



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summer School

“The Quest for European Values”

20-26 August 2006

Vama Veche, Romania

Introduction

In association with the Black Sea University Foundation (BSUF) and the European Cultural Centre from Bucharest, the Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies (LIEIS) convened a summer school on ‘The Quest for European Values’ from 20 to 26 August 2006 in Vama Veche, Romania. In the course of 12 sessions and on the basis of introductory presentations by four lecturers, about 25 participants from a number of countries in the wider Black Sea area (the Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia and Romania) discussed some of the main philosophical traditions of ethics and the importance of values in contemporary political debates in Europe.

Armand Clesse, Director of the LIEIS, explained in his opening remarks that this summer school is a continuation of last year’s course on mentalities. Like last year, participants would be divided into two or three working groups to foster discussion on some key themes and draw up reports. The principal objective and ambition of these events, which go back to the early 1990s – during the heydays of the BSUF – is to have genuinely free discussion and a lively exchange of ideas in order to go beyond conventional wisdoms and seek truths.

Professor Mircea Malitza, Founder and Executive President of the BSUF, told the participants that the cooperation between the BSUF and the LIEIS originated in the early 1990s. It was part of a wider project, which had been launched in 1990 by a summer course organised together with the College of Europe. This event inaugurated a long series of seminars, conferences and meetings and led to the creation of the BSUF – with a board of over 120



members from across the globe. Nowadays it includes more than 100 regional and local universities; the foundation has the status of consultant to the UN and is involved in Black Sea economic cooperation.

In the course of the last 15 years or so, the BSUF has organised some 300 courses, set up a publication called Millennium and focused on European integration and globalisation. Among the core activities, there is a wide range of projects centred on conflict prevention, resolution and negotiations. The summer courses with the LIEIS are the only events which span the last 16 years. After some difficulties between 1999 and 2005, 2006 has seen a renaissance, with new projects and new partners: first, a project on the virtual university of the five seas; secondly, a programme on e-learning; thirdly, an institute for projects in the Black Sea area (data collection etc); fourthly a programme with NGOs and the Club of Rome on sustainable development; finally, a project on alternative strategies to accomplish the process of economic and political transition.

I. Are there universal values? Eternal values?

At the outset of the first session, every participant was asked to write the five most relevant values, in the order of importance. The idea was to gauge whether (and if so in what ways) this personal hierarchy of values might evolve in the course of the discussions and be modified by reflections and debate. Among the most recurrent answers were freedom/liberty, tolerance, personal success, excellence, responsibility, democracy, nationality, individuality, culture, love, dignity, equality, peace and the family.

A. Clesse began the first session by situating the question of values into a contemporary context. He argued that even if one does not think that values are important, they are nevertheless present in public and private discourse, individual and social behaviour, implicitly or explicitly so, as a driving force in different realms. This raises many fundamental questions. For example, is there a common ethos in the EU? If there is, what is it? If there is none, should there be one and, if so, what kind of ethos? With respect to the failed Constitutional Treaty, a debate took place but it was not very bold. Instead, it verged on the side of caution and political correctness; there was anxiety about reaching a minimal consensus. Such an undertaking was considered too tricky, possibly causing disagreement, conflict and strife, perhaps because the question of values touches on the most intimate dimension of individual beliefs, in a secularised post-religious Europe.

However, the question is unavoidable: does a future European *demos* require a common *ethos* in order to attain its shared *telos*, i.e. its ends, purposes, finalities or deeper ambitions (e.g. a superior way of life, both within the Union and beyond, a model which could be offered to the outside world, like a security community which would be a peace community, governed by new notions of social justice, protection of the environment etc.)? These questions can no longer be eluded but must be part of the current reflections on the future of the Union. However, at the same time as the EU is in a crisis and needs innovative thinking, most research and debates in the field of European studies are impoverished and ignore the key questions.

Broadly speaking, the EU aims at integration, i.e. the homogenisation or imposition of common standards on all member-states and citizens. How far this process goes is supposed to be determined by the application of the principle of subsidiarity. But the absence of real debates on these fundamental issues is more understandable in Eastern Europe than it is in Western Europe because Central and Eastern European countries have desperately tried to comply with the *acquis communautaire*. What is urgently needed in the current situation is a sustained reflection and discussion on the EU's finalities: prosperity, wealth, equality within and between member-states, common standards of life? Or perhaps a more ambitious set of goals, a 'good life' and happiness, notions which are widely used by contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophers. For example, the pursuit of happiness is a right guaranteed by the American Constitution, but such and similar *teloi* are absent from the draft European Constitutional Treaty.

Contemporary works on ethics and politics single out a number of possible starting points. First, moral philosophers like Charles Taylor or Alasdair MacIntyre have written at length on ordinary life and common sense, a virtue culture where particular practices embody universal principles like justice, courage and a quest for excellence. Modernity and post-modernity have tended to undermine this virtue culture and trivialised the shared ordinary life in the public realm. Secondly, other philosophers have explored whether and in what ways it was religion which raised more ambitious concepts and practices at the level of normal life, i.e. life as it is available to all people. One question that arises from this is whether there are universal and perhaps even eternal values across the world.

In turn, this raises the question as to whether a confrontation between Western and Asian values or between Islamic and Christian values is inevitable. Are terrorism and extremism more prone in some cultures than in others? Was Samuel Huntington right about a 'clash of civilisations'? Is it desirable and feasible, as the neo-conservatives believe, to democratise the 'Greater Middle East', even by force? Or are Islam and democracy ultimately incompatible and any attempt to impose a democratic settlement dangerous and counterproductive? If so, then the question is why this might be so. One hypothesis is that there is neither the will nor the capacity to adopt democracy and make it part of Muslim culture, so that it is no longer just introduced or imposed but becomes engrained, integrated into the mind, the soul and the blood of people, becoming the first, not second nature, as it were. Another hypothesis is that colonialism and imperialism in Africa and Asia (especially China) have dealt a fatal blow to any project which tries to export a political model.

More fundamentally, such questions cannot be addressed without clarifying what a value is: is it an abstract principle? Or is it a criterion (or a set of criteria) for action, thus also involving a decisionary element?

In response to these introductory reflections, Christopher Coker, Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science, argued that values are best understood as cultural or social capital; values constitute an ethos or institutional set of practices, about how you conduct yourself. As such, values are both abstract and empirical, they have a theoretical and a practical outlook, e.g. the Protestant work ethic as detailed by Max Weber (1864-1920). Moreover, the idea of eternal values derives from what the German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) called the 'axial age' (*Achsenzeit*, a notion which can also be found in the works of the political philosopher Eric Voegelin [1901-1985] and the



sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt [b. 1923]). The ‘axial age’ describes the period from around 700 BCE to 200 BCE during which, according to Jaspers, similarly revolutionary thinking appeared in China, India and the West. This period is also sometimes referred to as the Axis Age. Jaspers argued that during the Axial Age, “the spiritual foundations of humanity were laid simultaneously and independently... And these are the foundations upon which humanity still subsists today” (K. Jaspers, *Ways to Wisdom*, 1951, pp. 99-100). These foundations were defined by individual thinkers within a framework of changing social conditions. The only cultures which did not participate in this age were those of the so-called New World, not least because they practised human sacrifice. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) said that the mark of cultures which believe in universal and eternal values is that they also believe in a God who finds humans as interesting as humans find him; this is what distinguishes the God of monotheism from the deities of the Aztecs.

If values are cultural or social capital, then norms are best defined as values turned into operational terms, said C. Coker. Thus, between and within Islam or Christianity, what we are seeing is a clash of norms, not of values. For example, the internet is not culturally mediated but instead provides a platform for pure unadulterated values, which are not transformed into norms. This is ultimately why there are British homegrown suicide bombers – young men who, despite having been born and been educated in a British culture, turn to the violence of a certain form of Islamism which they learn about over the internet. Indeed, as Olivier Roy, a French expert on Islam, argues, what makes Islamic extremism dangerous is the internet and its global reach above and beyond cultural mediation.

One participant remarked that values tend to order reality, logically and psychologically so. Logical sentences are universal, logical truth is universal, not relative, and values communicate this universality in different ways to different cultures. The main problem is that nowadays truth is no longer a reality but a metaphor; it is relative, not universal. As such, the universality of values has also been reduced to relativity and thus cultures are becoming relativist.

Following earlier comments, Adrian Pabst, Research Fellow at the LIEIS, contended that the concept of ‘axial age’ is problematic because it tends to lump together fundamentally different cultures. For example, monotheism differs from all other religions and cultures of the world in that it believes that peace is prior to violence and that it is objectively true, because it is God’s purpose for the world. This primacy of peace over violence constitutes a foundational difference with pre-monotheist societies, whether in Cairo, Rome or Athens, which all practiced various forms of blood sacrifice and embraced an ethos of *agon* – violent conflict in pursuit of holiness and happiness. Moreover, the real contrast is not between values and norms but between values and virtues. Whereas values are a modern invention, virtues refuse the modern dualism between abstract concepts and concrete practices. Instead, virtues bind together universal ideas and the particular practices which embody them. Thus, the difference is between a metaphysically grounded ethics and a self-grounded ethics, like utilitarianism, which is based on positivism – the claim that essences and their ultimate source are hidden from us. As such, utilitarianism is impoverished because it denies the reality of universals such as the good or beauty and instead posits that our primary moral choice is between maximising pleasure and avoiding pain (e.g. the works of Jeremy Bentham [1748-1832]).

