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ETHICS, TRADITION AND RELIGION

The aim of this chapter is to suggest a general approach to the relationship between ethics and religion, between moral principles and religious statements. For this, I will base my explanation on Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of "tradition"¹.

The Individual, Ethics and Community

In order to understand rightly the relation between ethics and tradition (and religion), we have firstly to think about the relation between ethics and community.

The MacIntyrean concept of "community" comes from the Greek "polis"². In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, he defines it as follows: "The 'polis' is defined functionally as that form of human association whose peculiar 'telos' is the realization of good as such, a form of association therefore inclusive of all forms of association whose 'telos' is the realization of this or that particular good"³. Therefore, MacIntyre defines "community" from its proper "function", which is the realization of good as such (its "telos").

¹ The bibliography used in this work is that published until 2005 (and attention is paid especially to A. MacIntyre's works published since 1981, when he published his famous book *After Virtue*). The complete information of the bibliographic references is indicated only the first time that the reference is cited. I thank Dr MacIntyre for his comments and conversations during a stay at Notre Dame University in 2004.

² A. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, London–Notre Dame (Indiana) 1988, p. 122–123; idem, *Politica, filosofia e bene comune*, "Studi Perugini", Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 9–29. English version: *Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good*, [in:] *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. K. Knight, Cambridge 1988, p. 235–252. In this paper, I indicate the pages of the English translation but indicate the year of the original version.

³ A. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 122–123.

Independently of this definition, the most important idea is that a human's development is possible only in a communitarian relationship, as communitarianism has emphasized. According to MacIntyre, the individual's development is a process of physical and intellectual development in which the individual develops faculties as a human being and also as an individual, something impossible without the help of others. In order to achieve maturity, the individual needs the care of many people (relatives, friends, etc.). Corporal and intellectual maturity would be impossible without this care. The individual starts learning about good, practices, virtues, etc. in that context. This is why MacIntyre says that the individual's morality is primarily a particular/communitarian moral⁴.

Besides this, once the individual has achieved corporal and moral maturity, there is always danger of damaging it. In the corporal field, the individual's integrity can be hurt at any time, even to the extent that he loses his natural independency. The same happens in the intellectual/moral field: the individual can always make mistakes that damage his development. This fact is called by MacIntyre "vulnerability": the individual always lives in a "vulnerability condition". That is why "disability" is an essential feature of the human being. Consequently, a human is always a "dependent" being. Vulnerability and dependency are, therefore, essential features of human existence⁵.

Apart from this, another important point about the relation between the individual and community is the concept of "practice". For MacIntyre, practices are the natural field or place where individuals act and live. In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre defines a practice as "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended". Sciences, architecture, and farming are examples of practices⁶.

According to MacIntyre, the elements of a practice are three: goods, models of excellence (or authorities) and rules⁷. Regarding goods, the author distinguishes between two kinds: "external goods" and "internal goods". Internal ones are those goods referred to the proper excellence of a concrete practice. The best building and the best way to design it are internal goods to architecture. Moreover, the exter-

⁴ Idem, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, London–Notre Dame (Indiana) 1981, p. 265–267; 2nd edition (revised and with a new epilogue titled: *The Relationship of Philosophy to History. Postscript to the Second Edition of "After Virtue"*). In this paper, we indicate the pages of the second edition (1984) but the year of the first one.

⁵ A. MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*, London–Chicago–La Salle (Illinois) 1999, p. 2–3, 72–73, 84–85, 91–92. It is worth paying attention to the title of this book: "Dependent" Rational Animals.

⁶ Idem, *After Virtue*, p. 187–188, 200–201.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 189–190.

nal ones are those goods not related directly to the proper excellence of a practice. This kind of goods can be achieved through many kinds of practices and can be independent of the achievement of the internal goods to the practice. These goods are money, power, prestige and so on. Therefore, internal goods are the proper or essential “telos” of a practice⁸.

Rules are necessary elements of a practice because they are the guidelines or the norms to be followed by the individual if he wants to achieve the internal goods to the practices⁹. Some rules have to be observed because they take the individual to excellence by practice. It is necessary for us, for instance, to train weekly if we want to make a good football team. Regarding models or authorities, MacIntyre thinks that they are necessary because the individual needs to know the rules and the goods of the practices, and he also has to learn to apply the rules and to realize the internal good. The individuals need some people to learn and to practice these elements: they are the models or authorities¹⁰.

