rather are opportunities for human freedom to cooperate with the merciful plan of God who acts within history.

The first consequence was an encounter in some countries between the Church and the workers' movement, which came about as a result of an ethical and explicitly Christian reaction against a widespread situation of injustice. For about a century the workers' movement had fallen in part under the dominance of Marxism, in the conviction that the working class, in order to struggle effectively against oppression, had to appropriate its economic and materialistic theories.

In the crisis of Marxism, the natural dictates of the consciences of workers have re-emerged in a demand for justice and a recognition of the dignity of work, in conformity with the social doctrine of the Church.⁴ The worker movement is part of a more general movement among workers and other people of good will for the liberation of the human person and for the affirmation of human

² See Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today *Gaudium et Spes*, Sections 36 and 39.

³ See John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (December 30, 1988), Sections 32-44.

⁴ See John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, Section 20.

rights. It is a movement which today has spread to many countries, and which, far from opposing the Catholic Church, looks to her with interest.

The crisis of Marxism does not rid the world of the situations of injustice and oppression which Marxism itself exploited and on which it fed. To those who are searching today for a new and authentic theory and praxis of liberation, the Church offers not only her social doctrine and, in general, her teaching about the human person redeemed in Christ, but also her concrete commitment and material assistance in the struggle against marginalization and suffering.

In the recent past, the sincere desire to be on the side of the oppressed and not to be cut off from the course of history has led many believers to seek in various ways an impossible compromise between Marxism and Christianity. Moving beyond all that was short-lived in these attempts, present circumstances are leading to a reaffirmation of the positive value of an authentic theology of integral human liberation.⁵ Considered from this point of view, the events of 1989 are proving to be important also for the countries of the Third World, which are searching for their own path to development, just as they were important for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The second consequence concerns the peoples of Europe themselves. Many individual, social, regional and national injustices were committed during and prior to the years in which Communism dominated; much hatred and ill-will have accumulated. There is a real danger that these will re-explode after the collapse of dictatorship, provoking serious conflicts and casualties, should there be a lessening of the moral commitment and conscious striving to bear witness to the truth which were the inspiration for past efforts. It is to be hoped that hatred and violence will not triumph in people's hearts, especially among those who are struggling for justice, and that all people will grow in the spirit of peace and forgiveness.

What is needed are concrete steps to create or consolidate international structures capable of intervening through appropriate arbitration in the conflicts which arise between nations, so that each nation can uphold its own rights and reach a just agreement and peaceful settlement vis-à-vis the rights of others. This is especially needed for the nations of Europe, which are closely united in a bond of common culture and an age old history. A great effort is needed to rebuild morally and economically the countries which have abandoned Communism. For a long time the most elementary economic relationships were distorted, and basic virtues of economic life, such as truthfulness, trustworthiness and hard work were denigrated. A patient material and moral reconstruction is needed, even as people, exhausted by longstanding privation, are asking their governments for tangible and immediate results in the form of material benefits and an adequate fulfilment of their legitimate aspirations.

The fall of Marxism has naturally had a great impact on the division of the planet into worlds which are closed to one another and in jealous competition. It has further highlighted the reality of interdependence among peoples, as well

⁵ See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation *Libertatis Conscientia* (March 22, 1986).

as the fact that human work, by its nature, is meant to unite peoples, not divide them. Peace and prosperity, in fact, are goods which belong to the whole human race: it is not possible to enjoy them in a proper and lasting way if they are achieved and maintained at the cost of other peoples and nations, by violating their rights or excluding them from the sources of well-being.

In a sense, for some countries of Europe the real post-war period is just beginning. The radical reordering of economic systems, hitherto collectivized, entails problems and sacrifices comparable to those which the countries of Western Europe had to face in order to rebuild after the Second World War. It is right that in the present difficulties the formerly Communist countries should be aided by the united effort of other nations. Obviously they themselves must be the primary agents of their own development, but they must also be given a reasonable opportunity to accomplish this goal, something that cannot happen without the help of other countries. Moreover, their present condition, marked by difficulties and shortages, is the result of an historical process in which the formerly Communist countries were often objects and not subjects. Thus they find themselves in the present situation not as a result of free choice or mistakes which were made, but as a consequence of tragic historical events which were violently imposed on them, and which prevented them from following the path of economic and social development.

