

THE CLAIM OF TRUTH AND THE CLAIM OF FREEDOM IN RELIGION

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ABSTRACT

Banyak konflik terjadi atas nama kebenaran dan kebebasan. Dan konflik menjadi lebih serius seringkali karena dikaitkan dengan kebenaran ilahi. Artikel ini hendak menunjukkan bahwa bukanlah kerinduan atas kebebasan, bukan pula keyakinan terhadap Tuhan, melainkan ilusi memiliki kebenaran, penyamaan sewenang-wenang kebebasan dan kebenaran, serta pemisahan antara kebenaran dari kehidupanlah penyebab utama konflik. Berdasarkan inspirasi Heidegger, artikel ini melihat kebenaran dan kebebasan dalam kaitan dengan kehidupan. Benar berarti setia dan beriman kepada kehidupan yang dinamis. Bebas berarti bebas dari daya-daya yang menghancurkan kehidupan, demi lebih membela tujuan-tujuan hidup yang lebih mendalam.

Key Words:

•*Paradox of freedom and truth* •*Truth in life* •*Truth as life*
•*Illusion* •*Formal logic* •*Dynamic force* •*Self-revelation* •*Self-realization*

The “Third World” and socialist countries have been more often than not accused by the West of being the abusers of human rights. One of their “crimes” is, perhaps the most controversial: offense against religious freedom. As expected, such condemnation is completely rejected by them, and even by a great deal of Western thinkers. However, such complaint falls into deaf ears. Worse, it is ignored, paradoxically, even by the accuser as well as by the accused. In fact, there is almost no difference among the powerful rulers, be they in the “first” or in the “third” world. They are those who set standard for “truth” and “justice,” and who claim the rights for themselves, at least in their own countries. To the ruling class, freedom serves rather as a pretext, but not as their true concern. The remark of Mr. Jiang Dze-ming, the former President of China, echoed by the rulers of many countries, that China has different conception of human rights, and that freedom is fully respected here, actually follows the same logic of power (the reverse side of Bacon's logic of knowledge): who has power, has the rights to decide! The ruled have no other choice but to dutifully obey the ruler's criteria of human rights imposed on the them against their will, simply because power is not in their hands.

The rulers know so well that knowledge and power are twin brothers, and that justice and human rights are at their wimp. Sadly enough, truth and rights do not stand at the side of the weak. Justice for the poor and the oppressed is only a beautiful slogan (or an opium in Marx's remark of religion) consoling them. Blaise Pascal's sarcastic remark that “justice is for everyone, the rich gets richer and the poor gets poorer” may sound too pessimistic, but true to some extent. This “naked truth” about power is equally applied to all men, regardless of races and geographical origin. So, the answer is quite simple: if power determines truth, then it is the business of acquiring power which is more essential. Truth serves rather as a means and not the end.

Power, Truth and Freedom

Bacon's attempt to elevate knowledge (truth) to the same rank of power has been distorted. The disgracing knowledge is taken, not as noble ideal but as tool against humanity. Similarly, the Enlightenment's spirit has been deformed: neither the force of judgment (Kant) nor the idea of freedom but power (the power of the people in the case of the French revolution) that makes history. This means the rulers have successfully transformed “the force of knowledge” into the most effective weapon to dismiss the rights of the ruled, to suppress freedom of other people and to impose the “Western” criteria of truth and “moral” standards on the latter. Gun-boat policy, artillery power, modern equipped army (results of the knowledge-as-power belief) as well as (Western) truth and morals are now taken to consolidate and expand the power of the ruling class.

Rousseau, surely, is neither the first nor the last thinker unmasking the hypocrisy of the rulers. Socrates might have had the right to claim the thinkers *per excellence* for himself with his critique of the Sophists and his total devotion to truth. One may say with some confidence that both Socrates and Rousseau (and not Galileo or Descartes) have set a good example for intellectuals with their relentless critique and non-compromising attitude. As we see, true philosophers, social activists, and foremost, theologians have often raised their critical voice against the rampant abuse of human rights of the rulers. They mistrust the truth proclaimed by the rulers. They challenge knowledge (ideology) that claims to be the final. In their view, those who pretend to possess absolute truth (total knowledge) are the worst offenders of human rights and freedom. Racism, imperialism capitalism, colonialism, to name just the most recent ideologies and practices, are solidified by the belief in a certain truth: truth about the superiority of a certain race (Arian race in the case of Nazism, Han race in the case of the feudal China), of certain nation (British empire, the France of Napoleon), of a certain class (aristocracy in the past and the high class today). So in the eyes of Western intellectuals, the claimed truth is nothing but a fabricated idea, used as a justification for the atrocities the rulers commit.

