

# POLITICS AND TESTIMONY

## POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF JAN PATOČKA'S AND EDITH STEIN'S TESTIMONY<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** I investigate the complex relationship between politics and philosophy by focusing on the notion of testimony. I argue that there is a necessary and fruitful tension between sapiential and political life. Testimony is characterized here as a free value-response in an intersubjective relation that requires empathy on both sides of the communication. This act of affirming a truth or value goes beyond the limits of prudent self-realization and self-preservation: authentic testimony requires some kind of self-sacrifice. I contrast this general image of testimony to Jan Patočka's interpretation of «care for the soul». Patočka, by following the early Husserl's renewal of philosophy, managed to establish and to preserve the harmony between theory and praxis even during persecution of the communist regime. His courageous acts come close to and illuminate the testimony of Edith Stein, who set the measure for philosophical authenticity and self-donation. The comparison of these two testimonies helps to elaborate the notion of exemplary sapiential life —a highly relevant notion for politics.

**KEY WORDS:** Politics; Testimony; Care for the soul; Self-donation; Value-response.

### *Política y testimonio*

#### *Las implicaciones políticas del testimonio de Jan Patočka y de Edith Stein*

**RESUMEN:** Investigo la relación compleja entre política y filosofía centrándome en el testimonio. Argumentaré que la tensión entre la vida sapiencial y la política es necesaria y fructífera. El testimonio será entonces caracterizado como una respuesta libre al valor presente en una relación intersubjetiva que requiere empatía por ambos polos de la comunicación. Este acto de afirmación de una verdad o de un valor va más allá de una prudente auto-realización y/o auto-preservación: un auténtico testimonio requiere algún tipo de sacrificio personal. Comparo esta imagen general del testimonio con la noción de «cuidado de sí» de Jan Patočka. Patočka, siguiendo la estela de la renovación filosófica propuesta por el primer Husserl, logró establecer y preservar la armonía entre teoría y praxis durante la persecución del régimen comunista. Sus actos heroicos se aproximan al testimonio de Edith Stein —cuya figura supuso una nueva medida para la autenticidad filosófica y la auto-donación—, y lo iluminan. La comparación de estos dos testimonios ayuda a elaborar una noción de la vida sapiencial y ejemplar que resulta crucial para la política.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** política; testimonio; cuidar el alma; auto-donación; respuesta al valor.

It is not surprising that *phenomenology* as a rigorous investigation of «the things in themselves»<sup>2</sup> was not particularly welcomed by political regimes

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<sup>2</sup> See HUSSERL, E., *Logical investigations*. Vol. 1. Routledge, 2012. see also: SEIFERT, J., *Back to «things in themselves»: A phenomenological foundation for classical realism*. Routledge, 2013.

shaping the drama of the 20th century. Any genuine truth-seeking philosophy challenges politics by examining its foundations, principles, motives and aims. The image of the *philosopher at trial*<sup>3</sup> is perhaps as old as philosophy itself. Does it mean that there is an inevitable tension between philosophy and politics? And if so, what is the relevant «philosophical act» by which this tension is both revealed and overcome?

In my paper I argue that the phenomenon in question is «giving testimony». Through an introductory phenomenological analysis I put forward some aspects concerning how testimony belongs essentially to philosophy while it also illuminates the principles of politics.

As a next step I contrast this general image of *testimony* to Jan Patočka's interpretation of «care for the soul» in order to elucidate some important elements of the given essence. Patočka is often referred to as the Czech Socrates; he is one among those students of Husserl who followed his early *phenomenological philosophy* and became later leading intellectuals in different areas<sup>4</sup>. Patočka is relevant in this context not only because of his philosophical oeuvre but also and primordially thanks to his exemplary life. In times when communism still in power in Central Europe regarded any intellectual work as a mere superstructure (*Überbau*)<sup>5</sup>, Patočka not only recognized how erroneous this philosophy was but also put his life at risk when fully active in organizing the opposition against the regime. Thereby, in a way, he destroyed the official doctrine simply by manifesting in his own life the harmony between theory and praxis that communist ideology undermined. He reminds us once again that to rediscover and reestablish this unity is one of the most important aims of any serious philosopher. His example inspires to rethinking philosophy as an existential life-form as opposed to a refined and abstract intellectual power-game.

Patočka's philosophical account on the care for the soul together with his silent heroism illuminates some politically relevant aspects of religious testimony that I will further develop here through the example of Edith Stein. Sister Benedicta, the Co-Patron of Europe<sup>6</sup> not only set the measure for philosophical authenticity and self-donation but also illuminated the fundamentals of political community —not just in European terms but in general.

In the concluding part I compare these two testimonies in order to evaluate how testimony —when correctly understood— illuminates the link between politics and philosophy.

<sup>3</sup> Even if what perhaps first come to our mind is the dramatic painting by Jacques-Luis David, *The Death of Socrates* (1787), the topic is perhaps even richer elaborated in literary works of art or even music.

<sup>4</sup> See to this point: HERBERT S., *Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982)

<sup>5</sup> See MARX, K., *Vorwort zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> See JOHN PAUL II, Pope. *Motu proprio. Apostolic letter proclaiming Saint Bridget of Sweden, Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Co-Patroesses of Europe*. October 1, 1999.

## 1. THE FRUITFUL TENSION BETWEEN POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY

Is there a tension between politics and philosophy?

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that is the bloodiest of all, we witnessed the decline of Western civilization far beyond what was announced by pessimists like Spengler (*Untergang des Abendlandes*<sup>7</sup>). The downfall of the European civilization—at least as we knew it till the 20<sup>th</sup> century—led, on the one hand, to the persecution of philosophers and, on the other hand, to the corruption of philosophical ideas through political ideologies. Philosophy, thus, did not only appear as victim of persecution but by becoming ideology it also actively participated in the shameful events and actions.

Politics often tried to silence philosophers who dared to raise their voice against injustice and the illegitimacy of the given regime. It is enough to think here of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and of phenomenologists like Dietrich von Hildebrand, Edith Stein, Jan Patočka or Karol Wojtyła. At the same time, worse than by any external attack philosophy was destroyed from within. The platonic principle that has been beautifully formulated as «*diligere veritatem omnem et in omnibus*»<sup>8</sup> got often replaced by the logic of war: academic philosophy became instrumentalized by politics on both sides of the Iron curtain. While in the East universities were subjugated by the Communist State with its materialism, in the West academic institutions only survived if they gradually adapted themselves to the not less severe political requirements prescribed by the peculiar logic of liberal capitalism (with its somewhat more sophisticated relativism and materialism)<sup>9</sup>.

Ideology is considered as the type of «philosophy» that serving the interest of a dominating social group proposes a comprehensive set of normative ideas that only have an imaginary relation to the conditions of real existence. It is remarkable that similarly to other typical vices of philosophy, such as *superbia* or *vanitas* (described by Thomas Aquinas) or sophistry (attacked by Plato and Aristotle), this philosophical deformation is also more easily noticed in others

<sup>7</sup> SPENGLER, O., *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte. 1. Bd.: Gestalt und Wirklichkeit*. C.H. Beck, München 1919, pp. 281-291.

