

***Closing Address: Quo Vadis? Where are the University and Science Going?***  
**10<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Systems Congress, University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto, 2014**

**J. D. R. de Raadt**  
**Melbourne Centre for Community Development**  
**www.melbourneccd.com**  
**donald@melbourneccd.com**

More than 40 years after his death, mention of Dr. Salvador Allende, former President of Chile, causes deep divisions among Chileans, especially among the older generation who lived during the years of his government and the military dictatorship that followed it. I do not wish to rekindle the pain and bitterness of either side of the division, but I find the words of an address Allende delivered at the University of Guadalajara in Mexico in 1972 so compelling and needed to be heard today, that I must start by citing an excerpt from it:

Long live Mexico! Long live Chile! Long live Latin America united!

... There are young people who are old and old people who are young; I place myself among the latter. These old young people do not ask themselves about the shortage of dwellings in our countries, and sometimes in their own country there are many physicians who do not understand that health is bought and that there are thousands and thousands and thousands of men and women in Latin America who are unable to buy health. Likewise, there are teachers who do not care that there are also hundreds and thousands of children and youth who have no access to schools. In Latin America, there are more than 30 million unemployed people and the number climbs to about 60 million if we include people who have only occasional work.

To do away with this brutal reality, we require a professional who is committed to social change. We require professionals who do not seek to grow fat in public posts in the capitals of our countries. For the obligation of the graduate is not to forget that this is a state university financed by tax payers, most of whom are labourers... Young people must understand this and we in Chile have given a significant step in this direction. The political foundation of my government is made of Marxists, secularists and Christians and we respect Christian thought when it adheres to the word of Christ who threw the merchants out of the temple.<sup>1</sup>

What makes a person “young” or “young at heart”? I suggest that there are at least three things that characterise this type of youth: ethics, vision and professional competence. There is an ethical component that acknowledges that a large portion of humanity – not only in Brazil or Latin America, but all over the world – lives in misery and that we should be committed to do something about it. It does not mean merely doing charity work. Charity is necessary because it provides for the immediate physical need of people; it allows them to survive. However, since human life ought to be more than surviving, young people also need a vision of what it is to live life to the full. Finally, they need professional competence to attain this vision, not only for themselves but also for others. These three components, ethics, vision and competence, are systemically bound to each other and, given that the university's mission is to provide professional competence, it follows that it must also integrate this with ethics and vision to be effective. To graduate the type of youth that society needs, the university must not only educate the mind, but also the heart and the soul of its students.

I do not think that Allende could have foreseen that, only nine months after his address in Mexico, his government would be overthrown, that his life would end and that Chile would become the first country in Latin America to embrace a resuscitated form of classical capitalism that has become known as neo-liberalism. Ironically, ignoring the conflict between “the word of Christ” and neo-liberalism, the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile became the incubator of Chilean neo-liberalism by introducing a doctoral programme in collaboration with the

---

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from a video on <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1dUBDWoyes>> (Accessed 26 February 2015); my translation.

University of Chicago, the cradle of neo-liberalism. By training Chilean students – known as the “Chicago boys” – who were eventually to assume important leadership posts in Chile, Friedman (2002) and Hayek (2006) were able to inject a resuscitated version of classical capitalism at lightning speed. Regarded as an “economic miracle”, Chile's adoption of neo-liberalism spread to other countries until – aided by the fall of the Soviet Union – it became the mainstream philosophy of a globalised world.

Evaluated by conventional capitalist economic indexes – such as GDP and CPI – neo-liberalism could claim success, but it is certainly no miracle when other aspects of society are considered, including education, family and community life and the predicament of young people; these tell a different story. For neo-liberalism is not just an economic system; it is a philosophy of life (Friedman, Milton 2002; Friedman, Milton and Friedman, Rose 1980) where every aspect of humanity – including freedom – is downgraded by subjugating it to economics. It dictates its own approach to almost everything and manipulates our language to ensure a capitalistic perspective on even the most non-economic of things. People now speak of “organisational and relational capital” (Sanchez et al, 2009), “human capital” (Keeley, 2007), “intellectual capital” (Fazlagic, 2005) “spiritual capital”, “religious capital” (Albaugh, n.d.; Holt et al, 2012; Barker, 2008) and even faith as capital (Candland, 2000). This is not a scientific or technical terminology that aims to be precise and avoid confusion between one thing and another. On the contrary, it is a type of Orwellian “Newspeak” aimed to divert, in an underhanded manner, the focus from one thing to another; in this case, from humanity to money. The word *capital*, meant to suggest something good or valuable, is in practice a synonym for money. The very freedom to choose that Friedman promised is ultimately limited to choosing things that make money. Such twisting of the language in order to say one thing and mean the opposite is a common trick of totalitarianism (e.g. Soviet *peaceful coexistence* and Nazi *Arbeit macht frei*, “work makes free”).

Of particular interest to us is the blow that neo-liberalism has delivered to the university and its intellectual freedom, a freedom that is vital not only to the institution itself but the society it ought to serve with truth. Truth, not money, makes us free. It is sad to observe how easily academics have surrendered their vocational integrity and readily acquiesced to their new master. Scientific publications now abound on the best way to redesign the university to the new specifications<sup>2</sup>. Here is an example:

Knowledge-based work is the dominant economic activity in the knowledge-based economy. Europe is facing demographic changes requiring a significant improvement in the productivity of Intellectual Capital. Facing the global market, European economies have *no choice* but to strengthen their intellectual potential in order to survive competition from the Asian economies. Clearly there are no panaceas and universal solutions for improving the performance of European Universities. Nevertheless, European universities *must* adopt management approaches and methods developed in the business sector. (Fazlagic, 2005, p. 8, emphasis added)