Moreover, if modernity marks the exit from metaphysics and the turn to positivism, then the current conflicts are not a clash of civilisations or of norms, but a competition between variants of secular modernity and its claim to philosophical clarity and moral purity. This secular perversion applies equally to Christianity and to Islam, as evinced by the two prevailing extremes – Evangelical Protestantism (especially the Calvinist strand which is at work in neo-conservatism) and Sunni Wahhabism. Both are iconoclastic movements which sanctify indiscriminate violence against all heretics/apostates and enemies/unbelievers. In this they mirror each other and thereby each constitutes the other's legitimation for their heinous crimes. Thus, the illegal and illegitimate war in Iraq is the product of a messianic and apocalyptic ideology which wages a perpetual war in the name of the struggle of good *versus* evil. Likewise, global Islamic terrorism repeats this Manichean dualism by calling on its followers to kill all those who are tainted with the evil corruption of western culture, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. As a result, homegrown suicide bombers kill indiscriminately because they identify the inculturation of Islam into a non-Muslim culture and the integration with secular values as cultural 'rape' – a notion which goes back to the fundamentalist theology of Abu Ala Maududi (1903-1979) who lived and preached his ideology of death in pre-partition India.

A. Clesse then began his exposition of some of the most important philosophical traditions and their respective accounts of ethics. He spoke of axiology and of Socrates' reflections on the notions of *aretē* (virtue), *timē*, *eudaimonia* (happiness), as well as of *agathon* (the Good) and agathology. Likewise, in Asian thought, there is the distinction between *yang* (good and male) and *ying* (bad and female). In Greek philosophy, two recurrent notions are honour and *eudaimonia* (happiness). A comparison of different philosophical traditions of the world raises the question of 'superiorism' or 'superiorology': what might be the basis for asserting that Western values are superior to all other values across the globe? Is it true that Roman and Greek philosophy and Western theological thinking, but also the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, Socialist and Communist ideas all merged into something which we might call Western and which is allegedly intrinsically superior? Even after the end of colonialism and imperialism, at least in Western Europe, are we not seeing other, perhaps more subtle forms of imperialism, e.g. the current US strategy of waging war and justifying occupation under the garb of freedom and democracy?

M. Malitza defined values in terms of attitudes, feelings, ways of understanding, mentalities and behaviour, the subjective side of individual and collective action, and thus also an important factor in international relations. However, values are not equivalent with facts; values are only adjectives, not substances, they are attached to facts and interests. As such, it is best to dispense with universals such as the truth, beauty or goodness. Instead, we can speak of true researchers, but not researchers of *the* truth; there are no observers of beauty in itself and as such, only beautiful observers. He also argued that Plato's great contribution to philosophy was to give ideas reality and thus to enable an analysis of how ideas matter to the material world. Values and facts always go together, with distinct tools and at different levels; the main difference is that facts can be measured, which enables common standards and homogenisation. For their part, values are components of a culture, they create individual personalities and particular forms of life; no two individuals or nations have the same identical values, though they are equal.

Interestingly, there was a time when values and norms were shared across Europe, i.e. Christendom and *res publica christiana*. But since the Renaissance, the French Revolution, Europe has been characterised by a *pêle-mêle* of values: some people are hedonists, others embrace the Protestant work ethic; some share the Germanic spirit of Faust, i.e. they believe in the human power to construct the world, others are empiricists or even sceptics. The French are deductive in their reasoning, whereas the British are inductive. By contrast, the Chinese and the Japanese tend to be analogical.

More generally, facts and values are inseparable, but facts are more fundamental than values, as borne out by the European integration process. Indeed, it would be wrong to argue that Jean Monnet was the founding father of Europe and Robert Schuman his deputy. Rather, there was nothing cultural in this initiative; lawyers only managed to create an enormous bureaucracy based on the logic of functionalism (cf. David Mitrany). As such, the nature of European integration illustrates how and why substance is more fundamental than structures, just like facts are primary to values. The lesson which contemporary Europe ought to heed from its own history is to begin with interests, to try and define common interests before mobilising actors and setting up shared structures. Moreover, there is a great diversity of values and cultures in Europe and it is best to interact in a mutually respectful way.

A. Clesse concluded the first session by saying that one objective of the summer school is to move from confusion to some clarity, but not total clarity in the Cartesian sense. The strife for total clarity is dangerous because it runs the risk of reducing complex questions and problems to simplistic slogans and thus to undermine and destroy genuine thinking. One way to avoid this is carefully to distinguish different levels of analysis and not amalgamate them: the personal or individual is of course distinct from the social or collective, e.g. democracy is not an individual value, whereas honesty can be both. The phenomenon of economic and social rights and the mushrooming of international institutions and NGOs raise questions about whether there is a minimum catalogue of rights, irrespective of cultures and political regimes. What is the indestructible core of values? Are there ephemeral and lasting values? For example, personal freedom seems to be a new notion, which emerged in the last 50 years, even though there is still slavery in countries like Brazil. Likewise, the notion of honour reappeared recently in Europe, after decades and perhaps centuries of positivism: we hear of honour-killings in Turkish families nowadays, but honour also mattered in the Middle Ages amongst the elites. All of which highlights the importance of values in contemporary Europe and requires a systematic approach to different ethical theories.

II. The debate on oriental vs occidental values (Asian vs Western values; Islamic vs Christian values)

At the beginning of the second session, A. Clesse continued his exposition of the philosophical traditions by turning to Greek philosophy, in particular Plato (427-347 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE). First, he mentioned a number of virtues in Greek culture, like courage, temperance, justice and autarchy. He also argued that there are elements of utilitarianism and hedonism in Socrates' philosophy and that other theories like materialism or cynicism had very different meanings in ancient thought. For Plato, values existed *a priori*, not *a posteriori*, i.e. independently of the material world and of sensory experience. Metaphysically, one of the most important notions is *eros*: the good and the beautiful are

attracting, they exert an attraction upon the senses and thus ‘lure’ the observer, such that we desire to explore appearances more closely and discern essences behind them (cf. the myth of the cave). Plato also describes this by way of the analogy of the sun: everything participates in the Good because everything is infused with goodness, as the Good radiates and communicates itself to all things, like the sun illuminates everything. Ethically, for Plato, what is morally good is absolute; he rejects ‘eudaimonism’ or hedonism and instead he embraces the notion of ‘joy’, which is an *aporia*, i.e. it cannot be defined in abstract terms but only described and pointed to in practice. Genuine pleasure requires a measure; what is good is pleasurable or pleasing and thus can be known. By contrast, what is morally bad is the fault of human beings; what is physically bad is the result of the finite world. Truth is the existence and knowledge of ideas, which are unchangeable and do not extend in space or time (neither *res extensa* nor *res cogitans*, as René Descartes [1596-1650] would have said). Courage and self-control are key virtues.

After Plato, A. Clesse discussed the tenets of Aristotle’s philosophy. Metaphysically, the whole exists prior to the parts; all forms of becoming are guided by forms or essences which are in the world (whereas for Plato the world is in the idea). The ultimate cause, also called First Unmoved Mover or God, is being, spirit and life; the highest being is at the same time the highest value (what Immanuel Kant [1724-1804] later called *ens perfectissimum*). Ethically, there is a hierarchy of lusts or pleasures: pure thinking or contemplative activity is the highest form of pleasure because it is linked to moral intellectual virtue. At the bottom of the scale, there are sensual physical lusts. For Aristotle, the natural order is the principle of what is good: if man does the right thing, then happiness ensues.

As a result, the sources of virtues are as follows: first, insight (recognising, distinguishing) and the right kind of reason (*orthos logos* or the medieval notion of *ratio recta*). What is crucial is the middle ground or *mesotes*: for instance, courage is the middle ground between cowardice and audacity. The second set of sources consists of self-control, generosity or magnanimity, friendship, urbanity. Thirdly, virtues are always connected to will, will power and freedom of the will.

Thus, a number of differences between Plato and Aristotle emerge. Metaphysically, they disagree on the relationship between immaterial essences and material things. Ethically, Plato was in favour of a community of goods and a community of women, whereas Aristotle was in favour of personal property, and he preferred monarchy to democracy; he favoured elitism and slavery, abandoning the sick and the disabled, and defended abortion. A. Clesse concluded that Aristotelian moral philosophy is a kind of elitist and primitive ethics, which does not include all human beings and all living animate creatures.

He then asked when in the philosophical tradition the separation of fact and value had occurred and how ordinary life had been disconnected from virtues such as honour. He speculated that this might have happened in the wake of the scientific revolutions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, perhaps after Francis Bacon (1561-1626). Is it possible to establish a broad genealogy which links these revolutions to the ‘ordinarisation’ of life, the commodification of life (Karl Marx [1818-1883]), the commercialisation of life and ultimately the disenchantment of the world (Max Weber)? Is the so-called post-modern world a ‘post-value’ world, a world of norms without values, a type of society and culture which are no longer underpinned by values? Both Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and

Nietzsche in some sense proclaimed the death of God and investigated life without absolute commandments. Was the rise of autonomy and self-determination accompanied by the concomitant rise of egoism, selfishness and a loss of transcendence and thus arbitrariness? In the name of what are post-modern men acting? This question is new but is being eluded by contemporary politics and culture. In many ways, our contemporary predicament is modern, in the sense that the loss of transcendence and a common culture had led to what might be expressed in German in terms of *sich selbst einzuhegen* (similar to the French *repli sur soi-même*), falling back on instincts and pure nature, a return to the Hobbesian war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*, *Leviathan* chap. XIII). In turn, this has shifted the emphasis away from divine and natural law towards human law-giving, protecting individuals from each other, without however knowing what to base human laws upon.