From this consideration, the West condemnation of the “Third World” and the angry objection of the latter display rather a bitter fight to power, and not for truth, justice and freedom. That is not the kind of battle between Cain and Abel, and much less between the bad and the good. That is a war of the ones fouled by uncontrolled lust for power. So, the accusers look as embarrassed as the accused. The self-pretended prosecutor turns to

be the most outrageous violator. Are they blatant liars? Or are they of good will and sincerity? No doubt, they are just belonging to the same class with the same insatiable ambition. And they both claim truth for themselves.

In such aspect, one could understand similar controversies in our present world. The burning and dreadful conflict in the Middle East, just as the tension between the North and the South, cannot be understood without a thorough investigation of the relation of power and truth. Truth is claimed not because of truth *in se*, but because of the conviction of the role of truth in acquiring, consolidating and preserving power. Absolute truth warrants a lasting power. From such dogma, we are sticking to our belief, regarding it as a “sacred mission” defending our religion or ideology. Freedom is therefore understood as the right to believe in our own truth, and to liberate us from “un-truth”. Freedom even means the “duty” to freely convince others of our truth (missionary works). In a loose description, freedom expresses our “free” will to take whatever measure to achieve our goal, including violence and dictatorship. In this context, we can understand the reason of why in the name of freedom “the fighters of freedom” have resorted to the anti-freedom and anti-human rights means. Suppression, murder, terror, slavery, intimidation, etc., are “justified” by “belief” and “truth”. Freedom, therefore, means emancipation from the yoke of others, but not from our own yoke. We understand now the paradox of freedom and truth: freedom contains in itself the element of un-freedom and “our” truth contains in itself the anti-truth element.

This paradox is vividly in human acts. On the pretext of defending freedom (of expression), a great deal of Western media have severely wounded religious feeling and belief (not only of the Islamic world). One the name of the truth, the rulers forcefully condemn intellectuals to silence. They deny and even testify against truth. So, it is not the question of whether the kind of freedom of expression (a human right) is compatible (or incompatible) to religious life (also a human right), but the question of truth-claim and freedom-claim, which must be carefully dealt with.

I am trying to approach the problem from an indirect (or oblique) perspective. I will not follow the traditional approach by beginning with a definition of truth or freedom but with a critique of human illusion of being the inheritor of God's truth and God's nature (freedom). I will argue that, it is neither our yearning for freedom nor our belief in God but rather, our illusion of truth-passion, and our arbitrary identification of truth with freedom as well as our artificial separation of truth and freedom from life, are the causes of conflict. This means truth and freedom *in se* are not the cause of conflict. Conflict is rooted in our lust for power, and expressed in

our claim of truth-inheritor and freedom-possession.

To prove the tenability of this view, I will examine the process of twisting from truth in life to truth as life. Such radical twist has been made possible thanks to philosophers like Plato and Neo-Platonians. They conceived of *freedom in terms of truth*. As *free* men, they are firmly convinced of their “own” truth. The claim of truth-possession, as identified with religion, yields the same result. The original understanding of freedom as a part of human nature that makes man as man has been distorted into a pure theory of freedom (in philosophy) as an *unconditioned free state*. That means freedom as the emancipation from the state of slavery. And they regarded the true man as a free man. A slave is not a man, and slavery means un-freedom. Such a concept of freedom does not deny, intrinsically, the concepts of finitude and dependency. Man is limited by death, and by his dependency on others. But he feels nonetheless free because he is a true human being, and a true human being is always aware of his finitude and his dependency. Therefore the idea of God's providence does not include the feeling of un-freedom. The believer in God never feels and regards himself as a slave, but rather, as God's son. He enjoys the freedom even if he is aware of his limit.