<sup>8</sup> PLATO, *Republic*, VI. Book, 485b-d

<sup>9</sup> The deep crisis of university education and its relation to philosophy and theology has been noticed and well analysed by several authors. I limit myself to some especially relevant sources: Giuseppe TANZELLA-NITTI, «Unity of Knowledge» in: *Interdisciplinary Encyclopedia of Religion and Science*, in: <http://inters.org/unity-of-knowledge>, 14.12. 2014.; See also ORTEGA Y GASSET, *La misión de la universidad*, El Arquero, Madrid, 1930, (<http://www.esi2.us.es/~fabio/mision.pdf>, 15.12.2014) and GUARDINI, R., «Die Verantwortung der Universität»: in: Romano GUARDINI, Walter DIRKS, Max HORKHEIMER, *Die Verantwortung der Univeristät: drei Vorträge*, Werkbund Verlag, Würzburg, 1954; one of the best articles of the contemporary critique was written by Alasdair MACINTYRE: «The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman, and Us», *British Journal of Educational Studies* 57.4 (Dezember 2009), pp. 347-362.o.; MacIntyre offers a way out of the crisis in his book *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011

than in us: we are more ready to discover the mote in other's eyes than the beam in ours. No wonder that very often it is precisely ideology that persecutes real philosophy by labeling it so, i.e. by accusing it to be power-driven thinking serving merely political purposes<sup>10</sup>.

It might seem then that real philosophy that does not want to be part of the supposedly dirty political battles should be pure *apolitical reflection* abstaining from any form of power. This claim is often linked to the image of philosophy as the highest scientific abstraction; let it be *more geometrico* reflection or phenomenological analyses of highly intelligible essences and pure perfections, or the strict scientific analyses of mind, consciousness or language. One objection that can be raised against a philosophy that aims at eliminating all connections to politics is this: it would convert philosophy to a bodiless activity of the «mind», to a theory with no praxis.

Thinking of philosophy in terms of an apolitical activity and therefore severing it from the life-world is tantamount to rejecting the responsibility of shaping the life of one's community. Proposing an apolitical philosophy implies that philosophy abandons the different dimensions of political life such as culture and sciences. It is beyond doubt that natural and human sciences are in deep need of a serious, argumentative and transparent orientation, for questions of their purpose, principle, reason and even methodology are beyond the reach of their proper investigations. An apolitical philosophy has obviously no authority to offer strong fundamentals for scientific research, cannot elaborate its methodology, nor can it define its principles or critically revise its ultimate aims and purposes, let alone evaluate the results of the investigations<sup>11</sup>. In short, philosophy's political irrelevance leads to disoriented sciences. It is not difficult to realize in the tragedies of the past century the dramatic consequences of

<sup>10</sup> There is an infinite list of self-accusations of philosophy as a tool of power, and it became almost an intellectual obligation to look at philosophy with the hermeneutics of suspicion. Post-structuralist, constructivist and post-Marxist thinkers argued strongly not only against the political implications of philosophy but noted that the will of power manifested in philosophy is even more horrifying in the domain of religion. Authors like Foucault (especially: FOUCAULT, M., *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Pantheon, 1980.), Derrida (DERRIDA, J., PORTER, C., and LEWIS, P., «No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives)», *diacritics* 14.2 (1984): 20-31.), Deleuze, (DELEUZE, G., and ARTAL, C., *Nietzsche y la filosofía*. Anagrama, 1971.), Žižek (ŽIŽEK, S., *Less than nothing: Hegel and the shadow of dialectical materialism*. Verso Books, 2012.), Agamben (AGAMBEN, G., *Homo sacer. El poder soberano y la nuda vida*. Pre-textos, 1998.) or Badiou (BADIOU, A., *Manifeste pour la philosophie*. Seuil, 2014.) elaborated more than enough arguments to remind us that philosophy does not only offer means to face the threatening power of ideologies but is itself also a powerful tool of manipulation. Along their works one can seriously question the authenticity of philosophical efforts and of any philosophical testimonies with respect to politics to the extent that it becomes difficult to recognize that there can be a philosophy that is politically engaged and yet is not appropriated by politics. This is the alternative I am looking for.

<sup>11</sup> JAKI, S., *The Purpose of It All*. Published by Regnery Gateway, Washington DC, 1990.

a philosophy that abandons the area of politics<sup>12</sup> and sciences and thereby exposes them to irrational forces and the manipulation of mere emotional «arguments», if any<sup>13</sup>.

Moreover, philosophy that insists on its complete autonomy from politics, precisely in the moment when it gets what it wants, becomes a toy of politics. Philosophy that does not want to do anything with politics, sooner or later has to face the challenge of dealing with such politics that claims to be the only philosophy.

Generally speaking, all solutions to resolve the tension between politics and philosophy that reduce one term to the other, i.e. convert philosophy into politics or *vice versa*, usually end up with fatal consequences.

There are reasons to believe therefore that the tension between politics and philosophy needs to be preserved through carefully distinguishing but never separating these poles from each other. The tension is not only necessary but it is also fruitful for both areas: philosophy is at best when fully conscious of the political consequences of ideas and politics is at best when directed to the highest good illuminated by philosophy.

Thus the question arises: how can philosophy relate to politics without venturing its autonomy and yet fully assuring its relevance? Even though there is a whole set of phenomena linking politics with philosophy, I limit myself to highlight here only one: *testimony*. My choice is based on testimony being a special and yet essential manifestation of both, philosophy and politics. I argue thus that there is no real politics that does not entail giving a testimony of those values that unite a community. If it were so, the promoted value would be a mere abstraction, a mere ideal without any reference to real life. Politics is certainly the art of imaginatively discovering the common good and thus of collaborating in the formation of an authentic community; yet if it operates with such merely abstract and unattainable values, values without their *Sitz im Leben*, i.e. without being incarnated, it becomes soon discredited for being simply irrelevant for life.

On the other hand, philosophy in its original sense as a specific form of *sapiential life*<sup>14</sup> would be deprived of its essential practical and existential

<sup>12</sup> It is noteworthy how in both types of dictatorships, national socialism and communism philosophical reflection on politics is replaced by the power technique and propaganda. Looking at these examples makes us tremble in view how in the contemporary liberal democratic Western societies authentic philosophical reflection in general but especially on politics is both margined and replaced by what is called political science that often does not have any other aim than evolving a more effective methods of mass manipulation. If political science renounces deep philosophical concerns, as it is often a requirement for the fragmentation of knowledge so typical of post-modern universities, it becomes a mere obedient servant of actual political power. No wonder that many faculties of political science at prestigious universities are a more or less disguised think tank of political parties.