Assistance from other countries, especially the countries of Europe which were part of that history and which bear responsibility for it, represents a debt in justice. But it also corresponds to the interest and welfare of Europe as a whole, since Europe cannot live in peace if the various conflicts which have arisen as a result of the past are to become more acute because of a situation of economic disorder, spiritual dissatisfaction and desperation.

This need, however, must not lead to a slackening of efforts to sustain and assist the countries of the Third World, which often suffer even more serious conditions of poverty and want.⁶ What is called for is a special effort to mobilize resources, which are not lacking in the world as a whole, for the purpose of economic growth and common development, redefining the priorities and hierarchies of values on the basis of which economic and political choices are made. Enormous resources can be made available by disarming the huge military machines which were constructed for the conflict between East and West. These resources could become even more abundant if, in place of war, reliable procedures for the resolution of conflicts could be set up, with the resulting spread of the principle of arms control and arms reduction, also in the countries of the Third World, through the adoption of appropriate measures against the arms trade.⁷ But it will be necessary above all to abandon a mentality in which the poor—as individuals and as peoples—are considered a burden, as irksome intruders trying to consume what others have produced. The poor ask for the right to share in enjoying material goods and to make good use of their capacity

⁶ See J o h n P a u l II, Discourse at the Headquarters of the E.C.W.A. on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the ‘Appeal for the Sahel’ (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, January 29, 1990): *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* vol. 82 (1990), 816-21.

⁷ See J o h n XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, Chapter III.

for work, thus creating a world that is more just and prosperous for all. The advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural and even economic growth of all humanity.

Finally, development must not be understood solely in economic terms, but in a way that is fully human.⁸ It is not only a question of raising all peoples to the level currently enjoyed by the richest countries, but rather of building up a more decent life through united labor, of concretely enhancing every individual's dignity and creativity, as well as his capacity to respond to his personal vocation, and thus to God's call. The apex of development is the exercise of the right and duty to seek God, to know him and to live in accordance with that knowledge.⁹ In the totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, the principle that force predominates over reason was carried to the extreme. Man was compelled to submit to a conception of reality imposed on him by coercion, and not reached by virtue of his own reason and the exercise of his own freedom. This principle must be overturned and total recognition must be given to the rights of the human conscience, which is bound only to the truth, both natural and revealed. The recognition of these rights represents the primary foundation of every authentically free political order.¹⁰ It is important to reaffirm this latter principle for several reasons: (a) because the old forms of totalitarianism and authoritarianism are not yet completely vanquished; indeed there is a risk that they will regain their strength. This demands renewed efforts of cooperation and solidarity between all countries; (b) because in the developed countries there is sometimes an excessive promotion of purely utilitarian values, with an appeal to the appetites and inclinations towards immediate gratification, making it difficult to recognize and respect the hierarchy of the true values of human existence; (c) because in some countries new forms of religious fundamentalism are emerging which covertly, or even openly, deny to citizens of faiths other than that of the majority the full exercise of their civil and religious rights, preventing them from taking part in the cultural process, and restricting both the Church's right to preach the Gospel and the rights of those who hear this preaching to accept it and to be converted to Christ. No authentic progress is possible without respect for the natural and fundamental right to know the truth and live according to that truth. The exercise and development of this right includes the right to discover and freely to accept Jesus Christ, who is man's true good.¹¹

Keywords: oppressive political structures, poverty, human rights, ideology, human dignity, democracy, rights of workers, collapse of dictatorship, non-violence, class struggle, justice, freedom

⁸ See John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Sections 27 and 28; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, Sections 43 and 44.

⁹ See John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Sections 29-31.

¹⁰ See Helsinki Final Act (Helsinki, 1 August 1975); Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Libertas Præstantissimum*, Section 5.

¹¹ See John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (December 7, 1990), Section 7.