From such consideration, I would conclude with a reflection on the notion of “the clash of civilizations” (to use Samuel Huntington's language). In my own view, the clash among different peoples is not rooted in the difference of cultures (civilizations), but rather in the belief of the superiority of a certain culture, i.e. in a strong belief in a certain system of values as the truest and highest ones, and especially in our illusion of being the sole possessor of such truth and such freedom. So any solution to such kind of conflict could be possible only if human beings are willing to free themselves from the utopia of being the sole possessor of the “kingdom of truth” (to use Kant's language).

The Twist From *Truth In Life To Truth As Life*

The main reason of conflict among religious worlds, and even among scientist communities is most probably rooted in our illusion of being the sole possessor of truth. That happened to the Medieval Christian Church, the Enlightenment protagonists, and the religious fundamentalists today. Conflict becomes deadly when our desire transcends our own finitude, when we entertain the illusion of being our own creator. The “philosopher-king” of Plato, the “philosopher “ of Hegel, the

“Superhuman” of Nietzsche and “proletariat” of Marx, all stirred more troubles than solution simply because of their claim of being the possessor of the “final truth.” To be sure, such an illusion is constructed on and cemented by the formal logic of truth with its corollaries: the principle of identity and the principle of non-contradiction: the true must be the same, and consequently, truth is universal and necessary. The mathematical formula of truth $1=1$ has been taken as the most obvious and irrefutable form to pass judgment on all sciences, including human sciences. Descartes and German rationalists have expanded and applied this mathematical formula to the whole of human sciences (moral science, in the case of Kant). It goes more radically with a bizarre principle of either-or (that Søren Kierkegaard has attacked in his *Either-Or*) and its logical law of “the excluded third” (excluded middle). So, the conclusion of one true God is drawn from the premise of one truth. If our God is true, then your gods must be false; if our ideology is true, then all other ideologies must be false.

It is not a mistake to take truth as the objective of sciences, but it would be questionable to believe it as the αρχη παραγραφ τελος, the alpha and the omega, i.e. the total sum of human life. Let us begin first with the claim of truth as the unique objective of life, and the sole means determining our thinking and actions. To many of us, the idea of a philosophy was palpable in Homeric tradition: a tradition centered on life. The twist begun with Thales, who in his search for the origin of life has identified the characteristic of life itself: the most original life must be the truest one (i.e. the most universal and necessary). Truth and life seems a to be the same. Other Greek philosopher followed suit and went much more radically. The Pythagorians abstracted human life and identified numbers as the origin of the universe. They may be quite correctly regarded as the predecessors of Galileo. The latter described the universe in terms of mathematical structure. In a word, one may say, Pre-Socratic philosophy is, in a certain sense, a constant search for truth, by means of arguments based on truth itself. Truth, and not life, is now the objective of our quest.

It was Socrates who gave a final and decisive stamp on truth as the unique objective of philosopher. By insisting on truth implicit in life, Socrates embraced the view that truth is the most valuable treasure. Indeed, true to his view, he had sacrificed his own life for truth. Truth is also the objective of the business of scientific research. It is the essence of science indeed. And it is the most secure means to safeguard truth and life.

However, what is truth? This question, the most important one, has not been satisfactorily answered so far. When Socrates chided the Sophists for mistaking truth with opinion, and especially for having claimed truth

for themselves, he had clearly opted for the view that truth can be acquired only by means of a constant search and critique (in the form of *dialogue*). Now the problem is, if truth can be acquired by a permanent investigation, then the acquired truth is temporal. The newly acquired truth would replace the one previously believed. To say with Hegel, temporal truth appears real, but that is the reality of a certain people in a certain age, i.e. an incomplete, partial truth. However, Hegel still believes in an eternal truth which he identified with reason. In his view, the true kernel determining the *Zeitgeist* and the *Volksgeist* must be the rational. But the kernel (the rational) is either unknowable (as a *noumenon* in Kant) or incompletely known because the rational emerges in a constant and infinite process (Hegel). So, truth known by us cannot be grasped *in toto*. We know only a part of it. Karl Popper radically developed this view to the edge of rationalism and to the brink of a possible collapse of Platonian truth: no truth is final. Any claim of having a final truth would contradict the essence of truth. In this Socrates' way of philosophizing, what we may grasp is not truth but reality, i.e. temporal and spatial aspect of truth. We know for sure a certain *facie* of truth but not truth in its totality.