Social and individual life are structured by practices, which take place in some institutions and in a specific history or tradition. Every practice is part of a history and a tradition. An individual life is composed of many practices: someone can act as a father, as a lawyer, as a member of different associations, and so on.

We have said that every practice has its own rules. The individual has to assume them and to follow them if he wants to achieve the internal good to the practice. But all the practices are part of a whole unity: the individual's life. Practices can be judged and understood only from this unity. Just as there are rules for practices, there are also rules for human development (for human life as a whole). These rules are the rules of natural law¹¹. The individual has to observe them in order to achieve his development as a human being¹². Just as life (as a whole) is the reference from which to judge practices, natural law is the reference from which to judge practices' rules.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 184–194; *Idem*, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, The Gifford lectures delivered in 1988 at the University of Edinburgh, Notre Dame (Indiana)–London 1990, p. 64–65.

⁹ *Idem*, *After Virtue*, p. 194–195; *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 31–32.

¹⁰ *Idem*, *After Virtue*, p. 194–195.

¹¹ Natural law is a topic with which MacIntyre has dealt mainly through papers or articles.

¹² *Idem*, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, p. 139; *Plain Persons and Moral Philosophy: Rules, Virtues and Goods*, (1991 Aquinas Lecture at Univ. Dallas), “American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly” 1992, Vol. 66, No. 1, p. 3–20. Reprinted in: *The MacIntyre Reader*, p. 136–152. This reimpression is used in this paper but the year of the first edition is indicated (in this reimpression there are some small changes); *A. MacIntyre, How Can We Learn What “Veritatis Splendor” Has To Teach?*, “The Thomist” 1994, Vol. 58, p. 171–195; *idem*, *Wahre Selbsterkenntnis durch Verstehen unserer selbst aus der Perspektive anderer* (interview with Dmitri Nikulin), “Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie” 1996, Vol. 44, No. 4, p. 671–683 (Russian version: “Voprosy Filosofii” 1996, No. 1, p. 91–100); *Dependent Rational Animals*, p. ix–x; *The Privatization of Good. An Inaugural Lecture*, “The Review of Politics” 1990, Vol. 52, No. 3, p. 344–361. Inaugural lecture for MacMahon-Hank Chair of Univ. Notre Dame. Reprinted in: *The Liberalism–Communitarianism Debate: Liberty and Community Values*, ed. C. F. Delaney, Lanham 1994, p. 1–17. German translation: *Die Privatisierung des Guten*, [in:] *Pathologien des Sozialen: Die Aufgaben der Sozialphilosophie*, ed. A. Honneth, Frankfurt 1994, p. 163–183.

For MacIntyre, good is the sense of rules: without the idea of good to be achieved, rules do not make sense¹³.

MacIntyre tells us that, for Aquinas¹⁴, an essential feature of any precept which is a law is that it is a rule of reason directed to the common good. MacIntyre derives from this idea that, in order to define the good – and the goods – and the rules, the very inclinations of human nature are not enough. Perhaps it is better to start with actions, debates and discussions about goods and rules which happen in practices when people are concerned about any common good¹⁵. Reflection and enquiry come after this fact, the ‘fact of the practice’, and then goods and rules necessary for everybody are found by people involved in these practices¹⁶. In fact, MacIntyre thinks that this argument was proposed implicitly by Aquinas, since plain people do not at first derive natural law from metaphysical premises¹⁷. If human nature is known through its operations and through the actions realized by an individual, the practices are particularly important because they are the field or the context of those actions¹⁸. That is why the author concludes: “the recognition of natural law is a matter of how such practices are structured”¹⁹.

¹³ A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 194–195; *The Privatization of Good. An Inaugural Lecture*, p. 344; *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, p. 139; *Plain Persons and Moral Philosophy: Rules, Virtues and Goods*, p. 143; *Dependent Rational Animals*, p. ix–x.

¹⁴ *Summa theologica* I-II, q. 90, a. 1–2, transl. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols., New York 1947. Spanish translation used: *Suma de teología*, Madrid 2001.