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Fr. Dariusz DZIADOSZ – “The Israelites offended the Lord” (Judg. 2:11): Theological Aspects of the Fall in the Book of Judges

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The theme of the article is the Biblical concept of the ‘Fall’ elaborated by the Deuteronomic writers and theologians of Israel in the period of the Babylonian exile of the Jewish people (597-538 BC). The presentation of the theme is referred to the source material found in the Book of Judges, in which a theological vision of the ‘Fall’ is the main motif. The Deuteronomic editor of the Book of Judges presents the problem in question in the context of the difficult period of the history of his people, presenting a multi-layered conception of the fall of the human being, which is reflected in the religious, moral, social, and political aspects of the history of the Jewish people, as well as in the lives of particular Israelites.

The paper comprises a synthetic review of the Biblical concepts related to the problems of the ‘Fall’ and reflects on the fundamental principle of Judaism, namely, the doctrine of Divine retribution. Against such theological background, selected parts of the source material, most representative of the theme in question, have been discussed.

Translated by Dorota Chabrajska

Keywords: The Book of Judges, Deuteronomic editor, Israel in the pre-monarchy period, religious and moral crisis, the fall of social, political and military structures, the doctrine of Divine retribution

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Piotr CZARNECKI – Towards the Origins of Evil: The Conception of the Fall in Cathar Doctrines

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In contemporary historiography of Catharism doctrinal matters are analyzed extremely rarely. However, an increasingly popular ‘deconstructivist’ interpretation of this heresy questions the connections between Catharism and earlier dualist heresies, in particular its relation to Bogomilism. The article, basing on source materials, analyzes the issue of the fall (crucial for the dualist teachings) in various versions of the Cathar doctrine: in moderate dualism, as well as in the two options that developed within the radical one (which assumed the existence of two co-eternal and independent principles), namely, the ‘angelic’ version and the ‘doctrine of the two worlds.’ The analysis shows that, in the early period, the doctrine of the fall professed by moderate Cathars as well as by radical ones was an accurate reflection of the models included in the myths and sacred scriptures of the Bogomils, especially those included in the *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Yet Cathar attempts at preservation of the mythological and exegetical themes borrowed from the East rendered the myths of the fall incoherent and incapable of giving a clear answer to the fundamental question: *Unde malum?* In the 13th century, however, mostly due to the Catholic criticism, some Cathar communities dared modify the Eastern, Bogomil models, which resulted in the creation of their own conceptions providing better explanations of the issue of the origins of evil (an issue crucial in the case of dualism). Nevertheless, the conceptions in question failed to be widely accepted among Cathars.

Keywords: Catharism, Bogomilism, medieval dualism

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Natalia STENCEL – A Mystical Fall? The Phenomenon of the ‘Dark Night of the Soul,’ as seen in the Linguistic Context

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This article is an attempt at consolidating research results on the subject of the mystical experience of the ‘dark night of the soul’ in the linguistic context. Marks of the ‘dark night of the soul’ in the sense conveyed by St. John of the Cross may be found in numerous mystical texts and the phenomenon as such has been described as an experience of the collapse of language in face of a sacred reality. The paper shows that such a collapse is embedded in the very morphology of a mystical experience. The main theoretical assumptions of the considerations refer to the contextual method of studying mystical texts proposed by Steven T. Katz. The most important hypothesis refers strictly to the possibility

of a ‘morphology of the sacred.’ The ‘dark night of the soul,’ being a means to spiritual and moral progress on the way to sainthood, simultaneously manifests a quality inherent in the very essence of the epistemological aspect of the mystical experience. The collapse of language is therefore one of the most important elements of the experience of the mystical ‘dark night.’ However, even in the case of the mystical experience the collapse of language is not unequivocal and total: having returned to his world, the mystic turns to language in order to speak out the unspeakable despite being aware that it will never be possible.