<sup>13</sup> See on this the critique of Alasdair MacIntyre in his *After Virtue* on emotivism. MACINTYRE, A., *After virtue*. A&C Black, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, «Philosophie, Christentum, Mönchtum», in *Sponsa verbi. Skizzen zur Theologie*. II (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1961); Eng. tr., «Philosophy, Christianity,

perspective if it would not imply the act of «testifying» the truth. To put it in a sarcastic way: without its testimonial dimension, philosophy would be reduced to something like the dull and self-referential production of papers with high impact factor.

## 2. «GIVING TESTIMONY». AN INTRODUCTORY PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Given the complexity of testimony I cannot offer here an exhaustive analysis. I will limit myself to enumerating those aspects that concern the link between philosophy and politics.

Testifying is a compound «social act» made up of several *transitive and reflexive* acts. These acts form a specific essential structure since the *intransitive* acts form the basis of the transitive acts<sup>15</sup>. Let us see:

### a) *Response to a value*

The intellectual grasping of what is the object of the trial, i.e. what value is questioned invites us then to «give a testimony». The act of giving a testimony is a certain response to a value and appears to be necessary when the value is obscured or obfuscated at a certain situation. What qualifies to be the value to testify is in a way always recognized in relation to a human or divine person. The value-response consists in different conscious acts like capturing, clarifying and affirming the value<sup>16</sup>. Even though it is directed to a reality that transcends the soul, these acts are internal ones.

There is no political community without affirming a certain set of values that although are fundamental for constituting the given community might be more or less present in the actual political discourse. What is recognized as testimony makes not only a given value present; it allows for grasping something about nature and foundation of the unity and ultimate origin of the given set of values and thereby opens new horizons for the ongoing political discourse on the concrete common good.

### b) *Free decision*

The testifying is based on a free decision to carry out this act. This motion of the free will occurs in two dimensions: the first is a response to

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Monasticism» in *Explorations in Theology*, vol. 2: *Spouse of the Word* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), pp. 333-372; id.; Jean LECLERCO, *Maria Christianorum Philosophia, Mélanges de science religieuse*, 1956, pp 103-117; Massimo BORGHESI, «Cristianismo y filosofía entre modernidad y posmodernidad», *Communio*, 1999, julio-septiembre, pp. 311-323.

<sup>15</sup> Alexander Pfänder argues for this distinction in detail. See PFÄNDER, A., *Die Seele des Menschen. Versuch einer verstehenden Psychologie*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Halle a. S., 1933

<sup>16</sup> Using the expression of Scheler «Wertsicht», to see the good and «Wertfühlen», i. e. to feel the good.

being affected<sup>17</sup> by the value. It is understood as a voluntary collaboration and therefore as an affirmation of the affection by the value. It manifests itself as a conscious taking side in face of the value (*Stellungnahme*). The second dimension of the act —exercised on the basis of the first— is the decision to execute an act as a consequence of which the person is going to testify for the value at stake<sup>18</sup>.

Whatever is recognized by the community as an authentic testimony is a demonstration of the existence of personal freedom beyond law and legislation, beyond ideologies, beyond the self-restricted area of acting politically and beyond cultural limitations. Experiencing a true testimony implies the possibility of discovering new dimension of freedom on the personal as well as on the community level.

c) *Intersubjectivity*

«To testify» has an intersubjective character for «giving a testimony» becomes meaningful through some kind of a presence of the human or divine person, i.e. of someone who is endowed with the capacity of understanding it as testimony. More precisely it is required that the other person understood: (1) what is the object of the testimony, and (2) what is at stake with respect to this precise act of testimony. The giving of a testimony thus presupposes the presence of a witness<sup>19</sup>. Thus testifying is a social act and as such a testimony in order to be recognized must be decipherable within a given discourse. This intelligibility allows for a testimony to strengthen the bonds among community-members beyond actual sympathies and hostilities for authentic testimonies make the members of the community to witness a truth with its transcendent references to love. The one who really receives an authentic testimony, while acknowledging its validity, at the same time recognizes something beyond the actual content of testimony, something that is clearly beyond words; it relates the community to a truth that is about to be manifested and has a clear appeal on us to be realized.

<sup>17</sup> I would not necessarily agree with Scheler that values affect us emotionally while I acknowledge that first they do indeed affect us, i.e. the corresponding faculty of the soul according to their own nature —emotionally, intellectually or spiritually. Evidently by affecting the soul through one or some faculties they do affect the whole person and this is the precise way they require an answer: they appeal to us saying that they ought to be affirmed.

<sup>18</sup> With respect to the distinction of the two dimensions of free will see: VON HILDEBRAND, D.: *Ethik*, W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1973. Von Hildebrand formulates it as follows: «In der freien Sanktionierung oder Verwerfung affektiver Antworten berühren wir den tiefsten Punkt der menschlichen Freiheit» (HILDEBRAND, *Ethik*, p. 378).

<sup>19</sup> Religious testimonies sometimes presuppose only the divine witness and do not expect to be understood or affirmed by any human person. That does not mean that there is no dimension of charity in these testimonies; it rather means that the charitable act (for example praying for the other) is not even supposed to be recognized by anybody but God. This feature endows religious testimonies a unique authenticity for there is no rhetoric involved; they are purely gratuitous deeds, genuine free gifts.

d) *Empathy*

What qualifies to be recognized as testimony is a communicative act and thus to «testify» includes various acts of empathy. These empathic acts enable us to find the adequate form and expression of testifying the truth or value in question according to the recipient of our act. Let me introduce here two aspects that refine this claim: (1) any authentic testimony is something like a poetic expression and thus implies a hermeneutical exigency to interpret it right. (2) However attuned a testimony should look like, it is in the first place a realization of a truth or value; its adequate communication is only of secondarily importance. This concern is often not even explicitly present in the consciousness of the acting subject.

Not only the performance of a testimony requires a certain amount of empathic understanding; also its recognition depends on this capacity of reading the inner world of the other person. Authentic testimonies are unique acts by which the reality and the nature of this particular human person and the human nature in general are best revealed. It seems as if any authentic testimony had a label saying: *ecce homo*. The political relevance of testimonies comes to the fore when realizing that any political idea presupposes an anthropological vision. Testimonies by being especially informative concerning anthropology thus, offer a horizon for *fundamentally* rethinking politics.

e) *Self-donation versus prudent self-preservation*

As pointed out above, to testify is not a spontaneous but rather a pre-pondered free act; therefore it includes divers reflective acts trying to comprehend the given actual situation or context. Thus testifying includes the election among different possible expressions—in general all types of deliberation that Aristotle places under the term *prudence*. Authentic testimonies, however, rather than being simply prudent are informative concerning what gives rise to a deeper understanding of prudence: excessive and yet careful love towards the other and the community<sup>20</sup>. This excess of love might sometimes appear as foolish for testimonies seem to deny the logic of both prudent self-preservation<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Let us recall the act of Maximiliano Kolbe, when he volunteered to be starved to death in order to save Franciszek Gajowniczek, a family father from this torture imposed by Nazi troops at the end of July 1941. Kolbe was canonized as martyr of charity in 1982 by Pope John Paul II. His sacrifice is far more than an expression of the virtue called prudence. It is prudent for it is indeed the best practical realization of the highest wisdom contained in divine love.