¹⁵ A. MacIntyre, *Natural Law Reconsidered* (review of *Aquinas's Theory of Natural Law: An Analytic Reconstruction*, by A. J. Lisska), “International Philosophical Quarterly” 1997, Vol. 37, No. 1, issue 145 (March), p. 95–99.

¹⁶ *Idem*, *Después de “Tras la virtud”* (interview with R. Yepes), “Atlántida” 1990, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 87–95; *Theories of Natural Law in the Culture of Advanced Modernity*, [in:] *Common Truths: New Perspectives on Natural Law*, ed. E. B. McLean, Wilmington 2000, p. 91–115. MacIntyre mentions the role of the “sinderesis” (in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, p. 194), but he does not analyze it.

¹⁷ *Idem*, *Natural Law Reconsidered*, p. 98.

¹⁸ *Idem*, *The “Theses on Feuerbach”: A Road Not Taken*, [in:] *Artifacts, Representations and Social Practice*, ed. C. C. Gould, R. S. Cohen, Dordrecht 1994, p. 277–290. Reprinted in: *The MacIntyre Reader*, p. 223–234. I indicate the page of this reimpression but the year of the first edition. MacIntyre, *Natural Law As Subversive: The Case of Aquinas*, “Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies” 1996, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 61–83; *Theories of Natural Law in the Culture of Advanced Modernity*, p. 94–95, 109–110.

¹⁹ *Idem*, *Natural Law As Subversive: The Case of Aquinas*, p. 80–81. Although MacIntyre does not talk about natural law in his paper published in 1978 – and published again in 1985 – *The Right to Die Garrulously*, he pays attention to the fact that rules exist in specific practices and communities (A. MacIntyre, *The Right to Die Garrulously*, [in:] *Death and Decision*, ed. E. McMullin, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Selected Symposium 18, p. 75–84. Reprinted in: *Moral Dilemmas: Readings in Ethics and Social Philosophy*, ed. R. L. Purtil, Belmont 1985). As an example of this argument, we can look at what MacIntyre calls “ethics of enquiry”, which is involved in the practice of moral and political debate. The author defines it as “an additional authority that is independent of moral standpoint” (*idem*, *Toleration and the goods of conflict*, [in:] *The Politics of Toleration*, ed. S. Mendus, Edinburgh, p. 6–7. I thank the author for a copy of this paper and also his comments on it. Reprinted in: *The Politics of Toleration in Modern Life*, ed. S. Mendus, Durham 2000, p. 133–155). And it is a part of natural law (*idem*, *How Can We Learn What “Veritatis Splendor” Has To Teach?*, p. 171–195). The liberty to express an opinion, the respect for people participating in the debate and so on: all of them are principles or virtues which form that “ethics of enquiry”. MacIntyre says that a true dialogue, a proper human dialogue, implies the acceptance of the ethics of enquiry. Perhaps someone does not define or state these rules explicitly, but he is implicitly accepting them when he joins a public debate on moral or political issues (*idem*, *Toleration and the goods of conflict*, p. 7).

We can thus understand the importance of the concept of “community” in MacIntyre’s thought. According to him, community is the natural context of human development. Without a community, the individual cannot achieve his whole development as a human being. According to what has been said so far, we can see that the individual depends on his community in many different fields or points: in his physical and intellectual development, in the practices where he acts and lives and, finally, in knowing and stating the rules related to his practices and his development.

Nevertheless, community cannot be understood on its own. According to MacIntyre, community (with its practices and concepts) can be understood only in the light of a particular history. MacIntyre deals with this fact through his concept of “tradition”.

Community, Tradition and Religion

According to MacIntyre, human reason cannot develop without a communitarian context. An individual can develop his rational abilities (language, arguments, etc.) only in particular relationships with others. He says in *Dependent Rational Animals* that “rational enquiry is essentially social”²⁰. And, therefore, “knowledge is possessed only in and through participation in a history of dialectical encounters”²¹. Human reason is both a “communitarian” and a “historical” reason.

MacIntyre expresses this idea through his famous concept of “tradition”. “We are, whether we acknowledge it or not, what the past has made us...”²² “We, whoever we are, can only begin enquiry from the vantage point afforded by our relationship to some specific social and intellectual past through which we have affiliated ourselves to some particular tradition of enquiry, extending the history of that enquiry into the present: as Aristotelian, as Augustinian, as Thomist, as Humean, as post-Enlightenment liberal, or as something else”²³.