Keywords: ‘dark night of the soul,’ mystical experience, mysticism, contextualism, the sacred, language

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Marcin SUBCZAK – The Fall of Man as a Disease of the Soul: Diagnostic-Therapeutic Dimension of Platonic Dialogues

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In this article, I address the diagnostic and therapeutic dimension of Plato’s writings. In the first part, I indicate that his dialogues are focused on the issue of the human soul. Plato, however, is interested—perhaps even more than in the metaphysics of the soul—in the problem of the lived experience of the presence of the soul as a rational and moral residuum of humanity. I refer to selected extracts from his dialogues in which the soul is described as what is most precious in man and simultaneously determining the essence of the human being. In the second part of the paper, I point to the fact that Socratic-Platonic concern for the soul has its origin in diagnosing the condition of the souls of the interlocutors of Socrates. I also claim that the context the dialogue as a genre introduces is perfectly suited to this task. I describe the course of the diagnosis in question, its nature and scope. Having observed that Plato’s diagnosis of the soul is largely negative and evokes the image of a sick soul, I discuss, in part three of the article, the essence of the fall of humanity, as well as the dimensions, manifestations, and consequences of this fall. The fourth part of the paper analyzes the therapeutic response of Plato to the condition of spiritual fall. The cure the philosopher proposes is philosophy understood as concern for the soul (psychagogy), encouragement to virtue (protreptic), and proper upbringing (paideia). I point to the fact that such philosophical therapy is recommended wherever Plato perceives a necessity of refining the human noetic skills that enable the cognition of a complex ontological structure. The purpose of this kind of cognition—the goal of Platonic therapy—is to know the Good, for the path towards it, as well as the knowledge of it, has the power to purify and elevate man from his fall, that is, to restore the natural harmony and order of human souls. To conclude, I emphasize that it is Plato’s implementation

of his diagnostic and therapeutic strategy that gives unity and coherence to the philosopher's thought, which develops consistently, beginning with the moment of the diagnosis: the recognition of the fall of man, which is followed by the proposal of a cure and, finally, by the soul's return to its 'natural' good health.

Keywords: Platonic dialogues, diagnosis, therapy, the fall of man

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Adam SAWICKI – The Sin of Knowledge and an Attempt at Freedom: The Notion of 'Fall' in the Religious and Philosophical Concepts Advanced by Lev Shestov and Nikolai Berdyaev

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The article discusses two concepts of the Fall, conceived of as, firstly, the sin of knowledge and, secondly, as an attempt at freedom. The former may be found in Lev Shestov's biblical philosophy, and the latter in Nicolai Berdyaev's Christian gnosis. The author expounds the way in which the mentioned philosophers reconstructed the relationship between the fall, knowledge, and freedom, as well as the one between God, nothingness, and the human being. He also analyzes the problem of the consequences of the Fall of man Shestov and Berdyaev, respectively, scrutinize, as well as the ways of overcoming these consequences they propose. The paper emphasizes religious inspiration of their views and compares the conceptions they worked out, taking into account their debate on the original sin.

Keywords: the Fall, nothingness, freedom, objectification, good, evil, faith, creativity, fear, original sin, knowledge, mind, reason

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Adriana WARMBIER – A Wounded Memory: Renarrativization and the Problem of Personal Identity

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In this paper, I consider the role that individual and collective memory plays in constructing personal identity. I particularly focus on the problem of entan-

gled memory (symbolic injuries which demand reconciliation). Analyzing the internal relation between recalling and forgetting, I argue that self-recognition (and self-interpretation) is possible only if the past events find their meaning in the narrative structure. I refer to Ricoeur's research on memory and to the concept of narrative identity. By emphasizing the fact that temporal experience and the narrative operation are intertwined, I suggest that we need constant narrativization in striving for our inner integrity.