<sup>21</sup> See on this notion especially the classical theory of Hobbes explained in *Leviathan*. Being self-preservation one of the key notion, it is thematized in many context, yet there is one particularly interesting paragraph when Hobbes talks about family ties and more specifically about the baby left alone by parents and nursed by somebody else: «But if she expose it, and another find and nourish it, dominion is in him that nourisheth it. For it ought to obey him by whom it is preserved, because *preservation of life being the end for which one man becomes subject to another*, every man is supposed to promise obedience to him in whose power it is to



and self-realization<sup>22</sup>. Is it not foolish to forgive and to love one's enemies, to give one's own life for truth instead of prudently escaping the danger? — These acts that often constitute the core of authentic testimonies obviously follow a different logic than what is normally acknowledged by political reasoning: the logic of supernatural wisdom that is manifested in true love.

Precisely by appealing to a higher form of wisdom than the Aristotelian concept of prudence<sup>23</sup>, when the community discovers and affirms the specific logic of authentic testimonies, these acts become highly informative concerning the very fundament of the bond among community members: an excessive love for the other; self-donation for the sake of others.

By highlighting this hidden fundament real testimonies are a strong counter-argument (even though it is only accessible for those recognizing and acknowledging testimony as such) against any reductive theory and praxis according to which the ontological and anthropological basis of community is *self-preservation* and self-realization — a prejudice of modern political philosophy still finding an echo in post-modern thinking.

All these five types<sup>24</sup> of acts are certainly relevant for politics in many ways. Instead of elaborating these points in detail let me highlight two aspects of the relationship between testimony and politics that are of elementary importance: one concerns testimony as a *value-response*<sup>25</sup> and the other the required *fundamental attitude*<sup>26</sup> of testimony.

### 3. TESTIMONY AS VALUE-RESPONSE

The act to «testify» reveals a value and it pretends to give evidence of its existence and relevance. The witness intends to prove the universal validity of the

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save or destroy him» (highlighted by me) in: HOBBS, T., *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civil*. Vol. 21. Yale University Press, 1900. p. 124

<sup>22</sup> See this notion in the philosophy of John Stuart Mill who quotes Wilhem von Humbold fully agreeing with him that „the end of man...is the development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole”. (in: MILL, J. S., *On Liberty*, Harlan Davidson, Inc., Arlington Heights, 1947. 57.o.) The other person and the whole society is subdued to this aim.

<sup>23</sup> Aristotle following the Plato's notion of *phronesis* especially elaborated in *Menon* promotes is own understanding of prudence in the VI. book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. A beautiful and thorough critical analysis is provided by AUBENQUE, P., *La prudence chez Aristote*. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1963.

<sup>24</sup> I revised these characteristics previously established in my paper: SZALAY, M., «Edith Stein, Patron of Europe. Meditation on Philosophy as Testimony». *Open Insight* 5.7 (2014): 185-211.

<sup>25</sup> See on this notion, VON HILDEBRAND, D., *Das Wesen der Liebe*. Vol. 3. J. Habel, 1971. and SEIFERT, J., «Dietrich von Hildebrands philosophische Entdeckung der "Wertantwort" und die Grundlegung der Ethik», in: J. SEIFERT (ed.), *Aletheia: International Yearbook of Philosophy: Truth and Value* v. 5. (Peter Lang), 1992.

<sup>26</sup> I have elaborated this notion in my essay, SZALAY, M., «Megjegyzések a fenomenológia, bölcséleti beállítottságról», in: SZALAY, M., SEIFERT, J., *Realista fenomenológia. Módszer és beállítottság*, Szent István Kiadó, Budapest, in print.

value and points to an order (*ordo amoris*<sup>27</sup>) required by the value in question. By doing so his testimony reveals the objective nature of the value. Supposing that there is only a subjective validity of the value in question renders meaningless any kind of testimony, for it would be deprived of its intersubjective relevance. A «testimony» in the sense of promoting one's merely subjective values would be nothing but a cunning act<sup>28</sup> by which the subject tried to impose his own ideas on others. Instead of a power that creates communion, it would only be a sophisticated manipulative mean to reassure one's hegemony. Although there might be such acts worth dismantling by philosophical analysis, authentic testimony is not related to manipulation but to sacrifice: it entails assuming the responsibility for a self-revealing reality to the extreme of giving one's life for it. It is especially the act of testimony through which both the excellence and the objectivity of the value or truth becomes obvious, for it is shown as something that calls for a *personal* response (involving the whole self) by which the subject surpasses the horizon of the merely subjective goods<sup>29</sup>.

Moreover, the recognition and affirmation of a hierarchy between testified truth and meaning of life is an act pertaining to the essence of «testifying». Becoming aware of the existential consequences of testimony in lights of the value that calls for a testimony marks the difference between a mere *world-view* and the *fundamental attitude* of the testifier. A unique serenity separates the two moments before and after the value-experience. What the testimony requires is precisely the transformation of the person between facing and appropriating the given value. It is not only the testifier's *world view* that has to be changed; the value-recognition requires something more than this: the transformation of the self, i.e. changing one's *fundamental attitude* to reality. It is enough to recall here on the second navigation of Plato that led to his philosophical conversion (metanoia<sup>30</sup>) and finally enabled him to testify<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> See on this notion AGUSTIN OF HIPPO, *De civitate Dei*, XV. book. 22 ch., see as well: *De doctrina cristiana*, L. I. C. XXVII, 28.; SCHELER, M., *Ordo amoris*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, Francke/Bern und München-Bouvier/Bonn, 1954-1997, 15 vols., X. Book. pp. 345-376; See also RIEGO DE MOINE, I., «El ordo amoris como principio inspirador del pensamiento personalista», in: *Veritas*, vol. IV, n° 21 (2009) pp. 267-286; see also DIETRICH VON HILDEBRAND, *El corazón. Un análisis de la afectividad humana y divina*. Ed. Palabra, Madrid 2005.

<sup>28</sup> «La astucia, que supone una habilidad especial para conseguir un fin, bueno o malo, por vías falsas, simuladas o aparentes», see: ROYO MARIN, A., *Teología del la perfección Cristiana*, Biblioteca Autores Cristiano, Madrid, 1962. p. 504.

<sup>29</sup> I argued for this thesis in: SZALAY, M., «Edith Stein, Patron of Europe. Meditation on Philosophy as Testimony». *Open Insight* 5.7 (2014): 185-211.

<sup>30</sup> I tried to analyze this phenomenon in details in: SZALAY, M., «Metanoia: Phenomenological Analysis of Philosophical Conversion». *Radical Orthodoxy: Theology, Philosophy, Politics* 1.3 (2012).