The question of “what is truth?” is still unanswered. It is left open by Socrates and his followers. His closest disciple, the ambitious Plato, had attempted to fulfill the mission of his master by having claimed to produce a final, irrefutable answer. He proved that truth is the most universal and necessary. It is the substance of all substances. In a word, it is divine and contemplative. Despite the warm reception of the Neo-Platonians (like Plotinus, Filone and Clemente) who found in God the absolute Truth, such an answer, regretfully, leaves behind more irresolvable puzzle. Nietzsche is neither the first nor the last who rebelled against such view with his satirical declaration of the death of God. The non-existence of God is interpreted as the non-existence of truth, just as His death means the end of Plato's truth. Without an absolute truth, Nietzsche plunged into a certain form of negativity of such thinking. Nihilism's question of “what is truth?” has not been answered. It is simply dismissed as non-sense: “Was sind diese Kirchen noch, wenn sie nicht die Gruefte und Grabmaeler Gottes sind?”.

The twist from truth *in life* to *as life* has been unmasked by Heidegger. He is, surely, not the first but the most eloquent opponent of Plato's truth and even of Nietzsche's negative nihilism. Traditional truth in terms of representation, or of correspondence (*adequatio intellectus et rei* of Thomas Aquinas), or of agreement, or of identification (positivism), or of coherence and pragmatic could not reveal the true essence of truth, because it is detached from the *Upspring* of truth, i.e. life. Traditional criteria of truth

have been based on the fact, or phenomena, or the similarity but not on their source and their *dynamic force*.

So, if truth is not life but only an essential aspect (authenticity), then it is not the question of “what is truth” but “what is life” must be the objective of philosophy. In Heidegger's harsh critique, philosophers from Plato to Nietzsche have scratched where does not itch. Ontology must be anthropology, and therefore, truth cannot be separated from human life. The investigation of life and its basic characteristics yield a new light on human beings in terms of freedom, on freedom and on truth itself. Kant's insistence on autonomy as the essence of moral identity, i.e. on freedom, does not contradict his faith in truth as the foundation of morals. Only in the context of life that truth can be grasped in freedom, and freedom can manifest itself in truth. In Heidegger's interpretation of truth as *αληθεια* truth no longer plays the role of God or the a-temporal and non-spatial mathematical formula, but reveals itself freely in the world. *Erschlossenheit*, *Entdecktheit*, *Unverborgenheit*, etc. (uncovering, self-revelation) are the essential characteristics marking the nature of truth. In this sense, he regards the essence of truth as freedom.

Heidegger's radical interpretation of truth in the sense of self-revelation is, of course, not new. However, it is interesting to note that even if Heidegger has tried very hard to dismiss the role of God as *custodius*, *providential* or the *philosopher* (Hegel) in favor of God as *artist ingenious* (like Nietzsche); he still follows the same logic of religion: only the God-like being can reveal itself. In addition, the God-like being possesses the *power of self-existence*, and the *power of self-determination*, i.e. *the power of a creator*. In a sense, Heidegger regards freedom as the essence of truth. Like the Epiphany that expresses the self-revelation of God's true nature, freedom displays the essence (i.e. the condition and nature) of human existence. If Epiphany is a process of God in the World then, analogically, Being is in a constant process of self-emergence. So Being's epiphany expresses not only its autonomy but, much more, its freedom: to be the self and at the same the other (the different). It is in this sense that Heidegger may have right to claim that the essence of truth is freedom; and also in this sense that the postmodernist have understood science in particular and human beings in general.

Freedom And Truth In Religion

Only in this context I would argue that Heidegger's interpretation of truth does not stem directly from Nietzsche's thought (as some

postmodernist may insist), but rooted in religious source. Earlier religious thinkers, actually, never separated truth and freedom from life. Truth in religion is not a formula, or a criterion, or a means but the most authentic aspect of life, just as freedom is not what is given to us but an essential part of human life which makes human God-likeable. There is no formula of truth in religion. There is no unique way leading to God. And, of course, there is no image that can depict precisely and truthfully the Godhead. Here is the reason why God forbids idolatry. In this sense, Heidegger's interpretation of Being's authenticity does not follow the pattern of traditional criteria of "certainty" and "clarity" (of Descartes). Authenticity, actually, refers to what essentially constitutes life. As such, it gives light to what Christ means by truth. Truth cannot be separated from the Way and from our life: *Christus via, veritas et vita est.* (John 14:6).