Keywords: memory, personal identity, narrativization, Ricoeur, Freud

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Rafał SOLEWSKI – The Falls of 20th Century Art and Metaphysics: On Selected Philosophical Theories and Artistic Activities Potentially Related to Them

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The article presents metaphorically understood falls of the twentieth-century art described in such terms as the ‘speechless image,’ the ‘absorption of the ugly,’ the ‘abandonment of art,’ the ‘end of art,’ the ‘lost image,’ the ‘lost experience.’ Philosophical views of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Theodor W. Adorno, Arthur C. Danto, Jacques Rancière, and Wolfgang Welsh have been juxtaposed with interpretations of works of such artists as Mark Rothko, Marcel Duchamp, Artur Żmijewski, Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, and Janusz Orbitowski. The analyses reveal a longing for metaphysics accompanying the described ‘falls’ of art. The theories advanced in relation to such ‘falls’ show the qualities inherent in the art in question, e.g., silence and moderation, the ‘lust of existence,’ paradox, poetry and its beauty, words which interpret art, the sublimity of infinity. In conclusion, the author points to the impossibility of avoiding metaphysics in art.

Keywords: art, a fall of art, speechless image, absorption of the ugly, abandonment of art, the end of art, lost image, lost experience, aesthetics, an/aesthetics, avoidance of metaphysics

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Marcin T. ZDRENKA – The Fall as a Problematic Metaphor in Ethics

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The article reviews the difficulties related to the illusions created by the metaphor of the fall. A closer look reveals its complexity and hidden traps that originate ethical challenges. The difficulties in question include: the apparent identity of various types of falls, the illusion of the trajectory model of the fall, the transparency of the process of falling, and the conviction of the dominance or exclusivity of the narrative of ‘scandal,’ understood as falling into evil. The most important ethical issues related to these illusions are: a language deficit concerning the description of ‘training in evil,’ the ineffective model of pedagogy of the final collapse, the lack of tools to exercise ourselves in vigilance before the process of falling begins, and the confrontation with the belief that the metaphor of the fall has become redundant.

Keywords: evil, fall, moral collapse, scandal

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Dobrosław KOT – The Decline of the Myth of Myth’s Decline

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Bruno Schulz was not only an outstanding prose writer, but also the author of an original conception of myth. According to Schulz, myth and mythicisation are not phenomena belonging to primeval and ancient cultures, but an indelible way of making sense. Man, regardless of historical changes, continues to reach for myth and explains reality through story-telling. Myth plays a particular role in building one’s own biography, whose roots vanish in the mythical past: it is impossible to understand oneself without constructing a private mythology. This sketch is devoted to Schulz’s philosophical views on myth and their consequences for understanding man.

Keywords: Schulz, myth, story, history, biography, hermeneutics, symbol, metaphor, decline

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Jacek MYDLA – Between Theodicy and Psychology: On the Visions of the Fall in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*

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The article discusses the fall as the main theme of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. At the outset, the author distinguishes between the fall in the sense of an act (a deed) and a state; then he applies the distinction in question to the three main fallen characters of Milton’s work: Satan, Eve, and Adam. The author makes numerous references to the poem (to the Polish translation by Maciej Słomczyński, as well as to the English original) and emphasizes the way in which literary devices support the doctrine (the theodicy), but also how—in particular in the ‘human’ part of the narrative—they weaken the doctrine by eliciting sympathy in the reader. The author also pays attention to the role of verbal interaction and rhetoric in Milton’s treatment of the theme of the fall.

Keywords: the fall (of Satan, of Eve, of Adam), theodicy (doctrine), narration, rhetoric

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Andrzej NIEWIADOMSKI – Poetic Catastrophism: An Attempt to Stabilize the Concept, and ‘Further Sequences’

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Catastrophism is a concept often used in Polish historical-literary discourse, but the frequency of the occurrence of this term does not go hand in hand with its precision. The article is an attempt to disambiguate it (following the concept of Edward Balcerzan) as a term meaning strictly poetic convention rather than a ‘view’ or ‘world-view attitude.’ The paper is also an attempt to determine the time frame of catastrophism in modern Polish poetry with culmination between 1930 and 1943, ordering its variations due to: the type and extent of catastrophic ‘fantasies,’ the consequences of the catastrophe, and temporal construction. This ordered phenomenon presents itself as an important part of modern Polish poetry, which, together with other aesthetics, marks the moment of the solstice in the middle of the 20th century. A separate issue is the problem of the presence of poetic catastrophe in post-war poetry up to the present times. Researchers using the term ‘poetic catastrophe’ in relation to contemporary poetic phenomena treat it very freely. The confrontation of works considered by

them as catastrophic with the convention of catastrophic poetics indicates that there are free connections rather than a simple continuation of the pattern. Such references can be found in the late works of Czesław Miłosz and Jerzy Zagórski, in the works of Tadeusz Różewicz, Zbigniew Herbert, Rafał Wojaczek, poets of Nowa Fala, Bronisław Maj, Jan Polkowski, and Marcin Świetlicki. The poems of the latter question the sense of using the catastrophic convention in the face of mental changes taking place in the post-modern world.