<sup>31</sup> PLATO, *Ph.*, 99 b-d, and 100 B-E, according to GIOVANNI REALE, «Plato's doctrine on the ideas (and especially his story of the second navigation) is the Magna Charta of the European spirit». REALE, G., *Kulturelle und geistige Wurzeln Europas*. Schöningh, Paderborn 2004 p. 53-55.

#### 4. THE *FUNDAMENTAL ATTITUDE*<sup>32</sup> OF TESTIMONY

In order to understand the relation between *testifier* and *value* it is helpful to evoke at this point the figure of John the Baptist who rejected the admiration of his person when assigned himself the role of a mere testifier of something greater to come<sup>33</sup>. This claim of John the Baptist sheds light on an essential aspect of testimony: his words and acts fulfil their meaning when not considered in themselves but representing a value (or a person) of infinitely higher dignity.

This raises the question about the proper attitude of testifier. His disposition should be formed on the basis that a) he necessarily appropriates the intuited value only partially and b) that therefore the reality and the meaning of this value is always beyond the concrete expression it gives rise to.

Only somebody who is fully conscious of this existential status when faced with values and thus humbled by this unbridgeable gulf between what *ought to be done* and *one's own response* to the value, is capable of authentic testimony. In order to do so the testifier's attitude should be characterized by what I would call an «ontological humility»<sup>34</sup>. This special kind of humility (different although related to social-humility) that bases itself on the recognition of the ontological predicament of human person when faced with transcendence, is expressed by the words of John the Baptist: «cuius non sum dignus calciamente portare» (Mt 3,11).

It is this humility that enables the testifier a certain kind of self-exposure characteristic of authentic testimony: the one that offers a testimony exposes oneself and the very act of testimony to the judgement of other. Every testimony is based on voluntary acts that intend to affirm the truthfulness of some state of affairs and the validity of a value that is questioned. Whether or not this act of testifying is perceived by others as testimony (and not an irrational act for example) escapes the power of the subject of the given act; it is up to the evaluation of the witness of the event.

It is morally and spiritually questionable to insist that what one has done or is about to do should be interpreted as testimony. The primary intention of any authentic testimony is not «offering a testimony» but simply «affirming the truth». In another words an authentic testimony is certainly free of self-referential intentions. It is not about the self, nor is it about the very act as testifying, neither aims at the persuasion of others. However these aspects might be given some importance the main intention of testifier is characteristically simpler: affirming the truth for its own shake.

Paradoxically enough a real testimony has a persuasive force precisely

<sup>32</sup> See on this notion: CRESPO, M., «Sobre las disposiciones morales de fondo». *Thémata: Revista de filosofía*, N° 41, 2009, pp. 144-160.

<sup>33</sup> «I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire». (Mt 3,11).

<sup>34</sup> See on this the beautiful passages of BERNARD OF CLAIREVAUX, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae tractatus*, in: <http://www.binetti.ru/bernardus/16.shtml> (05.05.2015).

because not being preoccupied with rhetoric but with the value or truth at stake. It is an act that does not want to persuade and yet it does so for the very fact that it demonstrates the attraction and efficiency of a truth or value in a real life context.

There is, however, a further point concerning the constitutive ontological humility of the testifier. What does it mean that the testifier affirms truth for its own sake? It is only one aspect that he affirms truth being higher dignity than one's own self for that still does not prevent him in believing in and even wanting to assure the victory of truth and the vale at stake over the present danger that requires a heroic testimony. What is rightly considered as authentic testimony requires certainly not giving up on this hope but admitting a possible defeat. Only those few people can give a true testimony whose ultimate desire is not the actual victory of truth and glorification of true values. The real witness, while full of hope, shows no sign of triumphalism, he corroborates truth being questioned and «dying» and knows that its resurrection is not up to his efforts; if it happens it is rather despite of us. What we are called to is precisely giving a witness of this happening. Thus real testimony requires an attitude of somebody who is fully involved in the divine-human *drama* testifying that at the final end it is far from being a tragedy<sup>35</sup>: the truth that is witnessed can actually be destroyed. The testimony is supposed to prevent it; rather it is the first sign of its resurrection and thus a sign of a new life where the testimony is not against the perpetrators but rather for them. As little as testimony is a sign of despair, as little it is a sign of war; authentic testimonies by holding up truth, pave the way for reconciliation.

## 5. JAN PATOČKA, THE PHILOSOPHER ON TRIAL

Jan Patočka, the Czech Socrates, was persecuted by the Communists. During the war and even after 1945 he was banned from teaching on Czech universities. Nevertheless, he continued his philosophical work and gave lectures at the illegal underground university. Only a few of his books were published and most of his work circulated only in the form of typescripts kept by students and disseminated mostly after his death. In 1977 he became one of the spokesmen of the civil right movement Charter 77 and was interrogated for 10 hours by the secret police. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1977 he fell ill; he was then taken into the hospital and after a short period passed away.

Unfortunately his case is far from being unique —many intellectuals suffered similar persecution— and yet it deserves special attention because he

<sup>35</sup> The beautiful expression used by J. R. R. Tolkien to describe this paradoxical situation of human person is «Eu-catastrophe». It means a good catastrophe in which no virtue and no sacrifice is ever be useless because redemption is already enacted. See: TOLKIEN, J. R. R., «O Fairy-Stories», in: *The Monsters and The Critics and Other Essays*. London, HarperCollins, 1997.

was not just an «accidental victim» of irrational political oppression; rather he demonstrated in his works as well as through his deeds that not just the given political regime but a certain type of politics in general was morally wrong and ontologically lacking strong fundamentals.

He certainly did not seek to be persecuted but when faced with his judges he stood up for the truth regardless of the possible negative consequences. One of the ideas prompting him to act in this brave-hearted way deserves our attention here for it is an essential feature of all philosophical testimony given in a political context.

## 6. CARE FOR THE SOUL

The *care for the soul* is not only a key notion of Patočka's political and moral philosophy but also for a deeper understanding of his testimony and the phenomenon of testimony in general<sup>36</sup>. It is noteworthy that in regard to this concept Patočka does not proceed on the path of Husserlian phenomenology<sup>37</sup> he follows rather the more existential analyses of his later master, Heidegger<sup>38</sup>. Husserl's axiomatic approach<sup>39</sup> to the world-life is replaced here with idea of the

<sup>36</sup> As Werner Jaeger pointed out in his classical work, the *psyches therapeia* is also a fundamental notion for education. See further: JAEGER, W., *Paideia: die Formung des griechischen Menschen*. Walter de Gruyter, 1973.

<sup>37</sup> BALÁZS, M., «A három mozgás és a jó ideája», in: BALÁZS M., *A lélek és a másik Jan Patočka és a fenomenológia*, Atlantisz, Budapest 1998, p. 24. Concerning the explanation of Patočka's standpoint in relation to Husserl and Heidegger I follow the reasoning of Mezei's outstanding interpretation.