Truth and life

One clearly finds here the closest, almost inseparable, relationship between truth and life., truth and the way to life. And this idea has been the most important concepts in almost all religions, and not in Christianity alone. It determines the behaviors, thought and even aspiration of believers. There is no internal contradiction here between freedom and truth, truth and life. In this perspective, North Alfred Whitehead rightly wrote:

"A religion., on its doctrinal side, can thus be defined as a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming the character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended."

Of course, the "system of general truths" here does not mean the system of truth built on purely mathematical form. Truth can be known only if it is "sincerely held and vividly apprehended." Needless to say, this kind of understanding of truth is originated in many religious traditions, the Eastern as well as the Western. Let us take a look in the history of Christianity to see how such a truth is conceived.

According to the study of Waldemar Molinski, truth originally (in the Hebrew *emeth*) means in the first place "to be firm, reliable, faithful or fidelity" (2 Sam 7:28; Ps 119:160), "sincerity and constancy" (Ps 132:11), "loyalty of the people to God" (Jos 24: 14; 1 Kg 20:3; Is 38:3; Ps 26:3; 86:11). The meaning of truth as the correspondence between assertion and reality (3 Kg 10:6; 22:16) or the identification of "law as truth" (Job 4:6; 13:6;

Ecclus 27:9) comes only second. Similarly, truth in the *New Testament* means firstly as “fidelity and reliability of God” (Rom 3:1-7), “human sincerity” (2 Cor 7: 14; Phil 1:18; 3:8; 4:4; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Jn 1), or “the quality of the genuine and obligatory which attached to the gospel” (Eph 4:21; Gal 2:5,14; ROM 2:8; 2 Cor 4:2; Gal 5:7). Truth is taken to be “the word of God” (2 Cor 4:2; Gal 5:7), and “authoritative doctrines (1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 18; 3:18; 4:4) comes second. The interpretation of divine law as love. So, in John's Gospel, truth is understood as the most necessary act of love, “the reality of salvation which sets me free” (John 8:32).

Such understanding of truth has been the basic teaching in the earlier Christianity, until St. Augustine who, under the heavy shadow of Neo-Platonism, explained truth in terms of reality. He combines the Johannine *Logos* with the Plotinian *Nous* (*Confessions*, VII, 9). In other words he linked truth as life to the divine (contemplative) truth. In *De Trinitate*, (VII, 3), he stated that the (God) Son is the truth since He is the Word who reveals the (God) Father. As such, Augustine understood truth as eternal reality. In *De Libero Arbitrio*, he clearly conceived of truth as absolute, eternal and changeless (II, 15,39). Drawn from such premise, he argued that the truth is not created but discovered by us only (*De Vera Religione*, 39,72). Truth is the ultimate objective of our life, and our search for truth determines the movement of thought.

From St. Augustine on, Christian philosophers (Boethius, St. Anselm Canterbury, and especially St. Thomas) have interpreted truth as the “primordial opening out of being” (*ens et verum convertuntur*), and at the same time as the function of judgment (*Adequatio intellectus et rei*). St. Thomas identified God as the first Truth and the foundation of all truth, while Duns Scotus, by distinguishing the ontological from the logical truth, gave to God the source of ontological truth. To prove God's existence, one has to rely on logical truth, however.

Now, we discover a slow change from the concept of truth as life (ontological truth) to that of the source of life (God), and finally to that of the so-called logical truth. Modern philosophers like Descartes went farther than most of his predecessors. He conceived God as the warrant for logical truth (*Meditationes*, III). He argued that man cannot be the origin of his infinite ideas (*Discours de la methode*, 2, 14), i.e. truth. So, it is God who is the source and the warrant of truth. However, he insisted on the *clara et distincta idea* as the essential characteristic of truth which exists only in pure thinking (*Meditationes*, III,4). Such a truth loses its traces in life and squanders in “the word of purely thinking.” Descartes' radical interpretation of truth in term of logical truth gives way to modern way of understanding truth as purely

logical, and consequently, truth is detached from life.