C. Coker returned to the question of virtues and argued that according to the Greeks an un-interrogated and non-reflective life is worthless. This has significant implications for European identity, as Europe interrogates itself more than other civilisations and thus also has more self-doubt and less self-assurance. Nietzsche's injunction captures this complexity well: 'become what you are'. What this means is that we only are insofar as we become true to ourselves, that we are authentic. The moment Europe ceases to interrogate itself, it becomes decadent and declines. Indeed, this is precisely why a proper debate on the future of Europe must be ongoing and cannot end with the draft Constitution. Secondly, one key aspect of European identity is urbanity. Only Diogenes and some early Arab philosophers resisted urban life and preferred a rural existence. The Italian late Renaissance thinker Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) argued instead that nomads civilise themselves when invading the city. Thirdly, Nietzsche said that values have a history and that the historicity of values is the historicity of norms. By contrast, for the German sociologist Norbert Elias (1897-1990), changing values are an indication of progress: the shift from chivalry and honour to the formalised court system is also part of European civilising process (even though it may be construed as a form of a commodification). Finally, C. Coker commented on A. Pabst's point about the difference between a metaphysical grounding of virtue or a utilitarian base. He argued that modern ethics such as Kant's moral philosophy attempts to bridge the gap between metaphysics and utility: the second categorical imperative is metaphysical insofar as it stipulates that man should be treated as an end, not exclusively as a means. Moreover, the reason why we have values is because empirically values operate and can be calculated (e.g. the costs and benefits of treating prisoners of war humanely): the utilitarian calculus can be measured and inferences can thus be drawn.

A. Pabst contended that the utilitarian calculus is arbitrary because it cannot demonstrate why some things are good and others not. The idea that all perceptions and emotions can be divided into pleasure and pain is wholly un-philosophical. Furthermore, utilitarianism merely posits the absence of universals on the basis that agreement on the Good, the Beautiful and the Just is impossible. However, as Plato and the Christian tradition argued, the Good is rationally intelligible because the Good makes itself manifest to the senses and the mind via instances of beauty in the material physical world. What monotheism added to Greek metaphysics is the *logos* of universals – *why* there is Goodness and *how* all things material and finite come to share in the Good. Rather than settling for an impoverished and base utilitarian ethics, the challenge for Europe is to retrieve and extend the patristic and medieval debate on universals: far from being abstract, this debate was about what constitutes the 'common good' and 'the good life' in which all people can share. If Europe is to escape from the low culture of free-

market capitalism and central state bureaucracy and to recover a high culture governed by virtues, then it requires a non-liberal non-secular debate and contest on the ‘common good’ and ‘the good life’.

M. Malitza argued that values can and do contribute to the survival of societies, even though they are based on ‘hard facts’: for example, slavery was a losing formula for America; it was an inefficient and unproductive form of exploiting people. Indeed, the Industrial Revolution required freedom and efficiency and thus economic facts helped bring about social and cultural change. He also spoke of the transition from individual to social psychology, the rise of ‘characterology’, the importance of mind sets, virtues, as well as specific sets of values: for instance, one feature of the European character is *angoisse* or anxiety.

A. Clesse argued that utilitarianism is relativist and arbitrary and leads nowhere, for it does not produce the good, nor does it prevent evil. He cited one example in order to illustrate his point: what if there are regimes where systematic extermination works and where people never realise that utilitarianism is wrong? However, the question is what would be a better catalogue of values. Liberal democracy is frequently mentioned as a regime which combines utility with values. The current US administration preaches freedom and democracy, yet at the same time it condones torture, which shows at the very least the discrepancy between rhetoric and practice and the hypocrisy that is at work.

Professor Gerhard Michael Ambrosi, Jean Monnet Chair of European Economic Policy at the University of Trier, rejected the distinction between utilitarianism and metaphysics. He argued that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is not self-evident but requires careful discernment and value judgement. Any ruler in any regime is tempted to maximise his own happiness at the expense of collective well-being. According to Kant, it is philosophically impossible to reason to ends; instead it is from metaphysics that ends are defined. Applied to the case of values in a European context, the European idea of self-reflection raises questions about the mind and consciousness: the mind turns onto itself and thought can communicate with itself, which may be the single most important European invention, unlike the nirvana in Buddhism or the immutable God in Islam (Allah is Allah). On progress, he mentioned the idea of the survival of the fittest (coined by Herbert Spencer [1820-1903]), which not only predated the use of this term by Charles Darwin (1809-1882), but also constituted a fundamentally different ethics compared with ancient philosophy, e.g. Heraclites who argued that the father of all things is war.

One participant interjected that Europe has religion and thus a distinct cultural identity, whereas the Americans are utilitarian and their only religion is democracy. In the USA, democracy is considered as something more than a set of values; it is consonant with freedom, moral, political and economic. As such, American culture has created commercial values, which are rational but not universal; instead, commercial values are relativist. Moreover, the USA is Machiavellian, whereas the EU is Erasmian (peace over violence), which explains the current conflict between America and Islam. However, what Europe lacks is a proper political identity, at a time when metaphysics is far from our contemporary culture.

A. Clesse sharply disagreed with this view. He contended that Americans are both very religious and anti-Machiavellian. He also disputed the pre-eminence of democracy in the USA, by asking why there is no reaction on the part of the civil society against ‘extraordinary



renditions' which is perpetrated by the US. Likewise, why are there no protests in Romania against 'extraordinary renditions' on Romanian territory? More fundamentally, he insisted on the ethno-centric bias in analysing cultures and their values: for example, is it right to speak of suicide bombings or is it not more accurate to describe such actions as acts of self-sacrifice (at least from the perspective of those who commit them)? He also said that notions such as power need to be used carefully and that a discussion which aspires to be conceptual and philosophical requires clear distinctions between different forms, e.g. will power, mental power and material power.

Another participant referred to the Illiad and Heraclites and argued that thought has the power to materialise; every culture acts on the basis of thoughts, such that ideas are central to the analysis of values embodied in actions. In order to comprehend other cultures, it is necessary to draw the distinction between personal and social values. For instance, Asian personal values include hard work, learning, honesty, self-discipline, fulfilling obligations; Asian social values include orderly society, harmony, respect for authority. By contrast, Western personal values consist of success in life, personal advancement and Western social values emphasise freedom and security. Thus, one fundamental difference between Asian and Western values is that the Asian approach is from the whole to the individual, whereas the Western approach is from the self to the whole. This distinction between holism and individualism is crucial to both culture and politics.

III. Does it make sense to set up a catalogue of values?

Prior to the third session, three working groups were established in order to explore the similarities and differences between the three dominant sets of values:

- (i) European vs. American values
- (ii) Western vs. Asian values
- (iii) Islamic vs. Christian values

The aim of the working groups was to foster reflections and debate among the participants and to draw up a summary of the discussions.

Thereafter, A. Clesse continued his exposition of some of the main figures of the ethical tradition. The Stoics developed a kind of anthropology, a doctrine of impulses or impetus (passions or pathos), according to which the will is an affect led by reason. The opposite of reason is folly (related to greed, lust and the wrong account of reality). One of the main representatives of the Stoic was Epictetus (c. 55-135), who argued that reason is the supreme principle and that pure joy is the opposite of lust. For the Stoics, the final *telos* of existence is to live in line with nature. There is a similarity with Aristotle in that virtue is right reason (*orthos logos* or *recta ratio*). Notions which are equivalent to *phronesis* and *eukaiosis* can also be found in Stoic ethics. Like the Greeks before them, the Stoics believed in the existence of natural law: on their account, global universal reason (*koinos logos*) leads to obligations, duties and solidarity with all people. Like Aristotle, autarchy is key because it enables human beings to be true to themselves and not to have any regrets. In this philosophy, the spirit, mind or soul is almighty and considered to be the supreme principle. There is an antagonism

between freedom and necessity: because fate is all-powerful, the Stoics defended an ethos of necessity.

By contrast, the Epicureans believed in the freedom of the will and in the prevalence of instincts and emotions over reason: the morally good consists in lust; the subjective lust is the principle of the Good. However, theirs was not a pure hedonism; instead, they also emphasised the importance of measure and the ability to control and limit oneself.

Augustine (or St. Augustine of Hippo [354-430]), inherited both Greek metaphysics and Roman philosophy and combined both with ideas derived from scripture. He argued that eternal ideas (*rationes aeternae*) constitute the basis for cognition and for morality, for ethics is eternal and follows the eternal unchanging law of God (*lex aeterna*, comprising *lex naturalis*, *lex voluntatis* and *lex rationis*). Augustine also believed in the primacy of the will: he argued that all forms of motion (*motus*) are a function of the will and that the human will is imbued with eternal ideas. Furthermore, for Augustine, blessedness or blissfulness (as found in the early text *De beata vita*) is related to the Good which infuses all things with goodness. Thus, what is good leads to happiness and peace. Ultimately, this is why the City of God (*civitas Dei*) will prevail over the earthly city (*civitas terrena*). Later, in the Middle Ages, Peter Abelard (1079-1142) opposed the will (*intentio*) to work/deed (*opus*) and contended that intention alone is insufficient to attain the Good. Likewise, Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-1328) spoke of the *scintilla animae* in order to explain why the finite human mind can cognise God. Before him, St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) had tried to show that participation in God, in the Good and in being are the same and these forms of participation coincide. For God is supreme goodness and self-subsistent being (*ipsum esse subsistens*). Thus to be good is to behave according to nature which comes from and returns to God (*exodus et reditus*).

These reflections led G. M. Ambrosi to refer to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely the idea that all thoughts are manifestations of the Spirit; the mind is not in or of itself but instead it appears and as such it is eternal because it manifests the eternity of the Spirit or the Absolute. The Greek root of these concepts is the idea of the stability of the mind set (*ataraxis*). On his reading, Meister Eckhart pertains to the tradition of mysticism and negative theology because he believed that in some fundamental sense God is not: He does not exist unless you create Him in yourself.