<sup>38</sup> He discovers with a keen eye that this aspect is missing in Husserl. In his essay entitled *Epoché und Reduktion* he criticizes the inconsistency of Husserl' ontology as follows: «Diese Ontologie ist, wie man leicht bemerkt, nicht in der transzendentalen Empirie gegründet, sondern in der Reflexion auf die Zugangsart des in ihr Zugänglichen. Und diese Ontologie hat etwas merkwürdig Unbefriedigendes. Sie setzt die Reflexion als unmittelbaren Akt der Selbsterfassung voraus, ohne über die Möglichkeit Rechenschaft zu geben. Daß dieser Rekurs auf die Evidenz der Innenerfahrung nicht viel hilft sondern vielmehr das Konzept einer reinen Phänomenologie als streng wissenschaftliches Erfassen der Struktur der reinen Phänomene zerstört, wurde schon von anderen konstatiert». In: PATOČKA, J., *Die Bewegung der menschlichen Existenz*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1991, p. 420.

<sup>39</sup> Husserl and Heidegger obviously followed each other's philosophical development, and they were certainly aware of the justifications of each other's approach. They even tried to find some well defined place for each other's proposal in their own work. Such is the Heideggerian endeavor of a fundamental-ontology, i.e. describing the meaning of Being on the basis of an existential analysis of human Dasein. On the other hand Husserl tried to elevate the question that appears in a concrete philosophical context into an ideal sphere of reflection in which it is possible to describe the ideal-typical way how this question comes to existence. According to him the last ground of this typology is the absolute subjectivity with a clear axiomatic status. Ultimately speaking both Husserl's and Heidegger's endeavor manifest beyond these intentions ideal-typical examples of two ways of understanding phenomenology. Jan Patočka undertakes the effort of elaborating a synthesis on the basis of his

philosopher who is rather bodily present and practically involved in the *polis*. The «phenomenological field» appears not as reduced to the subjectivity as in the idea of a general constitution, yet it preserves its autonomy as a typology of concrete-practical possibilities that are historically realized by a practical subject.

An anthropological concept that underlines the bodily presence in the midst of life is required for both the theory and the praxis of testimony. The suffering body becomes the field of expression that reveals the nature of aggression — in this case the political oppression becoming physical threat— precisely by assuming it. Only what Patočka calls after Plato the «care of the soul» as a fundamental attitude allows for the body to be fully at the disposal of the soul. Patočka offer here more than just an anthropological account.

Besides the detailed analyses in *Zur ältesten Semantik der Seelenlehre*<sup>40</sup> Patočka draws in *Europa und Nach-Europa* the following intellectual map to the notion of *care for the soul*. He distinguishes three fundamental aspects: 1) *care for the soul* as ontological project; 2) *care for the soul* in the *polis* as a conflict between two ways of living; on the one hand, the death of the true and just people as the downfall of the *polis* and, on the other hand, the project of an intellectual *polis*; 3) *care for the soul* as the inner life in relation to the bodily and bodiless life, the problem of immortality and the eternal destiny of world and soul»<sup>41</sup>.

These aspects not only presuppose each other mutually, they also possess their *raison d'être* in the fact that the human existence is essentially dynamic. This dynamism is triggered by the insight by the process that Patočka calls: the breakthrough towards truth.

Any real testimony —and such is the very testimony of the Check Socrates— unites the above mentioned three aspects in precisely this act of «breakthrough towards truth». The subjective foundation of testifying (in the third sense of «care for the soul») is provided by a certain way of relating one' bodily self to the spiritual dimension of the self. The second meaning is relevant for any true testimony is a political act, for it concerns the community. The *polis* is given the chance to participatively experiment a complete defeat that becomes a victory: the memory of the good and the righteous people overcomes the greatest terror. What guaranties the final victory is the truthfulness of the ontological proposal that lies at the heart of the testimony. However politically understood it is not about a political issue but about the ontological structure of being that becomes manifested in the care for the soul.

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interpretation of Platonism and phenomenology that supposedly unites the merits of the two visions, methods and attitudes. Among Patočka's unique philosophical achievement of such synthesis the most notable is perhaps his reinterpretation of «world-life». On Jan Patočka's overarching evaluation see BALÁZS, M., *A lélek és a másik Jan Patočka és a fenomenológia*, Atlantisz, Budapest 1998, p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> PATOČKA, J., «Zur ältesten Semantik der Seelenlehre», in: *Phänomenologie Heute. Festschrift für Ludwig Ladngrebe*, W. Biemel (ed.), Vol. 51, Springer, 1972, pp. 288-304.

<sup>41</sup> See: PATOČKA, J., *Europa und Nach-Europa. Zur Phänomenologie einer Idee*, Karl Alber Verlag, Freiburg i. Br., 2022, p. 265.

## 7. THE «CARE FOR THE SOUL» AND THE POLIS – FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL TESTIMONY

According to Patočka there are two philosophical traditions from which the notion of *care for the soul* originates: the atomism of Democrit and Platonism. The fundamental difference between these approaches is due to the fact that for Plato —on the contrary to Democrit— the subject of *care for the soul* does not characterize the isolated individual<sup>42</sup>. Plato is the first to shed light in a systematic and rigorous way on the link between *care for the soul* and polis. According to his fundamental insight the communitarian dimension of one's life appears first of all in the intrinsic teleology of the soul's natural strive and elevation towards justice and the Good. Patočka's theory that leans heavily on Plato's political philosophy could be summarized in the conviction that the real *care for the soul* is decisive to how the *polis* will look like. Plato not only affirms an analogical relationship between the soul's inner and the polis' external structure<sup>43</sup>, but he also detects a dialectical relationship between soul and community: if there are conflicts on the one pole, it does not leave unaffected the other one.

According to Patočka this analogy helps to realize three things: 1) that the soul consists of different parts the possible conflict of which with each other does not put into peril the well-being of the whole; the image of the *polis* illuminates the functioning of the soul 2) on the other hand the *care for the soul* sheds light on the functioning of and the conflicts within the community. The invisible reality reveals the form and logic of the visible one. A further analogical step is proposed by Patočka when noticing that similarly to the soul in which there is one faculty responsible for regulating desire and enjoyment, there should be some people setting firm limitations in the *polis*. This idea puts to the fore the strong relationship between guiding a life and guiding a *polis*<sup>44</sup>. —What can be recognized and acknowledged as a testimony stems thus from a certain «guidance of life». Based on this personal guidance why testimony gives guidelines on how to structure, organize and what to focus community life on.