Freedom and Life

Similar twist is found in human understanding of freedom. The original meaning of freedom in religious tradition as *true* image of God (imago Dei) has been often interpreted as restricted freedom: the freedom of the created. Such interpretation inclines to the view that only the total, unrestricted freedom of Creator can be called *true* freedom. Freedom here is understood as the free act towards any possible purpose. But, this kind of understanding of freedom, actually, has surpassed the original meaning of freedom: freedom towards a fixed purpose (imago Dei), i.e. to the truest human.

Now, the question is, if human freedom cannot overstep the limit (human nature) and surpass its own purpose (to become perfect *like* God , then the so-called *positive* freedom (freedom to) and the *negative* freedom (freedom from) must be understood in the context human nature and human activities, that means in the context of human life freedom expresses human attempt to overcome the conditions that restraint, diminish or dismiss the fulfillment of human life, and at the same time, freedom displays human force in fulfilling life. So the question here must be double : which conditions do we need to overcome ? and what kind of life can fulfill human nature? The answer to these questions is essential to our understanding of freedom.

Different answers to the first part of question of which conditions do we have to overcome constitute the notion of negative freedom. Answer given by different religious, philosophers and politicians displays the different approaches to the problem. To Christianity, it is the sin that limits human capacity of self-fulfillment. To Buddhism, they are the main causes (craving for wealth, pleasure power, continued existence) of unhappiness. To the Marxist, it is unjust social structure. It is clear that freedom in terms of emancipation or liberation is implicit in these answers: liberation from slavery, escape from the yoke of *samsara*, and emancipation from class society. That is what we often identify as the negative freedom, the *libertas ad coactione*.

Such kind of freedom does not, however, solve the inner contradictions of freedom: freedom can be known and gained at the cost of others' un-freedom. There is hardly a demarcation between individual freedom and individual interest. If freedom means freely pursue one's own interests, then conflict is a logical result of freedom. And to solve conflicts

requires the restriction of other's freedom. The others here are the powerless people. So the belief that freedom is the most desired, or the ultimate objective of human beings, would not make sense, or would make a little sense, to the majority of people. The belief in freedom as "freeing from" would turn to be an illusion as long as power is still on the hands of a few rulers. Aware of this sad fact, John Stuart Mill proposes an understanding of freedom from its positive aspect. He wrote: "The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way." He concedes the fact that such freedom is possible only if we can become our own master. To be our own master means a self-realization. But, Mill does not discuss the question of how to be aware of being master and how to become master, i.e. how to realize one self. Kant and German ideologists refer to the idea of autonomy and consciousness of the self, while Marx to the force (labor) as the *conditio sine qua non* that makes man autonomous. In other words, to be the master demands, firstly, self-consciousness and, secondly, the force of self-subsisting and self-developing. This is impossible due to human relation and reliance on others and on nature. A self-consciousness cannot be found in the ego alone, just as a man like Robinson could never exist in our present society. So, the insistence on the equality of liberty to all human beings seems to be rather a wish, or pure idea in the brain of (German) ideologists. Aristotle was not completely wrong when he discovered the existence of the ruling class thanks to slavery. He was wrong because he did not foresee human evolution thanks to human labor. The master knows how to use effectively his own force and the labor of his slave to realize his good life, while the slave just works for his master and not for himself. Despite his unwillingness to treat the problem from point of view of German philosophers, Mill still regards the positive freedom in terms of human self-realization.

To my purpose, I will not delve into Mill's controversy but start with his insight of freedom as a means for and an expression of self-realization. So, the center of our discussion would be whether self-realization could fulfill human quest for ultimate happiness, i.e. whether the positive freedom could be human most desired ends, and whether such an objective is also that of religion.