Here, Friedman's “freedom to choose” has ironically turned into “no choice”. The imposition upon the universities is clear: they must not only improve “the productivity of Intellectual Capital”, but must also be run as a business, that is, they must make money. What about their obligations to their students? Are not students the first responsibility of a university? In an exhortation in which he exposes the impact of neo-liberal economics on the poor, Pope Francis concludes that “[s]uch an economy kills”<sup>3</sup>. He is referring to physical death due to starvation or exposure and he has the economic figures to back his statement. Max-Neef (2012) argues that more people die from hunger than from warfare. He estimates that the several trillions of dollars that were used to bailout the speculators behind the 2008 financial

<sup>2</sup> There is a *Journal of Intellectual Capital*; see its website <<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/loi/jic>>.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis (2013).

crisis could have paid, for several hundred years, the bill to feed the hungry and save their lives<sup>4</sup>. But neo-liberalism not only kills the body but also the soul and of the two, the latter is the worse. The subjugation of the university syllabi to neo-liberalism is killing the soul of our students and with it, their minds and hearts. This happens right in the classroom. It is not only a betrayal of students, but also an obstruction to social change. The education students receive has been mostly delivered within an affluent bubble that is unable to see the misery afflicting the majority beyond its horizons. Our science and educational programmes may claim success within this bubble, but they have little to offer the humanity that lies beyond its confines. Nor have its graduands, whom we have turned into what Allende called “old people”.

What ought we to do? How should the university respond? In his address, Allende speaks of collaboration between Marxists and Christians in a common mission to help the poor. But Marxism and socialism have failed to deliver their promises. Their very failure helped fuel the rise and spread of neo-liberalism. Consequently, even left wing parties have largely abandoned socialism and adopted most of the neo-liberal policies of their opponents concealed under a very thin veneer of welfare concerns. Some people, especially in southern Europe and Latin America, have responded to this with a renewed interest in the relationship between socialism and Christianity, (e.g. Devés-Valdés, 2010; Ferhat, 2011; Díaz-Salazar, Rafael, 1994). Among them is a detailed study by Díaz-Salazar (1998) arguing that the failure of socialism is partly due to its loss of spirit which has turned it into an empty shell. Christianity, he says, can help revive it by filling up the spiritual vacuum and reigniting the passion of the political left. That Christianity has played an important role in the development of socialism is no new discovery. Díaz-Salazar himself provides ample historical evidence of the Christian influence on socialism.<sup>5</sup> But here we would expect that Allende's demand on Christians – that they should adhere to the “word of Christ” – should also be applied to a socialist endeavour to apply Christ's teaching to its agenda.

We need to clarify what we mean by “the word of Christ”. It may be a surprise to some that as documented in the New Testament and interpreted following the Old Testament prophets, the word of Christ is neither religion nor religious – at least not in the sense these two terms are commonly used. Nor does it lend itself to be incorporated into another system of thought other than its own, not even into theology. Socialism may have grown out of Christianity but what Christ taught cannot be grafted into socialism if it is to retain its acuity. Christ and the prophets thought historically and their approach was adopted with great success by the Christian humanists starting around the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Erasmus and his followers rejected the dialectic rationalism of medieval theology and philosophy (Bejczy, 1996, 2003; Erasmus, 1978) and replaced it with what Erasmus called the philosophy of Christ (*Philosophia Christi*). This philosophy organised the sciences around the empirical observation of the world rather than on abstractions and had, as a practical aim, the welfare of humanity. The philosophy of Christ was meant to have an impact on the way people lived; and it did. The evidence is found in the Christian Renaissance of northern Europe. Though it took more than a century to fully blossom, by the 17<sup>th</sup> Century society had made such strides in the fine arts and sciences, in welfare, civic engagement and organisation, in health and sanitation, education, navigation and exploration, that it was deemed a Golden Age unparalleled in the history of Europe (Israel, 1995). We are fortunate that, especially in Holland, paintings were a favourite form of art and that painters left behind a visual record of their society, just as photographs and films are a record of our times. Moreover, the Dutch masters not only painted what they saw,

---

<sup>4</sup>Estimates of the exact size of the bailout vary; Max-Neef states about 17 trillion dollars while Hudson's figure is 13 trillion (2011). Regardless of the difference, the potential impact on world hunger would be immense.

<sup>5</sup> A valuable historical analysis of this interaction is given in an opening address of the First Christian Social Congress in 1891, by Abraham Kuyper (1950), former Prime Minister of The Netherlands and founder of the Free University, Amsterdam.

they also painted the philosophy that inspired it. The towns, homes, work, management of civic affairs, care of the sick and scientific endeavours that are painted on their canvasses are an image of a philosophy put into practice.

I have discussed the significance of this Golden Age in a book (de Raadt, J. D. R., 2013) that has, on its cover, a painting by Vermeer. It succinctly conveys the book's subject. It renders Jesus at the home of Mary and Martha (Luke 10: 38-42) – see Figure 1. One striking characteristic of this painting is the absence of religious or mystical symbols that are common in earlier biblical art. Jesus is portrayed without a halo; the light on the wall behind his head – common in other Dutch painters of the times – is purposefully ambiguous, perhaps to stave off criticism for irreverence. The painting is not a denial of Christ's divinity, but simply affirms that Jesus faces humanity “man to man” (John 1:14; Romans 5:15; Philippians 2:7-8; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 1:7). In him, God confronts men and women on their own ground, without divine gloves. By doing this, he restores the nobility of humanity in the scheme of things. Thus, Vermeer paints Jesus as an ordinary young man teaching his student; on the canvass, he sits on a chair just as Socrates would have done, except that Socrates would have refused to teach a girl.