A. Pabst contended that the principal divergence between ancient philosophy and Christian theology on the one hand and modern thought on the other hand can be traced back to the fundamental difference between realism and nominalism. Broadly speaking, realism can be described as a set of ideas according to which universals are real, i.e. notions such as the Good, the Beautiful and the Just are not simple figments of our imagination but have an independent extra-mental existence. If they exist and if they are not the product of fantasy which the mind projects onto the world, we can know them. This is because they make themselves known to our minds via our senses – they are like ideas in things which have an immaterial form that the immaterial mind can cognise. On the contrary, nominalism denies the independent extra-mental reality of universals. Rather, the Good, the Beautiful and the Just are notions *of* the mind *in* the mind, abstract concepts without any correlate in the real material world. Universals are mere names (*nomina*), attributed to things which have an abstract similarity, i.e. which have a certain resemblance based on abstraction for their

materiality. The contention is whether the physical world reveals anything other than ephemeral matter and whether appearances and essences are in any way related.

This difference is not just academic but has significant implications for current debates on the future of Europe. For liberalism has inherited the nominalist denial of the reality of universals and argues that notions such as goodness or justice are purely subjective. Thus, any debate on universals belongs exclusively to the private sphere of individual conscience and personal judgement. What is good or beautiful is a matter of taste, opinion and conjecture and therefore outside the realm of universal reason. However, the purported neutrality of liberal values such as liberty and tolerance cannot disguise the value commitments involved in the liberal creed – individualism, freedom of choice and the primacy of secular ideology over religious beliefs. The liberal structures of thought and practice are in no way more universal than those of other ideologies and cultures which liberalism denounced as backward and obsolete. On the contrary, liberalism is similarly hegemonic as Communism and thereby stifles genuine reflection and open discussion. If Europe wishes to overcome the current impasse and build a real alternative socio-economic and political model, then what is required is a true contest for rival ideas of the ‘common good’ and the ‘good life’ and practices which can embody them. Nominalism in all its various guises prohibits such a contest and needs to be abandoned in favour of a new form of realism which can relate metaphysics to politics and thus make both once again relevant to contemporary European society.

After this discussion, A. Clesse turned to some of the key elements of Asian conceptions of ethics, beginning with Buddhism. He explained that *karma* denotes the universal law and encompasses punishment, retaliation and sanctioning of all good and bad actions, until all *karma* has been eliminated and the freedom from all desire has been achieved. Concomitantly, there are no eternal imperishable substances; instead, there is perishable matter and *dharma*, i.e. factors of existence which give shape and form to matter. What drives material things is *samskaras*, i.e. a series of basic impulses and forces which move beings. In some sense, life so construed is cyclical, in that *karma* comes out of the creature that has died. Buddhism is thus strongly determinist and fatalist. Non-knowledge is the last and most important cause of suffering, caught in a cycle of *avidya*, the thirst or longing for something. Coupled with the will to live, beings seek to triumph over all thirsts, lusts and impulses in order to reach some form of *nirvana* in this life and the perfect *nirvana* after death. Two other key features of Buddhist thought are self-abdication and complete chastity.

Taoism or Daoism derives from the word *dao*, i.e. the way, the original basis of everything, partially transcendental, without any attributes and partially immanent, ‘located’ both in beings and above them. According to the Taoist worldview, human beings are perhaps of a lesser quality than other animate substances because as a result of knowledge and will, humans tend to be induced into error. Therefore Taoism believes in the virtue of ‘doing nothing’ (*wuwei*). Death is to be overcome or transcended by way of mysticism and quietism, *ying* and *yang*, as well as the desire for immortality.

Confucianism, however, offers a rationalisation of heaven, which is conceived as a morally acting power. The notion of humanity connotes piety, loyalty, obeying the law, reliability and modesty. The patriarchal family model prevails and there are five key relationships: ruler and civil servants; father and son; man and woman; older and younger brother; friend and friend. Hinduism emphasises the birth, death and reincarnation (*samsara*) of the individual soul (not

unlike the Buddhist *dharma*). The pre-eminence of classes and castes highlights the importance of determinism and mechanism. According to the idea of *karma*, the cosmos is formed by a form of causality which consists of punishment, retaliation and sanctioning of all deeds. This configuration ascribes all creatures their place according to their deeds in the previous existence. Thus, only through renouncing the world and divine mercy is redemption and salvation from all forms of earthly attachment and all kinds of ties available (*moksha*).

Shintoism honours and celebrates nature, ancestors and some divinities. Its main ethical ideals are honesty, self-control and fulfilling one's duty. The notion of *magokoro* means to have a pure heart and to adopt a pure and humane attitude towards life. The term *Bushido* refers to a warrior ethics that is predicated upon loyalty towards the Master, bravery in battle and contempt for death.

Finally, A. Clesse outlined the main tenets of Jainism. The highest telos is *samsara*, liberating man from the eternal cycle of birth and reincarnation, through true insight and acting, especially asceticism. 'Jain' means 'the victor' and Jainists make five basic vows. The first is the most important – not to hurt any living being (*ahimsa*). The other four can be summarised as follows: to renounce lying, stealing, sexuality and property. According to Jainism, souls are eternal and there is no beginning of time in time. The idea of *karma* is also widely used, with a particular focus on deeds in former existences. Some souls can be redeemed, others not. Through asceticism and meditation, one can achieve redemption or salvation (*moksha*), but only by purifying and thus correcting the corruption of the soul, most clearly by living as a monk (*sallekhana*, fasting until death).

The discussion centred upon some of the specificities of Asian values and the differences with European principles. G. M. Ambrosi mentioned that superstition was key to the development of religions in Asia, above all in the case of eradicating Buddhism in India. Another example is the widespread practice in China to worship the Buddha for the sake of business success. One participant drew the distinction between Western monotheism and Asian polytheism. He also remarked that *samsara* encompasses the salvation from 64,000 forms of life and reincarnation and that the supreme form of life is human life. There is the possibility to descend to lower forms of life, which is not the case in monotheism.

C. Coker returned to the question of the origins of Europe. He argued that the first Europeans were the Romans, not the Greeks; only German philosophers reified the Greeks as Europe's founding fathers. According to Virgil (70-19 BC)'s *Enneads*, what makes Aeneas European is his conflicted nature – to be torn between family and society, to face a mandated history, a civilising mission; ideas which are wholly absent from ancient Greek thinkers. Rome is universal, everyone can become Roman, which is not true of Greek city-states. The reason why we tend to invoke Greek culture is because of the binary nature of Greek thinking, especially the dialectical tension, which helps to cause and reinforce unhappiness because we become alienated from ourselves. This is already mirrored by the idea of the Fall and the secularised versions in Hegel, Marx and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). So what distinguishes Europeans from the Americans is that we cannot be happy. Moreover, we Europeans go back to Socrates because we have two martyrs – Christ and Socrates, one divine who overcomes the Fall and saves human kind from its lot, the other secular who invented the private conscience, breaking away from the city. Thus, Socrates in some important sense inaugurated



the transition from a shame to a guilt culture, reinforcing the unhappiness which seems intrinsic to ‘European-ness’. By contrast, there are strong elements of shame in contemporary American culture today; this is primarily the result of Puritanism and is widely reflected in TV, e.g. Oprah Winfrey, the Jeffrey Springer show etc.

In response to these reflections, A. Pabst contended that Greek philosophy was instrumental to the rise of European culture, insofar as it helped to articulate monotheism and thus shaped the emergence of Europe as the ‘land of the three faiths’. Crucially, the specificity of Greek metaphysics and theological monotheism is the rejection of all variants of fatalism and superstition and the belief that all forms of life are the result of God’s creative activity, out of love and goodness. As such, creation is coextensive with freedom. Likewise, contrary to modern ideas of alienation (including Marx and Freud), the Fall does not mark perpetual unhappiness until the second coming of Christ. Rather, the Fall constitutes the advent of evil within the profoundly harmonious ordering of creation as a result of turning away from God’s goodness. This is why Augustine defined evil as the privation of the Good (*privatio boni*). So the idea of the primacy of the Good marks the synthesis of Greek metaphysics (especially Plato’s concept of the self-diffusive Good) and monotheism (especially the idea of creation *ex nihilo*). Far from being an abstraction or a dogma based exclusively on supernatural faith, for patristic and medieval Christians (and Jews and Muslims too), the radiance of the Good which refracts across the entire cosmos means that all beings are both individual and relational – they have their own unique identity as a result of standing in mutually individuating relations. Relationality is perhaps paradoxically the mark of pre-modern conceptions of individuality. This has been omitted by genealogies of the modern man, including Charles Taylor’s seminal book *Sources of the Self – The Making of the Modern Identity* (1992).

IV. The historical legacies: Greek and Roman; Renaissance; Enlightenment; French Revolution. What remains of these values? What should be kept of them?

After Asian values and ethical traditions, A. Clesse focused on some fundamental questions before outlining modern conceptions of morality. He spoke about the decency of life and compassion, which stand in diametric opposition to Nietzsche’s philosophy. However, in order to avoid confusion, it is crucial to distinguish empathy from sympathy and to remember the focus on life in the thought of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Nietzsche and other figures associated to the critique of Greek metaphysics philosophy, patristic and medieval Christian theology and early modern philosophy. More importantly, the key question is about what the right mixture of values might be – the right moral life that would make us better people and improve society. Perhaps our cultural predicament is that we focus excessively on secondary values (equality, non-discrimination, etc.) and thus neglect primary values.