Keywords: catastrophism, ‘end of the world,’ modernism, a poetic worldview, immanent poetics, second Avant-garde

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Furio PESCI – Between the Fall and Redemption. Pedagogical Perspective

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Drawing on the doctrine of the original sin and recognizing the constant possibility of individuals sins, Christian pedagogy developed in its history an original perspective on the good life and virtue conceived of as sources of positive energies that help the believer to educate his or her desires and, consequently, to progress in following Christ. Vice and sin are interpreted, in this view, as effects of breaking the connection between desires and happiness, while moral integrity is considered to be fruit of the appropriate choice and use of goods. In this context, pedagogical reflection may derive inspiration from René Girard’s mimetic theory, as well as from the first-person ethics and virtue ethics, especially as proposed by Alasdair MacIntyre.

Translated by Patrycja Mikulska

Keywords: Christian pedagogy, sin, virtue, René Girard, Alasdair MacIntyre

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Agnieszka TES – The Stigma of Decline: On Selected Aspects of Anselm Kiefer's Art

DOI 10.12887/31-2018-4-124-15

Anselm Kiefer has been present on the international art scene for decades. He is ranked among the most outstanding contemporary artists. The significance of his art springs from both the variety and importance of the subjects he treats, in particular the question of the Holocaust, and the diversity of artistic media and originality of formal solutions he employs. His erudite oeuvre derives from German and world history, culture, Bible, Kabbalah, mythology, legends, literature, philosophy, and theories of science.

The formula of my article was inspired by the observations on Kiefer's art articulated in a monograph by Daniel Arasse. I apply elements of analytical and hermeneutic methods to indicate the numerous contexts in which the motif of 'fall' appears in Kiefer's art. I also point to the possibility of various interpretations of this motif. I examine general, formal qualities of Kiefer's oeuvre and analyze some chosen artworks he authored, e.g., *Fallen Pictures*, *Icarus*, *Resurrexit*, *Winter Forest*, *The Breaking of the Vessels*, and *Starfall*. The motif that comes to the fore in Kiefer's art is primarily that of the Holocaust and of the possibility of representation 'after Auschwitz.' Referring to particular works of the artist, I highlight the issue of the continuation of the myth in the present in his art in order to show how the works in question derive from the antique, biblical and kabalistic traditions, simultaneously connecting these traditions to the drama of the history of the 20th century. By reference to Kiefer's artworks already analyzed in Polish literature, as well as to those less known, I indicate the complexity of their inspiration and message, as well as the evolution of Anselm Kiefer's artistic attitude observed during his career.

Keywords: Anselm Kiefer, the fall, decline, Holocaust, Bible, Kabbalah, myth, art, memory

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Andrzej SZOSTEK MIC – Alienation: A Continuously Acute Problem. Remarks on Alienation, as seen through the Prism of the Ideas Developed by Karol Wojtyła–John Paul II

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The author presents a brief outline of Karl Marx's concepts of economic alienation and social revolution (the latter conceived of as fight for human emancipation) in order to confront them with Karol Wojtyła's theory of participation, which is the main focus of the considerations. Unlike Marx, Wojtyła holds that, rather than the economic relations, it is the category of the 'neighbor,' together with the derivative commandment of love ("thou shalt love..."), that provide the deepest ground for participation. Therefore, Wojtyła emphasizes that the Marx-

ist theory of alienation is essentially the antithesis of the theory of participation, while the postulate of a class-struggle-based revolution, which follows from the theory of alienation, deepens the condition in question rather than contributes to overcoming it. In the concluding part of the paper, the author refers to the fact that Pope John Paul II did not consider overcoming the so-called socialist system, which began in 1989, as the end of working against alienation. Rather, he would stress that the problem of alienation is still acute, since alienation is now engendered by materialistic consumer attitudes which undermine the possibilities of participation.