In his book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, MacIntyre defines “tradition” with the following words:

an argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition [...], and those internal²⁴.

The elements of a tradition are, therefore, three: an argument through time, some fundamental agreements, and conflicts (external and internal conflicts).

²⁰ Idem, *Dependent Rational Animals*, p. 156.

²¹ Idem, *Three Rival Versions*, p. 201–202.

²² Idem, *After Virtue*, p. 129–130.

²³ Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 401–402.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 12–13.

For MacIntyre, tradition is the global context from which a community's concepts and practices can be understood. Community is a natural field of ethics, but ethics can be understood only as part of a tradition. A tradition explains the theoretical and practical concepts of a community. The individual learns about the good and carries out the realization of that good in a communitarian debate, which includes both theoretical and practical elements that can be understood only within a specific tradition²⁵. In order to achieve his development, the individual depends on a community, and, at the same time, depends on a tradition, which is “embodied” in his community.

According to MacIntyre, that fact implies clearly that theoretical and practical principles of human rationality are “principles” only within/for a specific tradition: they make sense only in this context²⁶. “The evidentness of those principles is always relative to the conceptual scheme which that particular theory embodies and by its success or failure vindicates or fails to vindicate”²⁷. In this sense, MacIntyrean “tradition” would be similar to Kuhn's “scientific paradigm”²⁸. At the same time, MacIntyre thinks that human rationality is a virtues-informed rationality. And individual virtues are developed in practices, which take place in a tradition. This is why MacIntyre says that every ethics is an ethics of a particular tradition²⁹: “Morality which is no particular society's morality is to be found nowhere”³⁰.

Although “tradition” can have a narrow meaning, related only to a specific field (science, arts, etc.), I think that it offers rather a “worldview”, that is to say, a global view of the human being and the world³¹. This view includes religious, scientific, practical, etc. elements. Because of that “global” character, some critics think that MacIntyre does not define accurately what a “tradition” is, but rather he only gives some examples related to different fields³². But moreover, some critics

²⁵ Idem, *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science*, “The Monist” 1977, Vol. 60, p. 453–472. Reprinted in: (1) *Paradigms and Revolutions: Appraisals and Applications of Thomas Kuhn's Philosophy of Science*, ed. G. Gutting, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1980, p. 54–74; (2) *Knowledge and Postmodernism in Historical Perspective*, ed. J. Appleby et al., New York–London 1996, p. 357–367; *After Virtue*, p. 219–222; *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, p. 201–202.

²⁶ Idem, *Are there any natural rights?*, Charles F. Adams lecture, delivered Feb. 28 in Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, President and Trustees – Bowdoin College, Brunswick 1983, p. 15; idem, *First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues*, Milwaukee 1990, p. 30. 2nd reimpr.: 1995. Reprinted in: *The MacIntyre Reader*, p. 171–201. Spanish transl.: *Primeros principios, fines últimos y cuestiones filosóficas contemporáneas*, transl. A. Bayer, Madrid 1993; *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 252–253.

²⁷ Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 252–253; *Are there any natural rights?*, p. 15.

²⁸ J. De La Torre, Fco., *El modelo de diálogo intercultural de A. MacIntyre*, Madrid 2001, p. 115; R. Stern, *MacIntyre and Historicism*, [in:] *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. J. Horton, S. Mendus, Cambridge 1994; A. Llano, *Presentación to Tres versiones rivales de la ética*, 1992, Spanish version of *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, p. 15.

²⁹ A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 221–222.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 265–267.

³¹ “Worldview” would seem to be the best translation into English of the German concept “Weltanschauung” (“cosmovisión” in Spanish).

³² J. Annas, *MacIntyre on Traditions* (Review of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*), “Philosophy and Public Affairs” 1989, Vol. 18, No. 4, p. 388–404; J. Porter, *Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair Mac-*

think that, although he defines what a tradition is, he is not accurate in describing some specific traditions³³. I agree, to some extent, with these authors, although, on the contrary, I think – like Mauri³⁴ – that, through MacIntyre’s examples and explanations (and the definition quoted above), we can reach (at least) a general view of what he means by “tradition”.