Following these reflections, A. Clesse discussed the ethics of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). According to Hobbes, pure sensualism leads to nominalism: sense perception is limited to appearances and names and cannot attain essences. As such, man is not free but instead dominated by egoism and selfishness (*cupiditas naturalis*). The state of nature is the war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*), because man is the enemy of man (*homo homini*

lupus). Because violence is constitutive of human nature, perpetual war can only be averted by delegating power to a central authority, the Leviathan. The state has to be absolute and almighty, and there can be no freedom of conscience. By contrast, John Locke (1632-1704) argued that there are no innate principles in or of our mind (in total opposition to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz [1646-1716]). Locke emphasised the importance of experience: external (sensation) and internal (reflection); the latter requires the former, and their interaction leads to the formation of ideas in the mind. There are also elements of an eudaimonistic philosophy in the works of Locke, as well as the role of divine law, civil law and public opinion. Locke believed that what is a virtue or a vice is not eternal and a-temporal but depends on the kind of society, class, circumstance, nation and point in history.

For David Hume (1711-1776), all perceptions stem from impressions and are therefore both necessary for knowledge and by themselves insufficient to know essences. Association is the fundamental psychic law of Hume's philosophy: perceptions are linked according to the law of similarity, in space and time. He also distinguished four kinds of qualities. First, those useful for the community, e.g. justice; secondly, those useful to the self, e.g. thrift; thirdly, those directly pleasant to the self, such as joyfulness, courage, goodness and magnanimity; finally, those directly useful for others, including modesty and politeness. According to Hume, moral judgements or approval come from the use of reason or inclination/penchant. A penchant is an inner feeling or sense which nature has endowed human beings with. As a result of his mechanistic thinking, for Hume there is no moral freedom of choice; instead, external stimuli have an impact on emotions and the mind and thereby produce reactions.

G. M. Ambrosi underlined the centrality of the social contract in early modern European thought. In essence, Hobbes is the ideologue of absolutism, whereas Locke is the apologist of Cromwell and the Glorious Revolution. In fact, the Leviathan is the supreme power which holds the monopoly over life and death. By contrast, for Locke the ruler is the agent of those he represents. Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) illustrated another aspect of collective action by way of an analogy: according to the Fable of the Bee, private virtues and public vices entertain a complex relation, for excessive individual thrift can destroy local economies. The moral dimension of this economic reality is absolutely crucial because it constitutes the foundation of the tradition of modern political economy. Indeed, Adam Smith (1723-1790) started as a moral philosopher. He argued that benevolence is best secured by self-interest: if each person looks after his or her own self-interest, society will be served best because each will find their proper place within the societal and economic order.

Following these remarks, C. Coker confirmed that Adam Smith was primarily a moral philosopher. His conception of moral sentiments was not derived from religion or law but instead from nature. Truth is 'situated' in history, but we never learn from history. This contrasts with the predominance of education in Hobbes' *Leviathan* – you can learn morality. There are thus no pre-moral or pre-historical societies; the state of nature is the 30 Years War. More fundamentally, unlike Kant's and Hegel's utopianism, progress is neither necessary nor linear and history can be a de-civilising a process, as societies can revert back, e.g. through civil strife, be it the sacking of Magdeburg in 1631 or the indiscriminate bombing of Dresden in 1945. As such, the terrible mistake of Hobbes is to base everything on fear: the survival instinct is stronger than sacrifice, but Hanna Arendt (1906-1975) and others have argued that we do die for our friends (patriotism or, worse, nationalism). There are three reasons for war: greed, diffidence (fear), glory (status). Contemporary Europe has, so to speak, gone out of the



glory business, but still continues to be fearful and greedy, which is why it still wages war (e.g. the 1999 war on Serbia and Kosovo).

A. Pabst argued that the mark of modern philosophy, politics and ethics is the shift from realism to nominalism and the concomitant move from theological transcendence to philosophical immanence. Hobbes is a late representative of medieval nominalism which was inaugurated by John Duns Scotus (c. 1265/66-1308) and William of Ockham (c. 1288/89-1349). Nominalism denied the reality of universals like Beauty, Goodness and Justice and reduced them to exclusively mental entities – mere names without any real correlate. As such, nominalism erased God from reality and introduced an irreducible divide between the immaterial mind and the material world. This dualist legacy was extended and radicalised by Descartes who substituted reality with clear and distinct ideas as the ultimate ground of knowledge. Thus, philosophy abandoned real being and became primarily concerned with formal knowledge. This formalism extended to politics and ethics and was mirrored by the decline of virtues and the rise of abstract principles and individual rights. Instead of emphasising the shared nature of being and politics (in particular the orientation towards the highest Good), modernity shifted the focus onto the lowest common denominator – a catalogue of minimal rights and the pursuit of happiness or utility. (Baruch) Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677) appeared to bring back theological transcendence by equating God with nature (*Deus sive natura*), but ultimately his philosophy rejected the monotheistic idea of creation *ex nihilo* and paved the way for a secular form of immanence. As such, Spinoza's thought represents an alternative to the primacy of the Good which is shared by Greek metaphysics and monotheistic theology, but his system is arbitrary insofar as he makes unwarranted and indemonstrable assumptions.

C. Coker emphasised the importance of the seventeenth century in forging modern ethical theories. According to Stephen Toulmin's book *Cosmopolis*, Europe took a disastrous turn in the early seventeenth century when eminent figures such as Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) and William Shakespeare (1564-1616) were discarded and a mechanistic view of nature was adopted. In line with Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Bacon, knowledge was henceforth construed as a power which enables the conquest of nature and human pre-eminence. The ideology of blanket progress, which was also a seventeenth-century invention, placed man at the centre of the world – man as the measure of all things and the ultimate arbiter of all values. The Scottish Enlightenment, especially the works of Adam Ferguson (1723-1826), was different to the extent that it highlighted the centrality of civil society and the importance of role-playing in the city and society. Rather than embracing the formalism of abstract principles and individual rights, professional ethos and the idea of duty gained once again currency. It is therefore best to speak of multiple rival modernities which cannot be reduced to one monolithic core and which embody the pluralism of modern life.

In contrast to C. Coker and A. Pabst, G. M. Ambrosi defended the modern ideal of progress and pointed to the revolutionary invention of modern mathematics, which was at the origin of social and scientific development. Moreover, the conception of deity or divinity in terms of substance marked an evolution in thinking which benefited humankind in the sense of stressing the subjectivity of God – God as a person who is both unlike and like human beings. The advent of humanism had tremendous cultural and political consequences for Europe and

ushered in a period of growth, expansion and the discovery of the New World, underpinned by scientific inventions and openness towards the rest of the world.

C. Coker disputed this reading of modern philosophy. He contended that most eighteenth-century philosophers were atheists or deists. For example, David Hume, when asked about why there was so much cruelty in the world, said that God suffered from senile dementia and had actually forgotten that he had created the world!

A. Clesse shifted the focus of the discussions away from the modern idea of success towards the ideal of a morally decent life. He referred to Immanuel Kant, in particular his defence of autonomy and self-determination. In some important sense, Kantian philosophy marked the Copernican moment of intellectual history, affirming the human will against mechanistic and deterministic conceptions, a move from objectivity to subjectivity. The subsequent oscillation between freedom and the determination of human nature continued to dominate the works of Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud, and it is still relevant today, in the light of recent discoveries on the brain and the sub-consciousness. The delusion that we have total knowledge might well be as superstitious as those traditional ‘backward’ cultures we deride and chide for their superstition. C. Coker echoed these reflections by pointing to genetic determinism and neuroscientific accounts of reality as attempts to refute the mystery of God and classical theism and to dismiss ideas like the existence of the soul. One participant argued that the single most important invention of modernity was the theory of the separation of powers (developed and systematised by Montesquieu [1689-1755]) and the rise of democracy.

V. How to preserve and defend values?

At the beginning of the next session, A. Clesse wondered about how individuals come to have values. He then raised a series of fundamental questions which framed the subsequent discussions. Are all values instilled by parents, family, community and society during childhood and adolescence? What is the role of institutions and practices such as religious education and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. How strong are religion and popular practice nowadays? What is the status of religious and/or cultural symbols like the headscarf? Is it true that since 1990, there has been change of mentalities and/or values in Central and Eastern Europe? Was there a Communist ethos and has it been replaced by a Capitalist and Liberal Democratic one? Or was it purely cynical? What about social justice, equity, equality, a sense or perhaps even a spirit of community? Or is all this sheer propaganda? How to relate the level of discourse and that of lived experience? Was the Enlightenment a turning point, philosophically, intellectually or even morally? How to grasp the emphasis on the self (Charles Taylor) and the focus on community and virtue (Alasdair MacIntyre)? Is law-making at the level of the state or that of the individual (self-determination but also self-fulfilment)? In what way have Christian values changed and is it true that to claim that Islam has not evolved? To what extent have we recently seen a reaction or perhaps even a backlash against individualism, including communitarianism?

He then outlined the tenets of Immanuel Kant’s philosophy. The first element is a shift from theoretical to practical reason. This move is tied to a critique of analytical judgement and synthetic judgement and the idea that metaphysical knowledge must be based on timeless foundations (the *a priori*), not based on experience (the *a posteriori*). Against empiricism,



Kant argues that reason derives its laws from the realm of *noumena* which is prior to the realm of phenomena. Secondly, Kant posited what he termed ‘*Sollensnotwendigkeit*’, the idea that ‘I should, therefore I can’. There is thus no absolute necessity, but the ‘ought’ is the ultimate ground for the ‘is’ and the ‘can’. This is because the ideal of pure reason is the absolute (*das Unbedingte*) and as thus founds moral freedom to realign what is with what ought to be. In turn, this requires consciousness of the ‘inner tribunal’ and knowledge of the ‘ought’ (*Sollen*).