The fact that freedom can be understood and appreciated in a certain life, and that human life can be fulfilled thanks to other elements (and factors) relating to life points to the truth that it is life and not freedom or truth the final end of human beings. So, one may argue that freedom makes sense only if fulfils life, makes it perfect. If so, then final question for us

should be: which kind of life can be appreciated as perfect life. Negative freedom expresses human aspiration for not being restrained by the conditions which may jeopardize, limit and destroy life. Positive freedom points to human desire to achieve what we consider as the fulfillment, the perfection of life. In religion, the freedom to fulfill and to perfect life can be termed as transcendental freedom (*libertas transcendentalis*). The desire of transcending the *status quo* and ascending towards the highest stage, i.e. “being over and beyond” present life is, without doubt, the kernel of any serious religion. It is religious spirit that motivates human beings to seek for perfect life. Such transcendental freedom is seen in human active participation (or engagement) into the absolute world of God. Thomas Aquinas describes such act of transcendental freedom in order that negative freedom and positive freedom be understood.

Concluding Remark

My objection to the claim of freedom-possession is based on my rejection of the claim of truth-possession. Against such claims, I took Heidegger's insight of truth as self-revelation, i.e. a *free state of self-presentation* to show that human pretension to being able to grasp truth in its *totality* is the product of pure imagination. The uncontrolled lust for power, advocated by Nietzsche, seductively pulls human into the hallucination of being God or semi-God. So, truth-possession and Freedom-possession, the property of the Creator, have been falsely claimed by these “supermen.” This absurdity has been the hallmark of many “imperialist” ideologies and cultures. I think, the source of the “clash of civilizations” (to use Huntington's language) is not the difference of races and cultures but our actual claim of truth and freedom for us only.

To reflect on truth and freedom must, therefore, begin with deeper reflection on life. Descartes' mathematical truth does not contradict the logic of life if he did not separate life from the truth. Kant's plead for a freedom in the sense of autonomy does not contradict human transcendental nature, if he conducted more investigation into the limit of reason. However, there is still a difference between Descartes and Kant. If Descartes remained content with his discovered truth which he did not bother to expand to life *in toto*, then for Kant, it is the question of “Was ist der Mensch?” the center of his investigation (Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, A 804f; B 832f.). Man cannot be understood in a single, static aspect. It can be apprehended only in a dynamic and infinite process of self-realization.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Whitehead's insight of the correlation between mathematical truth and religious truth is striking. One can be a good mathematician and a religious man, because there exists no internal contradiction between truth and life. So is the relation between truth and freedom. Both are rooted in life. Wittgenstein's pondering about the origin mathematics, just as Heidegger's relentless quest for the truth and freedom lead them to a similar conclusive view: mathematics is inseparable from life, just as truth and freedom are only the most expressive forms of authentic life. Edmund Husserl's strong objection to the so-called "mathematization of the world" (in his *Die krisis der europaeischen Wissenschaft...*) has forced the rationalists to ponder again the legitimacy of the "mighty reason." Actually, in Husserl's view, truth would lose its sense if it is separated from life. Truth would reduce the meaning of our flourishing life if it is determined by rational criteria which are fully neutral from life.

So, it is time to rethink truth and freedom in terms of life, and not the reverse. To be truthful means also to be loyal to life; and to be loyal means to be faithful (as seen in religious belief). Our faith cannot be demonstrated by a set of criteria built on formal truth, but by our "truest" feelings, by our deepest sense to life. Similarly, to be free does not mean to be completely in a free state, but free only from the untrue forces which deform or destroy life. In this sense, Marx's concept of liberty in the sense of liberation from the (social, economic, political) conditions making human alienated (or reified) does not, actually, play against religious understanding of freedom: freedom means a liberation from the state of slavery, and a condition to restore humanity as well as to fulfill it. It is in religion that one finds freedom in its full sense: a liberation from the negative forces that restrict or hinder human transcendence, and a positive engagement striving forwards to the ultimate purposes.

End Notes:

1. In the case of socialist countries, the Western human rights watchers have cited the lack of a certain freedom of religion as the main offense of human rights.
2. Note that the most ardent critics of the Western culture (and religion) are theologians. Among the pupils of Friedrich W. Schelling's class on religion, one finds the name of Bakunin, Kierkegaard, Engels. Marx adhered himself to the "Doktorklub," the majority of which are