MacIntyre does not use that concept (“worldview”) but he uses the expression “a view on the human being and the world”. Because of this global character, M. Murphy thinks – and I agree with him – that the concept of ‘tradition’ is related to the concept of “ideology”, one analyzed by MacIntyre in *Against the Self-Images of the Age* in 1971³⁵. In this way, “tradition” would come from the concept of “ideology”, tradition (as a concept) would be the heritage of ideology. In this book, he described an “ideology” with the following features.

1) It offers some general features of nature and society, and these features do not show only empirical and changeable characteristics of reality.

2) It provides the human being not only with theoretical concepts but also with practical concepts. It provides the human being with practical (moral) guidelines. In this sense, an ideology connects theory to practice.

3) It is followed by individuals in such a way that it defines their social and personal life³⁶.

In my opinion, this relation between ideology and tradition can help us to understand the global character of a tradition in explaining human life. In fact, because of this global extent of the concept of “tradition”, some authors have said that this concept has been inspired by the concept of “religion” in MacIntyre’s thought. In order to define his concept of “tradition”, MacIntyre would have taken as a referential point the concept of “religion”. The formal features of a tradition would be very similar to the formal features of a religion³⁷. This is a reasonable statement if we take into account the fact that religion and God have been issues about

Intyre, [in:] *Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. M. Murphy, New York 2003, p. 38–69; P. De Greiff, *MacIntyre: narrativa y tradición*, “Sistema” 1989, Vol. 92 (M), p. 99–116.

³³ J. De La Torre, *El modelo de diálogo intercultural de A. MacIntyre*, p. 25; S. Mulhall, *Liberalism, Morality and Rationality: MacIntyre, Rawls and Cavell*, [in:] *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 205–224; C. Thiebaut, *Los límites de la comunidad*, Madrid 1992, p. 111; M. Herrera, *Racionalidad y justicia: en torno a la obra de MacIntyre*, “Sistema” 1989, Vol. 91 (M), p. 45–56; J. Annas, *MacIntyre on Traditions*, p. 391–392; B. W. Ballard, *Understanding MacIntyre*, Lanham 2000, p. 59; A. Bielsa, *Crítica a MacIntyre: una lectura kantiana*, [in:] *Crisis de valores. Modernidad y tradición (Un profundo estudio de la obra de A. MacIntyre)*, ed. M. Mauri, B. Román et al., Barcelona 1997, p. 83–114; P. Kelly, *MacIntyre’s Critique of Utilitarianism*, [in:] *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 127–145; T. H. Irwin, *Tradition and Reason in the History of Ethics*, “Social Philosophy and Policy” 1989, Vol. 7, issue 1, p. 45–68.

³⁴ M. Mauri, *Autoridad y tradición*, [in:] *Crisis de valores. Modernidad y tradición (Un profundo estudio de la obra de A. MacIntyre)*, p. 7–21.

³⁵ M. Murphy, *Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 8.

³⁶ A. MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, London 1971, p. 5–7.

³⁷ T. Nagel, *Agreement in Principle (Review of Whose Justice? Which Rationality?)*, “Times Literary Supplement” 1988, July 8–14, p. 747–748. Reprinted as: *MacIntyre versus the Enlightenment*, in his book, *Other Minds: Critical Essays: 1969–94*, Oxford 1995, p. 203–209. C. Thiebaut, *Los límites de la comunidad*, p. 121.

which MacIntyre has sometimes thought during his intellectual evolution³⁸. In fact, MacIntyre sometimes uses the word “conversion” to express how an individual can take or assimilate the truth existing in other traditions, which is not (or not always) a logical way³⁹.

There are, of course, some authors who think that the concept of “tradition” has rather a narrow meaning. Mulhall and Swift say that there can be moral or religious traditions (like Catholicism or humanism), political traditions (like Marxism), economic traditions, aesthetic traditions (like literary or pictorial tendencies), geographic traditions (which would depend on a specific country or culture) and so on⁴⁰. Moreover, there are some authors who think that the MacIntyrean concept of ‘tradition’ has a more general or wide meaning, so that it would have, at the same time, a narrow meaning and a wide meaning: there would be religious traditions (a Catholic tradition, a Protestant tradition, a Buddhist tradition, etc.), national traditions (like the Spanish tradition, or the English tradition), intellectual traditions (Aristotelism, rationalism, etc.), scientific traditions (depending on a specific field: history, biology, etc.), political traditions and aesthetic traditions⁴¹.