The philosophy and ethics of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854) revolve around thinking about nature and thereby creating nature. Nature and creation are coextensive and overcome the early modern dualism. As such, divine action is not external to the world but inscribed into reality. For Schelling, the history of humanity is a history of redemption. By contrast, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) argued that everything derives from a transcendental self. Fichte’s philosophy and ethics are based on a series of dualisms, including appearance-essence and reality-ideality. His aim was to overcome classical theism, empiricism and utilitarianism; he even used nationalism to clarify his critique and set out his vision.

Following these ideas, one participant remarked that Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), in the context of Napoleon and nationalism, also tied philosophy to Romanticism and defended a radical form of nationalism. However, nationalism should not be judged by the experience of the twentieth century, nor by the events across the Balkans in the 1990s. G. M. Ambrosi said that there was a clear link between Romanticism and nationalism, as both Hegel and Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832) admired Napoleon. He also mentioned a number of specifically religious initiatives against nationalistic tendencies, e.g. John Paul II’s text *De dignitate Europae*. He defended the Enlightenment because it confronts everyone with critical ideas and encourages all to dare think for themselves. C. Coker remarked that Nietzsche hated Kant because the second categorical imperative smells of cruelty; it excludes Jews because Jews excluded themselves in virtue of being God’s chosen people. In some sense as a response, Hans Jonas (1903-1993) elaborated the third categorical imperative – to treat the environment as an end, not as a means. The meaning of modernity is that ideas can change the world, unlike the Greeks who engaged in contemplation. As such, modern philosophy advocates action and revolution. The break between England and the continent is that English philosophy rejected Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and developed a different philosophy. Moreover, nowadays there are numerous intellectual fault-lines between Britain and the continent – analytical *versus* continental philosophy, English Romanticism *versus* German idealism, etc.

A. Pabst was less sanguine about the Enlightenment and argued that the French *philosophes* posited abstract principles which bore no phenomenally intelligible relations with practices. As such, the Enlightenment radicalised the Cartesian dualism between the mental realm (*res cogitans*) and the physical realm (*res extensa*) and Kantian phenomena and noumena. Furthermore, the ideals of the French Revolution – *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* – were not modern inventions but had already been championed by medieval theologians. However, what is true is that the Enlightenment constituted a reaction against divinely sanctioned absolutism. Metaphysically, the Enlightenment project may well be flawed. But politically, it provided a much-needed change compared with the absolutist rule of the monarchy. However, as the ‘Glorious Revolution’ in England in 1688-89 showed, there was an alternative to the

indiscriminate violence of the *Terreur* – the abolition of absolutism and the establishment of a parliamentary democracy was not accompanied by mass killings and a sustained period of violent civil war. Nor did England restore the monarchy and engage in a decade-long attempt to subjugate the rest of Europe, like Napoleon. There were thus rival modernities; neither French idealism nor German Romanticism could claim a monopoly on modern philosophy and ethics.

C. Coker mentioned Theodor Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) but dismissed the core idea – that modernity somehow produced the Holocaust as a result of an excessive focus on scientific progress without any ethical limits because modernity eliminates God from the realm of immanence and elevates human law into the supreme absolute. However, the Scottish Enlightenment, especially the works of Adam Ferguson, had itself a critique of the modern evolution of war from considerations of honour to calculations of profit. As such, Hegel was right to call Kant naïve because in Kantian philosophy there is no room for virtue. Instead, already in the nineteenth century, war was fought for reasons of spreading free trade and human rights. In short, war was portrayed as part of a civilising mission but barely disguised the imperialist rationale, e.g. the Opium Wars. In some way, this is still valid today: the bourgeoisie has not gone out of the 'war business' but it has changed the terms.

G. M. Ambrosi rejected A. Pabst's critique of modernity in general and the Enlightenment in particular. He argued that philosophical and scientific progress was instrumental in generating economic growth and social equality. However, it is also correct that the worst excesses of modern thought led to absolutist accounts of progress and competition. In this sense, the ideas most clearly associated with social Darwinism – natural selection, purity and race – were responsible for the two world wars.

A. Clesse drew the discussions to a close by mentioning nihilism. He expressed doubt as to whether Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons* had indeed made a major contribution to the emergence of nihilism. Instead, what is more certain that the prominence of despair in the writings of key European figures prepared the ground for the advent of nihilism in philosophy. Moreover, one important question is whether power changes character and modifies idealism to the point of sanctioning exclusion and violence. The main problem is the difficulty of establishing links of causality between philosophical ideals and political practices. C. Coker concluded that modernity and the passage to postmodernity are coterminous with the idea of *tabula rasa* – figures as varied as the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) and Heinrich Himmler shared the conviction that all traces of the past must be eliminated from human memory and that a new society must be built on the ruins of the traditions which have collapsed and been destroyed. Insofar as this dissolution of age-old certainties is accompanied and perhaps even driven by secularisation, nihilism was both a consequence of, and a reaction to, the 'death of God'.

VI. The values proclaimed and propagated by the EU

The sixth session was devoted to a discussion on the foundations of values. A. Clesse explained that foundations are not identical with sources because the ultimate foundation or ground encompasses both the origin and the finality of values – what values are and what they

ought to be. There are thus different possible foundations. First, human nature: according to social biology, for example the works of Edward Wilson (b. 1929), there is no such thing as altruism, because altruism is but another form of egoism. Such and similar views have also been put forward by Richard Dawkins (b. 1941) in his book *The Selfish Gene* (first published in 1976). In juxtaposition to the paradigm of an inborn altruism, analysis tends instead to focus on inborn aggression. Reference was made to Konrad Lorenz (1903-1989) and his book *Das sogenannte Böse* (published in 1963). Inborn aggression is experienced as evil by those who are the object of aggressive behaviour.

The second possible foundation of values is reason as opposed to natural instincts. For instance, decency can be a matter of rational calculation; however, this raises the question as to whether decency leads to the maximisation of happiness or success by being treated oneself more decently. At the same time, there seems to be a tension between scientific progress on the one hand and ethical ideals on the other hand. Or perhaps it is more accurate to speak of the specific values which are inherent to rationalism. Moreover, eminent modern philosophers like Immanuel Kant believed that early modern rationalism is excessive and that the emphasis on 'pure reason' must and can be balanced by incorporating 'practical reason'. In fact, Kant thought that reason rather than faith leads to a universal ethics – the Kantian imperative requires to "act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it would become a universal law".

The third possible foundation of values is religion. A. Clesse invoked the Old Testament, values like humility and argued that the historical role of religion in forming ethical visions is ambiguous. On the one hand, religion seeks to be absolute and universal. On the other hand, religion can be arbitrary and relativist. C. Coker then argues that the French contemporary sociologist Marcel Gauchet (b. 1946) has gone as far as saying that Christianity is predicated upon the logic of the exit of religion from religion – the disenchantment of the world (Max Weber) is the product of Christianity, not secular modernity. What these three different foundations highlight is the complex nature of values and the tension between the original source and the subsequent evolution of moral theories and practices.

C. Coker contrasted a number of contemporary reflections on values with early modern concepts. He discussed the meaning of Richard Dawkins's thesis of the selfish gene and also referred to the shift from chivalry and ethos to the idea of merit and the modern concept of vocation on the other hand. The main difference is that modern conceptions tend to emphasise the specificity and particular purpose, whereas pre-modern accounts are more holistic and all-encompassing. In this context, reference was also made to the concept of "authenticity", defined as "being true to one's own nature". The problem is that as social beings we have no identity except through others and for others and this must also shape our creation and practice of values. According to the Spanish thinker Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo (1864-1936), we have no identity without others: esteem and respect from others is paramount for one's social role. This differs from the post-modern obsession with alterity and difference (or Derrida's *différance*) insofar as Unamuno's account is genuinely plural and thereby overcomes the duality between the modern self and the post-modern other. Concretely speaking, this pluralist theory stresses the importance of communities: professional ethos means that an entire community of experts judges and is judged by others based on shared (and disputed) standards of excellence. As such, ethos refuses the logic of power based on physical or psychological force. Thus, the master-apprentice relationship cannot be equated

with that of the master and the servant. However, what is genuinely new in modern ethics is the centrality of self-reflection, as articulated by Shakespeare in *Macbeth* and *Claudius*. The ancient world did not have this concept of self-reflection. It believed in the integrity of feeling. For example, Achilles killed without inhibition or reflection. In many ways, self-reflection is a modern Protestant concept and can also be treated as a source of value and value evaluation, namely self-evaluation.

A. Clesse then shifted the discussion to values and ethos during the Communist rule in Romania. He asked the participants about the change in values after 1989 and the transition from Communism to capitalism. This topic triggered a lively debate amongst the participants. Some argued that even during the Cold War East and West shared fundamental values but that they differed at the level of action. The basic problem was that the Socialist system did not honour good behaviour. Therefore, bad behaviour became ingrained and the rigidity of the system reinforced bad habits. Only education and the arrival of a new generation which will be untainted by the Communist past will be able to enact real change. Asked about examples, the participant mentioned the lack of respect for property, indifference towards considerations of inefficiency and the demise of solidarity – for fear of punishment, people refused to help others beyond their normal duties and threats to one's own life encouraged betrayal of neighbours and even relatives. As a result, loyalty was undermined and the rhetoric of solidarity was deployed for purposes of propaganda: May Day celebrations championed social justice, but in reality there was little evidence of large-scale redistribution. In addition to this gap between principle and practice, human rights were violated and beliefs destroyed, such that nihilism became the default position – not to believe in anything any longer was a veritable lifestyle, a cynical reaction to the *status quo*. As far as religion was concerned under socialism, there were in fact competing creeds, religious and secular, reactionary and utopian. There were even fights between churches for property, so the moral acceptability of churches suffered as a result.