**Figure 1: Vermeer, Johannes (c. 1654-55) *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*. National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.**

This painting exemplifies humanist down-to-earth spirituality and its emphasis on education. It dismisses mysticism and promotes biblical spirituality attained by living in a fully human manner<sup>6</sup> including, but not limited to, eating, drinking and being merry (Ecclesiastes 2: 24). Christ removes from us the yoke (Matthew 11:30; Luke 11:46) of institutional, religious and other restraining systems that keep us from fully realising our humanity. The Christian humanists understood that this emancipation was not delivered through revolt or violence, but through education where the humanities occupied a central place. According to Vives, considered the father of education in the Spanish speaking world, education ought to be led by the “...branches of learning [that] are called humanistic, since they make us human.” (1971, p. 293)<sup>7</sup>. Our animal instincts are provided for us, but our humanity must be learned.

Yet Christ's freedom from mysticism and religion brings a burden with it, a cross that does not represent our problems, but the problems of our neighbours<sup>8</sup>, especially those who comprise the majority of humanity living in destitution. This is not merely an exhortation to be charitable. As we have said, charity resolves the immediate need of people by allowing them to survive, but it does not resolve the long-term task of restoring them to full citizenship. Nor does it stop the next generation from becoming indigent. This requires a social renaissance, that is, a renewal of every institution in society as well as the intellectual foundation on which it is built. The story of Martha and Mary represents in some way these two perspectives in the face of the human predicament. Martha focuses on the immediate need – she is charitable – but neglects the long term. Ten years hence, she might still be doing more or less the same. Mary by contrast, stands for change; there is more than charitable promise in her. While sitting at the foot of the master seeking education, her eyes are set upon the future. Here is the key. The implementation of the philosophy of Christ relies on education and not coercion, whether physical, economic or packaged in bureaucratic policies.

Charity demands little; one can engage in charity without sacrificing much of one's comforts, especially if we are well off. Social renaissance will disturb our ease; it will demand far more than sacrificing part of what we own; it will require dedicating the whole of our life, in particular our professional life, to the cause. The poor of the world need workers who have skills to turn around their communities, who are able to teach these skills to others and who can provide a civic role model. By imitating such workers and learning their skills, communities can eventually fully assume the responsibility for their own affairs. For imitation is perhaps a most important component of learning and the role model, an important function of the teacher. That is why we need Christ, as painted by Vermeer, in the classroom. Against the self-pursuit and callousnesses of contemporary neo-liberalism, this young man can show university students how to dedicate their lives, talents and science to the service of humanity. He can show them that positive social change ought to be introduced at the grass roots rather than at the higher levels of society and pedagogically rather than coercively. For he was a great teacher; a well known Swedish educationalist has even described him as a “pedagogical genius”<sup>9</sup>. Of course, Socrates was also a great teacher, but he cared nothing for the destitute. He can inspire students to live in order to work, rather than the other way around; provide them with the historical understanding that our work transcends the short span of our earthly

<sup>6</sup>We are exhorted to become a “new man” (*kainon anthropon*) and not a “new something else” (Ephesians 2: 15; 4:24; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Colossians 3:10). Any spirituality that denies Christ's humanity and his anthropomorphic role model for us is to be rejected (1 John 3:24-4: 3).

<sup>7</sup>In the Latin original: “...artes humanitatis nominatur reddant nos humanos.”

<sup>8</sup>In my closing address of the 1st Brazilian Systems Congress in 2005 (see de Raadt, J. D. R. and de Raadt, Veronica Dawn, 2014, Chapter 12) I argued that, if we were to address the predicament of humanity seriously, this ethic is a systemic necessity and not an option. My argument here proceeds by assuming this as a fact.

<sup>9</sup> Kroksmark (1996) has developed a teaching methodology to be used in educational institutions based on Jesus' approach.

lives; and that it most often blossoms when we have gone. I doubt that anyone can object to such a role model, especially when the alternative is likely to be Milton Friedman and his “Chicago boys” as the papers on intellectual capital well attest.

Let us now turn our attention to philosophy. A sketch of this philosophy is given in Figure 2 which portrays it as a grammar of science providing systemic articulation and integration to the diverse sciences<sup>10</sup>. This grammar can be learned by observing the historical unfolding of the diverse disciplines and the impact, both good and bad, they have had on the lives of both people and nature. Its mission is “socialistic”, described by Kuyper, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, as:

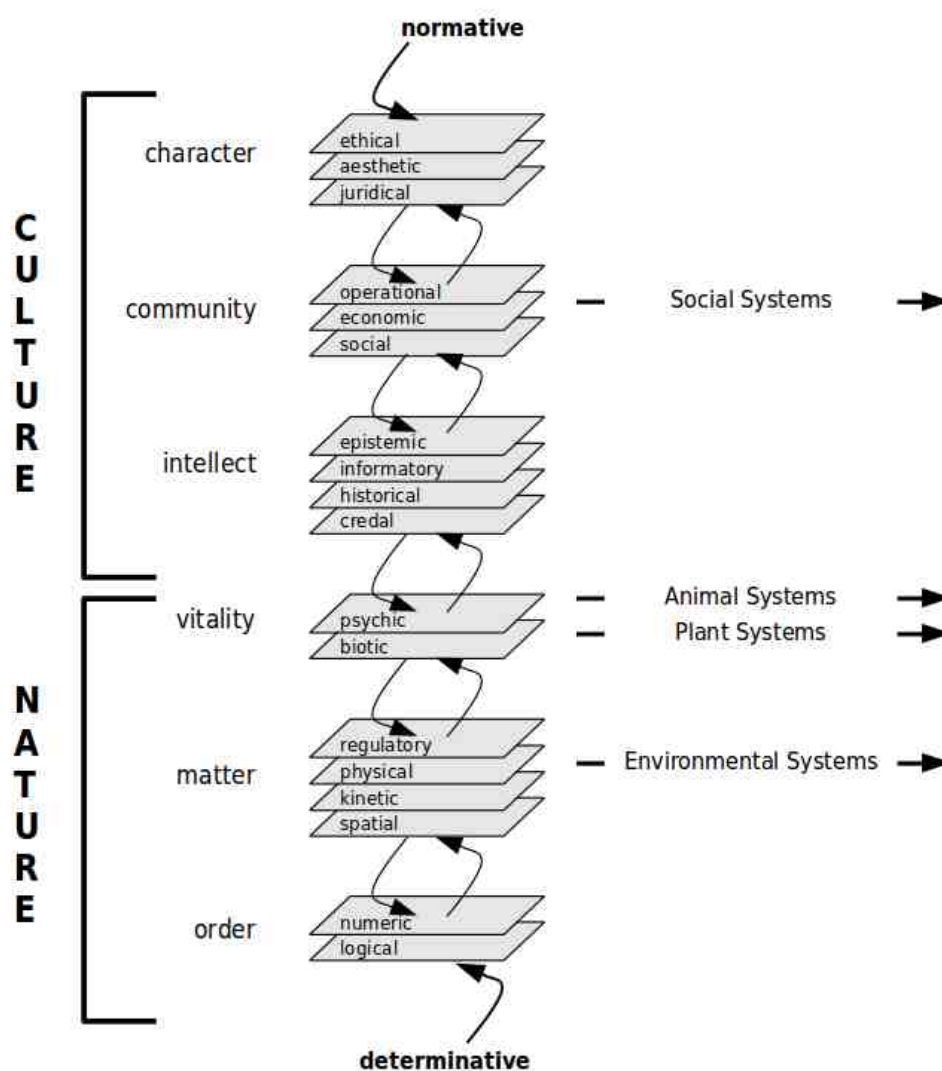
... [an] idea, in itself so beautiful, that our national society is, as Da Costa said, “not a heap of souls on a piece of ground,” but rather a God-willed *community*, a living, human organism. Not a mechanism put together from separate parts, as Beets says, inlaid with pieces like a floor; but a *body* with members, subject to the law of life; that we are members of each other, and thus the eye cannot get along without the foot, nor the foot without the eye. (1950, p. 41, emphasis in the original.)

This social and systemic philosophy deals with the law of communal life as “a living, human organism”. In developing it as the grammar of science, I have adhered to two basic principles of systems thinking: first, I began with the totality of life and moved to its particulars and second, I have paid special attention to the links between each of the disciplines that comprise the totality. Each of these disciplines is directed to a modality (or aspect) that we empirically observe in the world. These are grouped in two realms, nature and culture, each with their own domains corresponding to diverse living systems and their habitat (shown at the right of Figure 2). Since these living systems are linked with each other in a multi-modal manner, we need the knowledge of the diverse disciplines, brought together into a common body of knowledge, to understand their connections. Philosophy then becomes a *grammar of science*, where each discipline stands for a word and philosophy represents the body of rules that connect each word with another. There are two types of links shown between the modalities. One, pointing upwards, is determinative; it stands for what happens to us whether we desire it or not. The other link, pointing downwards, is normative; it represents what we make happen, that is, what happens because we will it and thus places it in our sphere of human responsibility. The order of the modalities and their corresponding disciplines has been established by these links, with the most normative at the top (ethical) and the most determinative at the bottom (logical). By ordering the modalities in this way, we provide a set of priorities for science where its endeavours should first be aimed at building a community characterised by love, beauty and justice. Naturally, these three qualities are only an abbreviation of a wider landscape offered by the ethical, aesthetic and juridical modalities, a landscape that expands even further when we consider how they connect with the other modalities that give shape to a civilised community.

As we have argued above, such a community should be attained mainly through education, which explains why the intellectual domain is placed as the floor upon which society, in the community domain, is to be built and developed. Because social change is an historical process, community building and developmental tasks require an historical form of reasoning to which we now turn and which will occupy us for the rest of this paper.

Prior to this however and as a form of comparison, we shall have a brief look at the type of reasoning behind neo-liberalism. Modernism, of which neo-liberalism is the contemporary expression, adopts a manner of thinking termed *physico-mathematical reason* (Ortega y Gasset, 1924, 2004; also known as *Cartesian reason*). Our economic and social thinking is saturated with it<sup>11</sup>. Truth, defined by this reasoning, is based on what exists, that is, on facts. It is an ontological approach derived from the Greek's notion of the world as something static.

<sup>10</sup> Melanchthon (1999) was one of the first humanists to speak of this articulation. However, he illustrated it not as grammar but as orthography.



**Figure 2: Sketch of a Social and Systemic Philosophy**

Life however, even biological life, does not exist, but happens; it is dynamic and this makes physico-mathematical reason inadequate to understand it<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, when it comes to addressing that part of human life that is not biological and that differentiates us from animals, physico-mathematical reason is even more inadequate and allows 'the human aspect to escape like water from a basket' (Ortega y Gasset, 2004, V<sup>13</sup>). This inadequacy has led people who study human life to embrace a variety of subjective approaches, mostly derivatives of Kant's philosophy (2007) and its many 19<sup>th</sup> century elaborations that turns truth into a mere projection of our minds; what is true for one may not be true for another. Such subjectivity has also been assimilated into neo-liberalism.

<sup>11</sup> This type of reasoning turned economics into "physiocracy" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Quesnay, 1766; Giraudeau, 2010, p. 3,) and sociology into "Social physics" in the next century (Comte, 1986, p. 33).

<sup>12</sup> One of the factors that led von Bertalanffy to a "...Quest for a General Systems Theory" (1971, p. 29f).

<sup>13</sup> All citations that have been translated into English have been placed in single quotes to distinguish them from the verbatim citations in the original language which are placed within double quotes.