Is there somebody capable of giving such orientations? According to Patočka a selected group of people acquires through education insights thanks to which it can mediate with a controlled application of power between the two extreme poles, soul and *polis*. These members of the polis —called by telling metaphor the guardians— are not distinguished because of their intelligence, wealth power; they are rather endowed with outstanding courage and willingness to give away themselves. In Patočka's description of the guardians a special intellectual merit and readiness to self-sacrifice is highly emphasized; these people live with the consciousness of being constantly on a cosmic battlefield

<sup>42</sup> See Patočka, J., *Europa und Nach-Europa*, op. cit., p. 270.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

between good and evil. To be one of the guardians depends therefore basically on the personal free decision to devote oneself to vigilance. Being a guardian certainly does not depend on intellectual superiority but rather on assuming the responsibility for one's life as connected to the community's relation to the Supreme Good. Through personal participation and full experience of this fundamental relationship —as manifested in and through the testimony one «invites» the community to recreate its identity from its very origin, from the point of view of the Highest Good.

The prerequisite for this distinguished role within the community is the willingness to a complete turn-around (*periagoge oles tes psyches*). The guardians shall appropriate this fundamental knowledge through education (*padeia*) without which it would be impossible to create and sustain the polis<sup>45</sup>. The education of the guardians aims fundamentally at *metanoia*, rather than any other type of knowledge or capacity. For, according to Pato ka, what gives the necessary orientation to the rest of the civic community is this turning around of the brave-hearted intellectuals based on the insight that giving away oneself and sacrificing one's own interest is exactly the way of finding oneself. But there is an even higher importance of *metanoia*: it enables guardians to participate in the dialogue on how the finite being encounters with and raises to the infinite. The «care for the soul» is that special way of living in which such a self-transcending encounter could be fully realized and could become fruitful for the whole community.

While we are called to interpret Patočka's ideas within the current philosophical and political context we should not overlook the fact that Pato ka already «translated» Plato's key insights into his own historical reality. Certain features of Patočka's description of the *polis* namely stem clearly from his experience of bolshevism. He ascribes several characteristics to the guardians that were tragically missing in his own environment. Precisely these very features were for him —as his life demonstrates— the kernel of one's striving and struggle for the good. He often stresses the link between courage and insight and talk about unconditional self-renouncement for attaining the highest good. Guardians are not only called to be the vivid image of virtues but are also depicted as responsible intellectuals who offer an effective resistance against all ideologies, false ideas and political utopias.

The idea of *resistance* could be rightly regarded as the culmination of Patočka's historio-philosophical reflections. He claims that the one imbued with *care for the soul* is more able to withstand ideological temptations existentially, i.e. both, theoretically and practically. If so, his example shall orient the whole community. His *testimony* can be recalled under different circumstances as a representation of those truths and values that are witnessed by him and made through his engagement practically and bodily available. These values and truths do not stem from and therefore are not reducible to the given life-world

<sup>45</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 279.



but rather are infused in it and appear as transcendent to it. Thus the content of the testimony remains always a «foreign» and «strange» with a depth of meaning that no community can ever expropriate. Those testified contents by transcending the borders of life-world represent the true political heritage of Western civilization.

#### 8. EDITH STEIN'S TESTIMONY: PHILOSOPHY AS SELF-DONATION

One of those testimonies that reshaped Western political life and still inspire new politics of reconciliation is the martyrdom of Edith Stein, Co-Patron of Europe. It is important to note that her testimony does not prove so much her personal heroic love and her fidelity to both, her Jewish ancestors and her Christian identity; it is above all the humanly speaking most clear and effective reference to a reality beyond the visible realm. Her testimony is incomprehensible if not understood as an invitation, or better to say, as an appeal of a transcendent reality beyond politics. Stein's decision of not to escape from the Nazis and to accompany her Jewish brothers and sisters, certainly exemplifies more than just the horrible character of oppression and persecution—a reality of certain politics that does not need to be corroborated; it reveals how politics could be understood beyond its own categories of «friend» and «enemy»<sup>46</sup>.

Stein's peculiar *care for the soul* implies a real learning to die (melete thanatou)<sup>47</sup> and results in her gift of life. Stein offers resistance to oppressive power threatening the integrity of community by giving away her life. When she renounces her own life she does not reject thereby neither the life she was *gifted* with, nor the very gift of life; rather the contrary: she highlights the gift nature of life by precisely making a gift it, i.e. giving her life away when affirming the beauty of the life of others, her own Jewish brothers and sisters living in utmost misery. Because their life is still the highest gift and they are worth of it. Rather than remaining in the narrow context of *self-preservation* she approaches the divine origin of life. Her way of elevation to it and her re-presentation of the gratuitous gift of life that is supremely good re-organizes the community life: brings peace where there is conflict. In the light of the one and only source of all life the old and meaningless ideological dogfights perish, new relations are tightened.

She does not achieve this re-organization through proposing a mere conceptual harmony but by reconciling the conflicts in her own soul and body transformed to a gift. Her life and death make it evident that there is no

<sup>46</sup> See on this SCHMITT, C., *The concept of the political: Expanded edition*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.

<sup>47</sup> See on this the in many ways insufficient and yet important account of Jacques Derrida, *Gift of Death*, critically reviewed by Edward F. FINDLAY in *Caring for the Soul in a Postmodern Age: Politics and Phenomenology in the Thought of Jan Patocka*, Suny Press 2002.

reconciliation<sup>48</sup> without sacrifice in the sense of participating in the divine self-sacrifice.

Stein's example invites us to re-consider more than just the nature of politics; it helps to disentangle the rather complex relationship between testimony and the *vocation of philosophy* as well. While, according to Patočka, the ideal unity of theory and *praxis* is reached in and by the philosophical testimony, Stein goes one step further: her testimony is obviously not just of philosophical (sapiential) but also of deep spiritual or religious nature. For Stein the unity of theory and *praxis* that is manifested in testimony is not so much achieved due to personal engagement or special virtues leading to the idea of the good; rather it is ontologically pre-existent in the only full and valid testimony given by God himself. Therefore in her description of the way towards testimony it is not stressed what one has to achieve but rather how one has to fully abandon oneself to this into the arms of an incarnated and crucified God within the most personal relationships of all.

This change of accentuation leads to other relevant differences. As stated above, *metanoia* has been regarded by Patočka as an essential prerequisite for testimony. According to Stein the change of attitude [Einstellungsänderung] described by Husserl as an indispensable starting point for philosophy<sup>49</sup>, has to J., be further radicalised in the following sense. Such transformation of the soul is not performed on the initiative of one's autonomous ego; it has rather a clear responsive character. Since the radical turning around is the adequate response of a radical trans-mundane and divine call it has a vocational character. This entails more than what might be reached by bracketing the life-worldly judgements. For what is revealed through such an incomparable change of the «fundamental attitude» is not so much the process of constitution of the different meaning-unites that has to be deciphered but rather the very origin of any givenness that philosophy might be concerned with. Therefore Stein's experience as a new starting point for sapiential life does not lead so much to the careful investigation in the sense of an analyses of essences or even a phenomenological genealogy. What is at the centre of her philosophical interest

<sup>48</sup> See SZALAY, M., «On Reconciliation. Christian versus Secular Imagination of Peace in the context of politics», in: Monika Gabriela BARTOSZEWCZ (ed.), *Bridging the Divides Post-conference publication on faith-based reconciliation and peacebuilding commemorating the 30th anniversary of «Reconciliatio et paenitentia» by St. John Paul II and the Year of Jan Kariski, Centre for the Thought of John Paul II*, Warsaw, 2014, pp. 41-51.