The true problem which characterised the Soviet bloc and which was epitomised by the Ukraine was not so much the choice between Communism and democracy but instead between a Soviet or pro-Russian regime of stability on the one hand, and a free-market liberal democratic disorder on the other hand. If people feel nostalgic about Soviet times and desire once again closer ties with Russia, it is not so much for ethnic and cultural reasons but because they miss the order and stability which existed under Soviet rule. In part, this explains why people craved for new ideologies and beliefs after the collapse of the Communist system in 1989. However, as another participant argued, hopes were quickly dashed when the new elites turned out to be equally corrupt, for example Yulia Tymoshenko in the Ukraine, one of the protagonists of the so-called 'Orange Revolution' who had become a billionaire in the 1990s thanks to the privatisation in the energy sector.

This description of the events in the Ukraine was contested by a third participant who contended that Russia is no hegemonic power which seeks to control its neighbours. The Ukraine has enjoyed fifteen years of independence and the new freedoms are appreciated, including in the Eastern part. It was in former times forbidden to say where one came from, but this has changed irreversibly.

Other participants said that nowadays people are much more religious than during Communist times but there are increasing divisions within Eastern Orthodoxy, above all between the



Moscow and the Kiev Patriarchs. Yet other participants dismissed the importance of religion in the transition after 1989. Religion is not a source of value but just a trend. People have no knowledge about religion and embrace it not for what it is but for what it provides – a source of comfort and support in times of heightened insecurity and fear about the present and the future.

A participant from Romania referred to the values of industrialization in an agricultural age. There are specific secondary values in an agricultural society and these values were catapulted into a rapidly industrialising society under socialism. Under agricultural conditions, community values are more esteemed than under industrialisation. Nevertheless, during the Socialist rule, social contacts were required; for example in order to get a book you had to have good connections to the librarian. When the revolution occurred in 1989, Romanians did not know what to do with their newly found liberty. Aristotle speaks about some tribes being natural slaves because they cannot govern themselves. The Romanians are in this position. One illustration of this is the fact that Ion Iliescu was elected with 89% of the vote in May 1990. On the other hand, Traian Băsescu got only 52% in his election, which shows the growing indifference towards the ruling class.

Following this discussion, C. Coker explained the corrupting nature of totalitarianism in terms of the following four reasons. First, there is an absence of intellectuals in totalitarianism. The "intellectual marrow", which all vibrant societies need, was missing during the Communist rule. Intellectuals are the challenging voices which do not fit into totalitarian regimes. For instance, in 1922 Lenin sent most Russian intellectuals to Paris. Secondly, there *is* opposition, but opposition expresses itself only in cheating the state. For example, Aleksei Grigorievich Stakhanov (1906-1977) was beaten up because he was treated as a traitor. In such a system, productivity all but disappears. Thirdly, civil society does exist and civilised behaviour exists only so far as it is ordered. Under totalitarianism, there are campaigns which promote social behaviour, e.g. friendliness and respect for the elderly. But such and similar values are not adopted and practised out of one's own impetus; instead, they are imposed by the central state for the purpose of social and societal control. In the Soviet Union, civil society was reborn during the 'Great Patriotic War' in order to display and boast about the vitality of Soviet culture. The fourth reason for the absence of intellectuals under totalitarianism is that there is 'inner' emigration, sealing oneself off from society. Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) was a case in point. He was part of the officer corps and after the war eschewed public life. In this context, reference was made to Herman Broch's trilogy *Die Schlafwandler* (1888-1918).

One participant confirmed this account and said that in the transition from rural to urban values, Communism abolished dissent and attempted to forge a monolithic society. The Communist 'New Man' was created so as to consolidate the power of the central state: the life of the individual did not count but was sacrificed for the sake of the community. The natural response was to retreat and to focus on one's own interests. Having thus been atomised, those who lived under the Communist yoke did not know what to do with their liberty after 1989, especially in the wake of the first 'free and fair' elections.

Another participant argued that beyond the common rhetoric, the differences between the various Soviet satellites were profound and significant. For example, Romania was characterised not so much by internationalist Communism than by extreme nationalism – something like 'Ceaușescu-ism'. Moreover, even this ideology was not homogeneous and the

country experienced several distinct periods. This argument draws upon a book by Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for all seasons: A political history of Romanian Communism* (2003). In addition, the problem was that the state owned everybody, and no personality or initiative could develop under this condition. Everybody hated and resented everybody else. Inevitably, this led a prolonged process of moral degradation and decline.

The situation was different in Poland. The reason was that religion played a fundamentally distinct role. Whereas as virtually all the Romanian Orthodox priests were *Securitate* informants and spied on the entire population, the Catholic Church in Poland was a declared enemy of the Communist regime (however, other participants contended that there was in fact Orthodox resistance and that it was the growing poverty which crippled people). The moral crime of Nicolae Ceaușescu was that he destroyed all the authentic leftist traditions. Nowadays, there are no democratic traditions that might revitalise the country and its culture.

Finally, another participant argued that Communism was unable to resist and defeat nationalism. The reason why their civil society was under-developed or inexistent is because the socialist states were agrarian totalitarian societies. The socialist countries in Yugoslavia and across the Balkans did not know how to deal with nationalism and how to contain it. On the contrary, the elites of those societies manipulated people by using nationalism. In so doing, they followed the example of their Western counterparts who had deployed nationalism and xenophobic and anti-Semitic populism since the nineteenth century in order to attain political office and cement their power.

A. Clesse concluded the session by raising the following fundamental question: do the ideas of philosophers emanate from societies or do philosophers shape societies with their ideas? This question is of particular importance for the emergence of the modern state and capitalism because the Enlightenment, which is said to be at the origin of modernity, championed concepts and practices such as self-exploration, self-determination, self-fulfilment, as well as questioning the established authorities, especially the Church and the absolute monarchy.

VII. Does the EU need a value discussion?

A. Clesse launched the seventh session by summarising Hegel's ethical theory. The idea is the only real or reality. The Spirit (*Geist*) is defined as the idea which is with itself (*Bei-Sich-Sein*). In the unfolding of the objective Spirit unfolds the kingdom of freedom, where the world spirit (*Weltgeist*) is reigning. For Hegel, law limits arbitrariness, not freedom. The state is the self-conscious substance and the reality of the moral idea, which is in itself reasonable. The law of the world spirit is the supreme law. As such, the highest duty of individuals is to be members of the state. Thus construed, the state is a God (*ein Gott*), unlike Nietzsche's definition of the state as the coldest of all cold monsters. The centrality of the state derives from the primacy of the whole over all the parts. Human reason uses the interests and passions of man for its ends or purposes. Hegel describes this as the 'cunning of reason' (*List der Vernunft*). The objective of action which seeks to be ethical is general freedom. Hegel's philosophy is characterised by dialectics: thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Hegel's aim is to overcome dualism and attain a higher unity which subsumes and elevates opposites. The dominant state, construed as the embodiment of the world spirit, is both *de facto* and *de iure* dominant. History is neither cyclical nor linear but mediates the Absolute: as such, world

history becomes the world judgement or world tribunal (*die Weltgeschichte wird zum Weltgerichte*)

G. M. Ambrosi underlined Hegel's decisive influence upon Marx. However, the fatal mistake which Marx made was to strip Hegel's philosophy of all metaphysics. As a result, Marx failed to see that the recognition of value is a process of mutual recognition, not the recognition of any one person's value; mutuality is for Hegel necessary for the recognition of values. Moreover, mutuality raises the question of the master and the slave and can only be resolved through a contest for life. Alienation is the confusion of 'master-minds' and 'slave-minds', which is resolvable only through mutual recognition. Eventually the master becomes superfluous, as a slave society moves via a serfdom society to a democratic society. In this respect, the Hegelian concept of *Aufhebung* is crucial: 'sublation' is the wrong translation because it echoes the idea of an upward movement, but this is misleading; overcoming is a better term. Likewise, it is important to realise that for Hegel, the state is not God, but instead the Absolute: the three other key concepts are morality (*Sittlichkeit*), positive law (legislation) and the system of interests. Most importantly perhaps, Hegel defined freedom as 'the insight into the necessity', i.e. understanding the laws of nature.

C. Coker drew attention to the contemporary relevance of Hegel. He argued that for Hegel, what was paramount was to understand the meaning of history at the time when you are alive. Thus he viewed Napoleon as 'the world spirit on a horseback'. But this is a very dangerous idea because it presupposes that we know the world spirit and that history has indeed meaning. By contrast, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, we are a post-historical people and for us everything is historic, but not historical; we cannot make the present historically significant. This is because we are post-revolutionary, unlike Hegel who believed in world-changing events. In this he followed a long tradition, from the Pharaohs who equated freedom with the fate of one man via the Greek ideal of the free city and the Christian belief that everyone is free in the eyes of God to the liberating moment of the French Revolution. In this sense, the Iranian Revolution was perhaps the last European revolution; everything else has either been a palace revolution or a *coup d'état*. The state is important for Hegel because of sacrifice; martyrdom leads to salvation (Hegel uses in this context a crypto-Christian language). Interestingly, Hitler argued that the remarkable feature of the German people was their capacity of sacrifice; Hegel was no fascist, but there are elements of his thought which are open to ambiguity and misunderstanding, which bears great dangers. One aspect of Hegel's philosophy which is specifically European is the idea that there is a burden of history: Napoleon argued that he was invincible and indestructible as long as he carried the burden of European history on his shoulders. As such, he embodied the world spirit and was endowed with a divinely sanctioned mission.