One may well wonder how neo-liberalism is able to accommodate simultaneously such opposite views of truth, totally factual on the one hand, totally subjective on the other. It does so by turning pleasure into factual truth. Although individual pleasure is subjective, one can easily marry subjective reason to physico-mathematical reason as long as people regard as truth what pleases them. They must both think and act selfishly. Thus, everyone is encouraged, through marketing and all forms of modern media, to be self-indulgent and do as they please. This combination of utilitarian positivism, on the one hand, and subjectivism on the other, distinguishes neo-liberalism from classical liberalism, for the latter still sought to adhere to objective norms of proper human conduct<sup>14</sup>. But for neo-liberalism, there no such thing as proper human conduct.

We can now return to historical reason by considering human life as a combination of what happens to us and what we make happen; these happenings make our history, both communally and individually. The truth, according to historical reason, is not subjective, but is based upon what happened to people in the past and what is happening to them now. However, since most of the time, events are not observed by everyone, truth must depend upon the testimony of the witnesses to the events, in the same manner that our system of law is based upon “the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth” as declared in the witness stand. Naturally, there is a risk in accepting this testimony; it may turn out not to be true. Therefore, neither we nor the courts of justice ought to believe testimonials on their face value; one needs a method – often justice is represented by a woman with a blindfold and the scales (of justice) in her hand – to evaluate testimonials and declare them true or otherwise. The method does not totally remove the risk of misjudgement, but reduces it and turns it into a calculated risk. Accepting truth with a calculated risk is a necessity. While it is possible for the courts to declare a person guilty who is innocent or vice versa, judges and juries must nevertheless render verdicts, for without them there could be no justice. So it is with other aspects of our lives; here the weighing up of the evidence is performed by historical reasoning. Such reason involves the four modalities in the intellectual domain: credal, historical, informatory and epistemic. It requires therefore that one masters the humanities pertaining to these modalities such as history, languages, methodology and historiology. Since these modalities are interconnected, the humanities must also be linked and it is upon this latter attribute that we shall centre our attention now.

Let us begin with the historical modality. Life is a given to us, we did not choose to be born, nor when or where we were born. From birth on, life is shaped by the times in which we live and by what has gone before, whether we are aware of it or not and whether circumstances are favourable or unfavourable. Since we have not witnessed most events, both in the past and at present, we must rely upon information (see the informatory modality in Figure 3) to become aware of them. In ancient times, before the emergence of modern mediums of communication, most information was conveyed through language, that is, through words. In our times this has been significantly expanded to include things such as photographs and films<sup>15</sup>. Now for this information to be regarded as true, that is, “the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth”, it must solely represent the historical event and nothing else (this is symbolised by the determinative arrow 1 in the figure). This definition of truth, which places the emphasis on the information rather than on its interpretation, is important. For much of the confusion of what is truth, both in ancient times as well as modern times, is based on trying to lean mostly on our understanding (in the epistemic modality) rather than on empirical evidence in our search for truth.

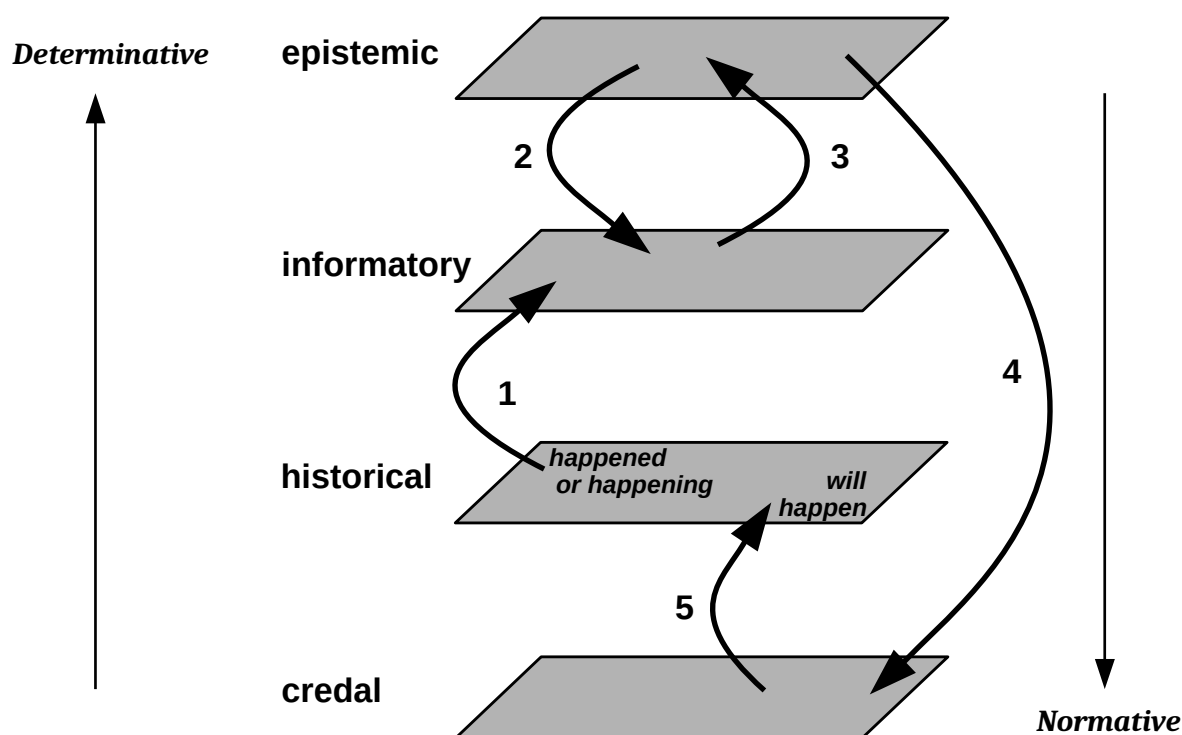
---

<sup>14</sup> It is unlikely that classical liberalism would have considered brothels – e.g. Daily Planet in Australia – even if legal, as a legitimate and ethical industry with its shares listed on the stock exchange.