<sup>49</sup> Husserl describes the beginning of philosophy as an immediate act of changing one's attitude with the expression «in/mit einem Schlage». See: (Hua III: 67. o.; VI: 153., 242. o.; VIII: 162. o.; XV: 534, 549. o.; XXXIV: 79. o. I think that his position needs to be revised for it pays not sufficient attention to the existential, moral and philosophical prerequisites of such change and even less of how this goes along with a transformation of the philosopher. I tried to analyze these issues in detail in: SZALAY, M., SEIFERT, J., *Realista fenomenológia. Módszer és beállítottság*, Szent István Kiadó, Budapest, in print; see also: Orsolya HORVÁTH, *Az öneszmélés fenomenológiája. A fenomenológiai redukció fogalma Husserl késői filozófiájában*, L'Harmattan —Magyar Daseinanalitikai Egyesület, Budapest, 2010.

—as the title of her main work calls it— the «Science of the Cross»<sup>50</sup>. This new and most complete science is about the revealed logos as love.

Similarly how the change of the *natural attitude* to the phenomenological and then transcendental reduction reveals the «phenomenological field», religious conversion opens up and illuminates fundamental segments of reality: the original logos that pervades, unifies and fundamentes everything that there is. Conversion in this sense leads to *contemplation*: in reflecting on the analogy of being<sup>51</sup>, on how the one that is in the many and on how the many reveals the one. For Stein this mystery reflected on for thousands of years in philosophy became accessible for philosophy, i.e. real *science* on love in and through the Cross. It is the idea of the Good made history that the real lover of *sapientia* has to follow when undergoing the conversion, i.e. by completely turning to the origin of reality as expressed in the glory on the Cross.

Without further developing here the analyses of conversion let me just state: a more radical conversion leads to a more full sense of testimony. It is arguable that the peculiar character of Stein's witness for which she is called Co-Patron of Europe consists in her *unconditional self-gift* as self-sacrifice. Even if the dignity of the object whose nature is revealed through the testimony is decisive concerning the value of testimony it also depends on the testifier's existential implication. Undoubtedly the highest form of implication is «martyrdom»; giving one's life for the other has been regarded—even if for different reasons—equally recognized by Jewish, Greek and Christian culture as the *non plus ultra* of giving a witness.

Self-gift and self-sacrifice deserve special interest for they belong essentially to testimony in the full sense of the term. Any *authentic testimony* necessarily implies a certain sense of self-gift. It is a gift for it is something absolutely valuable freely offered by one person to the other. If it is not freely given the testimony cannot be fully accounted for. It is precisely its gift character that brings closer its intentional object to its addressee. Testimony offers to the addressee a special access to the true nature of the phenomena in question. He can gain insight into the truth thanks to the transmission of other person. The testifier role is to be the medium of the communication between truth and the addressee. Giving a testimony is based on the recognition that the given truth communicates while personally experienced, it is far from being subjective; it is objectively there and calls to be accessible to everybody. Paradoxically, however, this objective character of truth comes only to the fore in the utmost subjectivity of the perception. Moreover, the more personal (not subjective!) is its perception, the more one can get conscious of its objectivity, for truth is first and foremost an event of/within the interpersonal relations between the

<sup>50</sup> See STEIN, E., *Kreuzeswissenschaft: Studie über Johannes von Kreuz*. Vol. 1. E. Nauwelaerts, 1954.

<sup>51</sup> See on the notion of *analogia entis* and catalogical analogy: WOLFGANG T., «True Foundations of Authentic Theology» in: SCHINDLER, D., (ed.) *Hans Urs von Balthasar. His Life and Work*, Ignatius, Communio Books, San Francisco, 1991, p. 174.

divine and the human, God and the soul. It is only possible to communicate truth through testimony because the testifier, the very bearer of that truth, gives away oneself. Paradoxically again, the more one is able to give away its self, the more clearly can the truth itself be perceptible and can stand in the centre of interest. When testimony is fully realized, the self does not disappear or get dissolved; it is fully present, yet fully converted to a sign: the incarnation of truth. The whole person becomes to nothing but an indication of the origin of the gift of truth. When lived-through and in historical time and context truth becomes *re-enacted* by the testimony that puts it into action again —as the German expression says: *es ereignet sich wieder*<sup>52</sup>.

The sign that indicates a truth worth of one's life has a special form: it is sacrifice. The original meaning of the world contains more than simply giving the life for somebody; it means doing something holy or it is better to say: letting the holy get manifested. 'Holy' stands here for traces of divinity and or transcendence that pervade reality. Real testimony consists in witnessing how the saint is present in the profane sphere and making this presence visible by affirming its ontological value: nothing in the profane is worth of the saint.

Within testimony self-sacrifice and self-gift are inseparable aspects. Not only because both concern the self but also because the gift consists precisely in dying for the other, in loving the other more than one's own life. This love would be irrational if it were based on a rational evaluation of what the other is worth and what one is worth. Such nonsensical comparison is far from the spirit of authentic testimony; what motivates the self-sacrifice is the recognition of the other's divine origin: of the holy in the other. The holy of the other that has to be fully realized lies at his origin, at the original idea of the other we find the most holy mystery: he was called into existence. Testimony both as sacrifice and as self-gift refers to and affirms precisely this mystery of being: to be called to existence.

## 9. THE POLITICAL RELEVANCE OF PHILOSOPHY: TESTIMONIAL LIFE

This reflection started with the analyses of the tension between philosophy and politics by arguing that there is one relevant phenomenon connecting these spheres in an existential way: testimony. Some of the politically relevant features of testimony were highlighted through a critical approach to Patočka's idea of the 'care for the soul'. Stein's account on religious conversion helped us to realize some complementary aspects of the political relevance concerning testimony: testimony understood as self-gift and self-sacrifice strengthens the new form of polis, the ecclesiastic community, the community reunited around the self-sacrifice of God.

<sup>52</sup> The difficulty of translating this expression has been repeatedly documented. Its meaning can be rendered as: it happens again.

Christian politics cannot be but based on this elementary experience of community. Whatever the political engagement of a Christian might be—however the concrete form must be adjusted to the given realities of different life-worlds— the principle of action cannot be but what follows from this original unity: it has the same reason, the same finality and the same way of operation. The political activity, i.e. the self-donation to the given concrete community always has a testimonial character for it gives witness of whatever one found relevant for the community within the divine-human relationship as it is manifested in one's own life. There is the origin of one's call and one's mission to become a politician and to serve the community.

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