J. Porter says that the best way to understand the concept of “tradition” is to apply it primarily to science, so that it would mean different scientific theories or tendencies⁴². This view can be reasonable if we take into account the fact that MacIntyre sometimes talks about different *traditions*. For instance, in his famous paper “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science”, he talks about “*three kinds of tradition – religious, political, intellectual...*”⁴³. But I think that, in that paper, these kinds are rather examples of the concept of “tradition”. And it is clear that MacIntyre uses this concept in a more global and wide meaning in his later works (like *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* or *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*).

It would seem, therefore, that, when we talk about different kinds of traditions in a separate way, we tend to separate things that are united in reality, in the history and in the ordinary life of any community or society. There are, of course, many different theoretical and practical elements that define the values and practices of any community, and they can be called “traditions”, but only in a secondary way.

³⁸ For instance, MacIntyre dealt with the relation between Christianity and some political or philosophical tendencies in some books: *Marxism: An Interpretation* (1953, book revised in 1968 under the title *Marxism and Christianity*, and published again in 1995), *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (1955), *Metaphysical Beliefs: Three Essays* (1957), *Difficulties in Christian Belief* (1959), *Faith and the Philosophers* (1964, where he writes *Is Understanding Religion Compatible With Believing?* and *Freudian and Christian Dogmas as Equally Unverifiable*), *Secularization and Moral Change* (1967) or *The Religious Significance of Atheism* (1969).

³⁹ A. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 356, 396–397.

⁴⁰ S. Mulhall, A. Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, Oxford 1992, p. 90. Spanish transl.: *El individuo frente a la comunidad (El debate entre liberales y comunitaristas)*, transl. E. López, Madrid 1996.

⁴¹ J. De La Torre, *El modelo de diálogo intercultural de A. MacIntyre*, p. 25.

⁴² J. Porter, *Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 53–56.

⁴³ A. MacIntyre, *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 461.

And what is the role of religion in a tradition, in a “worldview”? In order to answer this question, we have firstly to realize that, although there are many different theoretical and practical elements that define the values and practices of any community and tradition, very important is the fact that these elements are closely related to each other within a common framework, and, at the same time, they have, as a whole, an internal hierarchical order. And religion would seem to play an important role in shaping this framework and also in this hierarchical relationship.

In this sense, I think that the features of the concept of “ideology” (described above) could be applied, to some extent, to those of “religion” (as a concept). Of course, “religion” cannot be identified with “ideology”, at least in its political and usual sense. But it is clear that religion offers (or tries to offer) a global framework within which human existence can be explained in both its theoretical and its practical aspects (and, at the same time, those aspects can have an influence on religion).

We can see this in MacIntyre’s works. For instance, when he analyzes different traditions (both Western and non-Western traditions) and when he says, in his famous book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (and also in other works), that Thomism (a tradition depending on a religious frame) is the most coherent and strongest tradition⁴⁴. In the same book, he says that he is an “Augustinian Christian”⁴⁵. And, talking about the hierarchical relation between virtues, MacIntyre states that Charity (supernatural love) is the most important one, because it is the “form” of virtues, their “fulfilment”⁴⁶. But Charity, which is closely related to Faith and Hope, can be realized and performed by the individual only with the help of God’s grace⁴⁷.

Therefore, we can conclude that the most coherent meaning of “tradition” is “worldview”. And a worldview, because of its global character, does not have a meaning related only to one part of reality: it is a whole which unifies many kinds of elements, so that, at the same time, it is formed by them (scientific and ethical theories, practices, religion, etc.). But it is formed by them in such a way that religion plays an essential role in giving them a global framework and also in ordering them in hierarchical internal relationships.

⁴⁴ Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 403; *First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues*, p. 47–48, 55–56; *A Partial Response to My Critics*, [in:] *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 283–304.

⁴⁵ Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 10–11.

⁴⁶ Idem, *Wahre Selbsterkenntnis durch Verstehen unserer selbst aus der Perspektive anderer* (interview with Dmitri Nikulin), p. 676–677.

⁴⁷ Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 205; *Three Rival Versions*, p. 140; *Wahre Selbsterkenntnis durch Verstehen unserer selbst aus der Perspektive anderer* (interview with Dmitri Nikulin), p. 676–677.