The author holds that the mark of the consumer mentality characteristic primarily of Western societies is that their members are no longer aware of the alienation they experience and, consequently, they no longer strive to overcome this condition.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: alienation, economic alienation, socialist revolution, human emancipation, theory of participation, consumer attitudes, Karl Marx, Karol Wojtyła

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Łukasz NIEWCZAS – “We are merely a huge national banner.” Cyprian Norwid Speaks on the ‘Partition’ of Poland

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The paper comprises an attempt at a reconstruction of Cyprian Norwid’s views on the causes of the fall of Poland in the sense of the historical fact of the disappearance of the Polish state from the political map of Europe in the late 18th century, as well as in that of the crisis the Polish community experienced in the 19th century in the situation of oppression. The starting point of the considerations is Norwid’s opinion, expressed in a letter to Józef Bohdan Zaleski of 1869, where the poet describes the main causes of the two aspects of the fall of Poland: the ‘non-enlightened’ patriotism characteristic of the Poles and their lack of civil courage.

In the second part of the paper, I provide a closer description of the tradition of ‘secular patriotism’ Norwid criticized as well as an analysis of the phenomenon of the lack of civil courage of the Polish people to which Norwid pointed. I broaden my research focus referring to other views and opinions Norwid expressed in a discursive way in his letters and political commentaries rather than in his poetry. In relation to the main theme of the considerations, I also attempt a contextual reconstruction of Norwid’s views on the Polish nation and the Polish community.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: Cyprian Norwid, patriotism, civil courage, Poland, the fall, partitions, independence, insurrection, intelligentsia

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Fr. Janusz MARIAŃSKI – On the Religious and Moral Condition of Polish Students

Review of *Miedzy konstrukcją a dekonstrukcją uniwersum znaczeń. Badania religijności młodzieży akademickiej w latach 1988-1998-2005-2017* [“Between the Construction and the Deconstruction of the Universe of Meanings: Research on the Religiousness of Students conducted in 1988, 1998, 2005, and 2017”], ed. Sławomir H. Zaręba, Marcin Zarzecki (Warszawa: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Socjologiczne, 2018).

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Adam F. BARAN – Adam Strzembosz's Clashes with the Communist Regime

Review of Adam Strzembosz's *Miedzy prawem i sprawiedliwością. Rozmawiał Stanisław Zakroczymski* [Between the Law and Justice: An Interview by Stanisław Zakroczymski] (Warszawa: Biblioteka “Więzi”, 2017).

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Books recommended by *Ethos*

Akcent 39, no. 3(153) (2018), “Karol Wojtyła – poeta, dramaturg, filozof” [“Karol Wojtyła: A Poet, a Playwright, a Philosopher”].

Encyklopedia 100-lecia KUL [“Encylopaedia of the Centenary of the Catholic University of Lublin”] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2018).

Dorota CHABRAJSKA – The Relentlessness of the Form: On the Fall of a Certain Type of Culture

An essay addressing the phenomenon of the expansion, in today's world and in particular in Poland, of the formal conditions which need to be fulfilled so that an (individual or collective) subject may fully participate in social and public life, as well as in broadly conceived culture. The expansion of the formal aspect of public life is accompanied by a gradual decline of values and principles which, for centuries, made the development of the Western culture possible. Among them, are: truth, subjectivity, freedom, responsibility, and trust. In Poland, the phenomenon in question comes to light in particular in the functioning of educational institutions, above all universities.

Keywords: formalism, formalization of public life, truthfulness in public life, responsibility, an individual, subjectivity, competence, universities, scholarly journals

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Maria FILIPIAK – Decline and the Fall

DOI 10.12887/31-2018-4-124-22

A bibliography of the addresses by John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis from 1978 to 2018.

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