<sup>15</sup> That is why I have preferred to label this modality *informatory* rather than *lingual*, the term used by Dooyeweerd (1958).



This does not mean that understanding or thought plays no role in establishing the truth. On the contrary, witnesses to historical as well as contemporary events often contradict each other. There is a need, therefore, to evaluate whether what we have before us is information, dis-information or just noise, irrelevant to the purpose we pursue. Just as in the courts of law there are “rules of evidence” that specify which information can be admitted or excluded (for example, see Australian Government, n. d.), each discipline in each modality has its own way or method to evaluate information. Some sciences give their method a distinct name, such as *historiography* for history. Method is not only used to evaluate data, but also to collect and organise it; in our day, with the development of information technology, method has incorporated very sophisticated tools, such as computerised databases and modelling software. These methods establish a normative link between the epistemic and informatory modalities (see arrow 2) by helping us decide what *ought* and what *ought not* to be received as information.



**Figure 2: Historical Reason**

Once we have received information and found what has happened to us, science can help explain why things happened the way they did and what might follow in the future. This explanation is partly determined by the information we have accepted (see arrow 3). But pure information is not sufficient, we need to evaluate how these events acted upon each other and how they may affect where we are going. Where we are going assumes that we have an aim or destiny for our lives; an answer to the question *Quo Vadis* in the title of this paper. This destiny, both individual and communal, drives our lives beyond the domain of purely biological and psychological life and directs us on a journey of cultural life with its own domains and

modalities, as we have illustrated in Figure 2. The name of this journey is *history*. And to undertake this journey, we need something like the navigational chart used by sailors to reach their destination, which shows the geographical area where their journey is taking place and the coordinates of their present location. Naturally, the geographical information provided by the chart must be invariable, that is, it is independent from the events and destination of our journey. The equivalent chart for our historical journey is *historiology*, a term coined by Ortega y Gasset and defined by him as follows:

The real structure of historical events never consists of the data that the philologist and the archivist come across... The data are symptoms or manifestations of reality. These data are given to someone by something. That someone is, in this case, the true historian – not the philologist or the archivist – and that *something* is the historical reality. Now, each moment of this historical reality is constituted by a number of variable elements and by a nucleus of invariable or constant ingredients. These constants behind the event or historical reality are its radical, categorical and *a priori* structure. And because it is an *a priori* structure, it does not depend upon the variation of historical data. On the contrary, it is this structure that commissions the philologist and the archivist to search for the necessary data to construct this or that concrete epoch. The identification of this categorical nucleus is the principal theme of historiology. (1924; my translation, emphasis in the Spanish original.)

In the philosophy of Christ, the “categorical nucleus” consists of two historical points, departure and arrival. The point of departure is humanist, the point of arrival is civic. The humanist point starts with man and woman created as noble creatures, bearing the image of God and yet fallen into sin. The sin is to desire to be more than man and woman; sin is not to wish to improve ourselves, but to transcend our humanity. Some seek this through money, some through power, some through mysticism or a combination of these. But since these cannot go beyond their own humanity, they seek their objective by undermining other people's humanity. The result is enslavement – either to their own or others' wish for grandeur – and with its consequent moral and physical misery. Although the downfall has tarnished our character, it has not affected our essence, for regardless of race, gender or social status, every man and woman retains God's image. They remain princes and princesses, albeit fallen princes and princesses. Whatever criticism might be raised, it would be difficult to hold a higher view of mankind while not ignoring its tragic predicament. Redemption from this circumstance is brought about by the civic element which aims not at transcending our humanity, but at restoring its nobility within a society where all citizens are patricians, not by birth or by wealth, but by the way they live. It is important to underline the communal character of this redemption, for the individualism so widespread in our times is foreign to both the Old and the New Testaments.

These two points, providing us with a departure and arrival of mankind, help to determine our location in the chart of history (see determinative arrow 3). That is, here we gain an understanding of the times in which we live, the challenges they present and the actions which must follow to continue the journey to our destination. For in the epistemic modality we find, in addition to the natural sciences, the humanities. They constitute our historical navigational sciences. They will help us find where to go and how to get there. Here again, the humanities and natural sciences will help answer these questions and give us the competence to reach our destination. However, all this knowledge is only a norm and ineffective unless we appropriate it, that is, unless we believe it. Decisions are made by our belief, not by our reason; reason might illuminate our decisions, but it does not decide. Reason proposes, but belief disposes.

This deciding takes place in the credal modality and the normative arrow 4 illustrates how the mind connects with the heart, which we have reached in this last modality. The heart of man is the seat of his faith and convictions. But, the type of belief or faith we have in mind here is different to the contemporary understanding of it, which tends to be passive. In most European languages, the word faith is a noun, just like the equivalent word *pistis*, in ancient

Greek. If one holds this sort of belief, it is not necessary to do anything about it. But, in historical reason, faith must be followed by an historical action to be regarded as such; that is, true faith determines what will happen in the historical modality, as is illustrated by arrow 5. Conversely, if faith does not determine anything in history, it should not be regarded as genuine. We are required to show our faith by our works of historical significance. Such significance does not mean that it needs to be of Napoleonic dimensions. Actions are counted as historical when they are a step, no matter how small, towards the emancipation and civic restoration of humanity. Often, small steps towards this purpose are of much greater importance than great battles which destroy humanity. Therefore, since true faith implies an action, it would be better to substitute it with the verb *believing*; the *verb* describes it more accurately<sup>16</sup>.