- theologians (Bauer, Stirner, Feuerbach and other). Today, the so-called theologians of liberation still stay at the front battling against imperialist suppression and capitalist exploitation.
3. Such paradox has been brilliantly analyzed by Horkheimer and Adorno. See Marx Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).
 4. The furor of Islamists against Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verse*, and most recent outrage against a Danish cartoonist is a case in point. No doubt, both Islamic believers and the cartoonist were certain of their own truth and both call up to human rights (freedom) to justify their violent acts and their abused languages defending their truth. In the case of Dan Brown's *Leonardo da Vinci's Codes*, it is the question of whether one can abuse the freedom of expression to distort religious truth?
 5. To say with Thomas Kuhn, the author of *The Structure of Scientific Discovery* (1962).
 6. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 44; Especially in *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit* and *Wabreit Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*.
 7. Hegel, *Vorlesungen ueber Rechtsphilosophie*, Einleitung. "What is rational real and what is real is rational."
 8. Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963).
 9. Hilary Putman, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1981, pp. 150-1)
 10. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Froehliche Wissenschaft*, Der Tolle Mensch, 125. Karl Schlechta, ed., Muenchen: Carl Hanser, 1960)
 11. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Guenther Neske, 1961), Vol. 2, pp. 31 ff.
 12. *Seen und Zest*, 44a
 13. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Einleitung; Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, (1929); and *Nietzsche* (1961), vol. II.
 14. *Seen und Zest*, 44b
 15. In *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, Heidegger clearly wrote: "Das Wesen der Wahrheit ist die Freiheit."
 16. Cf. Karl Rahner, *Geist in Welt*
 17. See Jacques Derrida, *Writings on Religion* (1992); See also Robert Magliola, *Derrida on the Mend* (1985). Similar idea has been found also in Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-meme comme un autre*, Paris: du Seuil, 1990, chapter on "Ipseite et 1"alterite, pp. 367 ff.
 18. Similar interpretation has been found in the works of Heidegger's

- pupils. See Karl Rahner, *Geist in Welt*, op. cit., Raymondo Panikka, *Hinduismus und Christentum*, and John Caputo, *Heidegger and Thomas Aquinas*, just to mention a few of them.
19. North Alfred Whitehead, *Religion in The Making* (London: Macmillan, 1926); (Cleveland: The Word Publishing Co., 1960, p.15.
 20. See Waldemar Molinski, "Truth" in *Sacramentum Mundi*, Ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Herder, 1970), Vol.6, pp. 308-318.
 21. Clement of Alexandria, for example, taught that God is the norm for the truth of beings (*Protrepticus*, VI, PG VIII, col.173).
 22. Molinski, p. 308.
 23. According to Molinski, op.cit., p.309, "Boethius refers truth to judgment, while St. Anselm of Canterbury analyses the relation of logical truth to ontological truth. Logical truth is an effect of the *summa veritas*, mediated by created things (*De Veritate*, chap.19). This means that the ontological connection is under the rule of truth as the *rectitudo sola mente perceptibilis* (chap.11)."
 24. Cf. *Contra Gentiles*, I, 59; *De Veritate* I,2.
 25. Molinski, op.cit., p.310: "God is the Transcendental Truth means that being as an intrinsic relation to spirit and hence to the spirit-soul, and also that spirit is ordained to being (*De Veritate* I, 1). St. Thomas combines the Aristotelian notion that the soul is "all things in a certain fashion" with the notion of the truth of things (Aristotle, *The Soul*, 431: *Metaphysics*, 993 b)
 26. Molinski, p.311.
 27. Cf. Max Mueller, "Freedom", in *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol.1, pp.352-361; see also Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p 122. ff: "The Notion of "negative" Freedom".
 28. John Stuart Mill, *Essay on Liberty*. Quoted by I. Berlin, op.cit., p. 127.
 29. Actually, the idea of positive freedom has been a mark of the Greek culture. The Greek refer to the idea of self-possession, being completely present to oneself, total self-sufficiency as *Autarky*, while the Romans understand liberty as *dominant in actu suos, dominium super se ipsum*." Max Mueller, *op.cit.*, p.353.
 30. Mueller, p.354.
 31. Mueller, p. 353.
 32. Whitehead, p. 14. "But as between religion and arithmetic, other things are not equal. You *use* arithmetic, but you *are* religious. Arithmetic of course enters into your nature, so far as that nature involves a multiplicity of things. But it is there as necessary condition, and not as a transforming agency."

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9. Mueller, Cf. Max, “Freedom”, in *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol.1
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