The fifth arrow in Figure 3 closes a feedback loop which starts and ends with history. History, therefore, is not only about the past but also the future. History is a passage from the past into the future. The present is transient and those who live exclusively in it live by the side of the road, where one is only supposed to camp. Understanding the past will help us act on the future with wisdom, for the past provides an image or model – even if imperfect and thus entailing risk – of how things ought to be in the future. Moreover, all the systemic principles that we find in nature such as stability, equilibrium and the effects of positive and negative feedback also apply here. This means that although we have introduced historical reason as normative – that is, how we ought to think rather than how we think – there are nevertheless determinative systemic constraints upon it which we ought to take into account when we think. At first, historical reason may look simple, but when one considers that it involves all the sciences and their interactions with each other, we realise what Ortega meant when he wrote:

Historical reason is... a rigorous concept. There should be no doubt of it. When setting it up against physico-mathematical reason we are not making concessions to irrationality. On the contrary, historical reason is even more rational than physical reason, more rigorous, more demanding than the latter. (Ortega y Gasset, 2004, my translation)

This highlights the banality of talk about “intellectual capital” in the university. But we must move on, for knowing how we should reason is not sufficient. We also need to learn the methods to apply it to our lives, both individual and social. In an endeavour to supply and implement an educational syllabus based on historical reason, my wife and I designed undergraduate and post-graduate programs focused on community development. This work has been documented in a variety of papers which we have collected, edited and assembled into a book (de Raadt, J. D. R. and de Raadt, Veronica Dawn, 2014) to celebrate the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Systems Congress. We hope it will assist our Latin American colleagues who might wish to continue this work or apply its ideas to their own research and teaching. We selected as a book-cover a painting by Johannes Vermeer entitled “A View of Delft” (shown in Figure 4). The preface explains that Vermeer sets out, on his canvass, a vision of his home town as inspired by the philosophy of Christ. It is a beautiful representation and yet not extravagant; the people in the foreground show the dignity of the citizens, a sense of just order and yet freedom that permits unaccompanied women to travel safely and children – shown in other Vermeer paintings – to play freely in their neighbourhood streets. Undoubtedly, the painting is very Dutch, but within it are elements that transcend Holland or any other nation, such as peace, human dignity, love, order and beauty. These are elements that can be exported

---

<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to note that in ancient Greek, the verb believing (*pisteuo*) is derived from the noun faith (*pistis*). In ancient Hebrew, a language akin to historical reason, it is the opposite. The noun faith (*emunah*) is a derivative of the verb (*aman*) and in the Old Testament, this verb is used more than twice as often as the noun (Harris et al., 1980).

and were indeed exported to other lands, including Brazil. In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, under the leadership of Johan Maurits and “...during a brief period[,] the Dutch colony in Brazil was fully integrated into the expansive cultural and scientific life of the early Dutch Republic.” (Emmer, 2001, p. 35f.) I am not advocating for colonialism and its practices, nor I am saying that this colony was devoid of injustice, but one must judge events within the age in which they take place. Rather than dumping its convicts in far away lands as other nations did, Maurits invited artists and scientists to settle in the Brazilian colony and contribute to its cultural development. He architecturally enhanced the colony with channels, bridges, public buildings and gardens, and “...turned the squalid village of Recife into the most beautiful and most modern city of the Americas at the time.” (Prien, 2012, p. 161.) Its extent of tolerance was uncommon for the times; no one could be persecuted for their religious beliefs (Israel and Schwartz, 2007). By imprinting in Brazilian New Holland the character of the Dutch Republic, Maurits transferred to the New World a seed rooted in the philosophy of Christ.



**Figure 3: Vermeer, Johannes (c. 1660 - 1661) *View of Delft*. Mauritshuis, The Hague.**

But that is in the past. Now, Brazilians should give their own expressions of justice, beauty and love to their communities and in this task our systems colleagues can make a significant contribution. We hope that the book we have dedicated to them will be a small help in this historical labour.

Long live Brazil!

## References

- Albaugh Ryan (n.d.) Analyzing the “Religious Capital” Approach to Religious Participation. <[http://nazarene.org/files/docs/albaugh\\_ryan\\_paper.pdf](http://nazarene.org/files/docs/albaugh_ryan_paper.pdf)> (Accessed 12 January 2015).
- Australian Government (n. d.) Evidence law in Australia. *National Archives of Australia*. <<http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/strategic-information/standards/records-in-evidence/evidence-law-australia.aspx>> (Accessed 20 February 2015).
- Barker Michelle 2008. The role of religious capital in relating religion and economic development. *James Cook University, Research Online*. <[http://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/24361/1/Religious\\_Capital\\_article.pdf](http://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/24361/1/Religious_Capital_article.pdf)> (Accessed 12 January 2015).
- Bejczy István 1996. Overcoming the Middle Ages: Historical Reasoning in Erasmus’ Antibarbarian Writings. *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook*, 16: 34 – 53.
- Bejczy, István (2003) ‘Historia praestat omnibus disciplinis’: Juan Luis Vives on History and Historical Study. *Renaissance Studies*, 17: 69-83.
- Candland Christopher 2000. Faith as Social Capital: Religion and Community Development in Southern Asia. *Policy Sciences*, 33: 355-374.
- Comte Auguste 1896. *The Positive Philosophy. 3 Volumes*. Translated and Condensed by Harriet Martineau. London, George Bell & Sons. <<http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/comte>> (Accessed 17 May 2007).
- de Raadt JDR 2013. *Intelligent Christianity for an Age of Folly*. Melbourne, Melbourne Centre for Community Development. <<http://www.melbourneccd.com/download-books.html>> (Accessed 26 February 2015).
- de Raadt JDR and de Raadt Veronica D. 2014. *From Multi-Modal Systems Thinking to Community Development*, Melbourne, Melbourne Centre for Community Development. <<http://www.melbourneccd.com/download-books.html>> (Accessed 26 February 2015).
- Devés-Valdés Eduardo 2010. Pensamiento Socialcristiano y Circulación de las Ideas: Redes a través de las cuales se Importaron y se Exportaron Ideas durante los Largos 1960s en Chile. *História: Questões & Debates*, 53: 121-149. <<http://ojs.c3sl.ufpr.br/ojs/index.php/historia/article/viewFile/24119/16150>> (Accessed 26 February 2015).
- Díaz-Salazar Rafael 1994. Un Nuevo Ciclo para la Izquierda. <<http://www.fespinal.com/espinal/lilib/es59.rtf>> (Accessed 27 December 2008).
- Díaz-Salazar Rafael 1998. La Izquierda y el Cristianismo. Madrid, Taurus.
- Emmer Piet C. 2001. The Dutch Atlantic, 1600–1800: Expansion Without Empire. *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas – Anuario de Historia de America Latina*, 38: 35-48. <<http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/jbla.2001.38.issue-1/jbla.2001.38.1.31/jbla.2001.38.1.31.xml>> (Accessed 25 February 2015).
- Erasmus Desiderius 1978. *The Antibarbarians*. Translated by Margaret Mann Phillips. *Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings I*. University of Toronto.
- Fazlagic Amir 2005. Measuring the intellectual capital of a university. *Conference on Trends in the management of human resources in higher education*, OECD, Paris. <<http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/35322785.pdf>> (Accessed 30 December 2014).
- Ferhat Ismail 2011. Un chemin de Damas? Le Parti socialiste et les chrétiens dans les années 1970. *Chrétiens et Sociétés XVIe-XXIe siècles*, 18: 165-184. <<http://chretienssocietes.revues.org/2984>> (Accessed 26 February 2015).
- Friedman Milton 2002. *Capitalism and Freedom*. University of Chicago.
- Friedman Milton and Friedman, Rose 1980. *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement*. New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. <

- rs.org.br/site/biblioteca/docs/Friedman\_Milton\_Rose\_-\_Free\_To\_Choose\_-\_A\_Personal\_Statement.pdf> (Accessed 25 February 2015).
- Giraudeau Martin 2010. Performing physiocracy: Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours and the limits of political engineering. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 3 (2). pp. 225-242. <<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/36819/>> (Accessed 25 February 2015).
- Harris Laird R, Archer, Gleason L, Waltke, Bruce K. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 Volumes*. <[http://www.theword.net/index.php?downloads.modules&group\\_id=5&o=title&l=english](http://www.theword.net/index.php?downloads.modules&group_id=5&o=title&l=english)> (Accessed 04 March 2013).
- Hayek F. A. 2006. *The Road to Serfdom*. London, Routledge.
- Holt Cheryl L, Schulz Emily, Williams Beverly, Clark Eddie M, Wang Min Qi, Southward Penny L. 2012. Assessment of Religious and Spiritual Capital in African American Communities. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 51: 1061-1074.
- Israel Jonathan 1995. *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477- 1806*. Oxford, Clarendon.
- Israel Jonathan Irvine, Schwartz Stuart B. (eds.) 2007. *The Expansion of Tolerance: Religion in Dutch Brazil (1624-1654)*. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press.
- Kant Immanuel 2007. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by J. M. D. Meiklejohn. Project Gutenberg. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/4280>> (Accessed 12 July 2008).
- Keeley Brain 2007. *Human Capital: How what you know shapes your life*. OECD. <[http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/human-capital\\_9789264029095-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/human-capital_9789264029095-en)> (Accessed 12 January 2015).
- Kroksmark Tomas 1996. *Didaskalos: Undervisningsmetodik vid vår Tideräkningens Början med Särskild Inriktning mot Jesu Undervisningsmetodik*. Göteborg, Sweden, Daidalos.
- Kuyper Abraham (1950) *Christianity and the Class Struggle*. Translated by Dirk Jellema. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Piet Hein. <[http://www.reformationalpublishingproject.com/pdf\\_books/Scanned\\_Books\\_PDF/ChristianityandtheClassStruggle.pdf](http://www.reformationalpublishingproject.com/pdf_books/Scanned_Books_PDF/ChristianityandtheClassStruggle.pdf)> (Accessed 12 February).
- Melanchthon Philipp 1999. *Orations on Philosophy and Education*. (Sachiko Kusakawa, ed.) Cambridge, Cambridge UP.
- Ortega y Gasset José 1924. *Kant - Hegel - Scheler*. <<http://www.librodot.com>> (Accessed 30 May 2008).
- Ortega y Gasset José 2004. *Historia como Sistema: Sobre la razón histórica como nueva revelación*. <[http://www.laeditorialvirtual.com.ar/Pages/Ortega\\_y\\_Gasset/Ortega\\_HistoriaComoSistema.htm](http://www.laeditorialvirtual.com.ar/Pages/Ortega_y_Gasset/Ortega_HistoriaComoSistema.htm)> (Accessed 14 January 2012).
- Pope Francis 2013. *Evangelii Gaudium* (English version). <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium\\_en.pdf](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf)>
- Prien Hans-Jürgen 2012. *Christianity in Latin America: Revised and Expanded Edition*. Leiden, The Netherlands, Brill.
- Quesnay François 1766. *Analyse de la Formule Arithmétique du Tableau Économique de la Distribution des Dépenses Annuelles d'une Nation Agricole*. MacMasters University, Department of Economics. <<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/quesnay/tabeco.htm>> (Accessed 21 March 2015).
- Sánchez M Paloma, Elena Susana, Castrillo Rocío. 2009. Intellectual Capital Dynamics in Universities: A reporting model. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 10: 307-324.
- von Bertalanffy Ludwig 1971. *General Systems Theory*. London, Penguin.