Following these remarks, A. Clesse wondered whether it makes sense to speak of a twenty-first century ethics or even a post-modern ethics. Controversial issues like stem cell research, abortion and euthanasia cannot be addressed without exploring their specific and distinct ethical implications. What is less evident is whether an institution or organisation such as the EU could and should deal with these and other similar ethical questions. What is ethics in a world without God? Before examining some of the underlying questions, he outlined the philosophy of Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Schopenhauer fought against the idea of the freedom of the will. He argued that the body is but an objectivisation of the will, nothing can stop the endless longing of the will which is untameable and thus cannot be

limited. Life is swinging between pain and boredom. What keeps everything alive is the striving for existence (*Dasein*). Human beings are characterised by an infinite egoism, as each is prepared to destroy the world. In addition to egoism, human action can also be driven by malevolence and compassion. According to Kierkegaard, the most fundamental distinction is between the finite and the infinite. In terms of ethics, he distinguished between the aesthetical life, the ethical life and the religious life: there can be liberation from fear only through God's mercy. Faith is a religious belief in the absurd; unlike Hegel, Kierkegaard did not think that human beings can reach the transcendental. For Nietzsche, all existing morals are lies, fiction and calumny: there are no moral phenomena. He replaced these with 'the moral of life', based on the re-valuation or trans-valuation of values. For example, Nietzsche rejected the idea of compassion because it is plebeian and grounded in weakness; instead, he spoke of the 'will to power'. Resentment was central to his critique of existing ethical theories and practices and associated explicitly with the Jews and contrasted with Rome. Another key theme was the innocence of becoming (*Unschuld des Werdens*) and the nakedness of nature. Similar to Kierkegaard, Nietzsche drew the distinction between the aesthetical, the unjust and the teleological dimension of life. He also emphasised the difference between 'ought' and 'will'; based on a strong determinism, Nietzsche referred to the idea of *amor fati* and replaced the 'thou ought' with 'I want/will' which is characteristic of the *Herrenmensch*.

C. Coker echoed the importance of Nietzsche for modern and post-modern ethics. Nietzsche is perhaps the most widely read philosopher and he is even seen as a post-modernist. One of his main innovations was the writing of genealogies and the emphasis on the history or historicity of everything. Another invention was the 'death of God', defined as the inability to find new values and thus the need to revaluing existing values. This does not imply that Nietzsche denied the existence of God. Much rather, God ceases to move people and God is henceforth outside history, but to say this is not to say that the God principle is dead. The idea of a 'year zero' would have disgusted him because there cannot be a fresh start. Indeed, Nietzsche was a great affirmer of life: his main motto, if he had any, was to 'become what you are', to live life, to dig deeper and in this sense to perfect one's essence. He hated ancestor worship and privileged the future, not the past. Because he never adopted the frog perspective of life, he tended to look towards the future and as such he was a great liberator.

A. Pabst described the significance of Nietzsche in terms of his compelling rejection of essentialism and his focus on becoming. Nietzsche sealed the exit from modern foundationalism – the shared Cartesian and Kantian delusion that there are absolute foundations for being and that we can know the conditions of possibility of being based on clear and distinct ideas. As such, Nietzsche also accomplished the move from modern to post-modern philosophy and the search for a new thinking. However, his ambition was undermined by his own misreading of Platonism and Christianity. Against Nietzsche, there are many compelling reasons for rejecting the dualism which he ascribed to Platonism. More importantly, he misconstrued the Christian emphasis on the poor as a sign of endemic weakness and decay. Instead, Plato always argued that ideas are in the world. More importantly, Christianity seeks to liberate and elevate all creatures towards union with God.

Following these interventions, A. Clesse raised two questions. First, do we need a new ethics because our ethical questions and challenges are incommensurable? Secondly, should there be one ethos for Europe or for the world? Or would this be totalitarian? In reference to Hegel's theory of the law, the state and freedom, one participant said that people in Eastern Europe

think of themselves as unfree because of the state and the law, whereas the absence of the state and legislation means despotism. Likewise, Kant's imperative instructs us to be good to ourselves before demanding from others to be good to us. Generally speaking, Locke is important because of the idea of toleration, whereas Hobbes' modern state is seen as opposed to the small medieval states. Other participants mentioned Nietzsche's idea of 'good Europeans', Spengler's thesis about the end of the West and the core claims of social Darwinists.

VIII. Are there differences between Eastern European and Western European values? If so, can there or should there be a convergence?

At the outset of the eighth session, A. Clesse used the detention facilities for illegal immigrants on the Italian island of Lampedusa as an example to illustrate the predicament of people who disturb us in our moral certainties, especially our ideology of human rights. This predicament raises many ethical questions, above all what to do with such 'stray people': deportation, detention or death? Likewise, how to treat the many ethnic and religious minorities who subsist at the margins of the so-called Western civilisation – for instance, what to do about the Roma? The French are perhaps the most hypocritical of all by calling them *personnes de voyage*. The discrepancy between our ideals and our way of life is revolting, especially the hypocrisy that pervades our ideas, practices and mentalities. What we must face up to in our societies is nothing less than selective killing, putting to death those who are least protected. But what is it that gives human beings (*homines sapientes*) the right to kill other creatures? Is it our 'innate superiority', our reason, our sanctity (chosen by fate or God)? Or is it our ruthlessness and our brutality? The most pressing need is a new philosophy which respects all living creatures and does not elevate the human species above and beyond the rest of creation. As such, this philosophy marks a rupture with both modernity and so-called post-modernity. Indeed, for Descartes, animals were merely machines and the modern obsession with man at the expense of other living creatures can only be described as the barbarian period of philosophy.

However, has there been any genuine progress in the last 5, 10 or 50 years in terms of respecting and protecting all living beings? Is it good enough to content ourselves with minor, secondary values such as human rights, the rule of law, democracy and freedom? For example, both Indians and Westerners point to the city of Mumbai as an example of growth and progress. But exactly how many ordinary Indian citizens benefit from the current boom? What about the hundreds of millions who live in 'abject poverty'? Perhaps it is true that human rights have managed to change something in our society, but they have certainly not altered our basic mentalities, behaviour and attitudes; to pretend otherwise is engage in delusion, self-delusion and self-betrayal. Institutions like the UN and the Council of Europe only provide us with a good conscience, they are superfluous and their abolition would not exacerbate the fundamental predicament. What we need instead is a new, real philosophy which is existentialist and as such overcomes the shallowness and banality of contemporary ideologies.

In response to these reflections, one participant argued that ignorance is – and ought to be – our prime value because it expresses our imperfection and replaces arrogance with humility. It is instructive to draw upon the works of Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) who talked about

duty and alterity and thereby hoped to challenge the primacy of individuality. In his intervention, C. Coker pursued some of these themes. According to Levinas, the Holocaust marked the great rupture in European history. Not unlike the works of Zygmunt Bauman (b. 1925), Levinas argued that we have followed the wrong trail paved by Socrates' injunction 'Know Thyself' and the concomitant focus on authenticity and essence. Moreover, as Freud showed, there is ultimately no self to understand. Likewise, for Franz Kafka (1883-1924), there is no centre to the labyrinth of life; the essence of humanity is relation to others. More recently, Hans Jonas has put forward an ethics of responsibility for your own action and for the outside world (time and space); through technological inventions, there can be catastrophic effects on unborn life, future generations and far-flung corners of the globe. Such and similar ethical theories have significant ethical implications for the USA, Europe, and the emerging markets of China and India. Furthermore, in his book *Cosmopolis*, Stephen Toulmin describes the move from the first to the second modernity as that which inaugurates humanising modernity; the destruction by bulldozers of 'perfect machines' marked the beginning of post-modernity. Nowadays, this shift is reflected in the practice of concordance, e.g. consulting the patient about his or her treatment.

A. Clesse responded to these points by saying that Hans Jonas talks of a dualism between man and nature which can be traced back to gnosticism. The rise of gnosis marked the loss of a world order or cosmos. In modern times, this is reflected in the reification of nature. Therefore, Jonas' third categorical imperative stipulates that we must act in such a way that the effects of our actions are compatible with the permanence of human life on earth. In many ways, this echoes the works of Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and Max Scheler (1874-1928). For Bergson, the mark of life or existence is *durée* or duration, consciousness and the *élan vital*: life is a never-ending wave and reality is making itself. The *élan d'amour* is both open and closed, but above all it is an irrepressible *élan*. According to Scheler, we can have an *a priori* insight into ethics by analysing emotions: to construct a grammar of emotions (*Grammatik der Gefühle*) is to discover values through emotions, not inventing them. This theme comes close to the thought of Blaise Pascal (1623-1662). There is thus a stark contrast between Bergson's and Scheler's advocacy of disengagement and Sartre's defence of the *intellectuel engagé*.

This was followed by a brief discussion on the nature of capitalism. G. M. Ambrosi argued that the importance of Marx lies in the prophetic realisation that capital will reach the point where it will not find any opportunities of reproduction. It is then that capitalism will decline and Socialism and Communism become real alternatives. C. Coker contended that the most important insight of Marx is his theory of unintended consequences of the market: e.g. an innovation in the textile industry in Manchester leads to economic repercussions in places as far removed as China and India. In this sense, the crisis of the world economy is not necessarily a crisis of the market economy *per se* but of insufficient attention to the wider implications of certain strategies and policies. A. Clesse concluded this discussion by extending the focus in the direction of politics. He argued that the post-Cold War era has seen a dramatic alternation of idealism and disillusionment. Despite the formal end of Communism, nothing has come out of the decade-long repression and silence in Eastern Europe, even though there was enormous potential to forge something new; a new societal vision, inspired by some intellectuals like Alexander Dubček (1921-1992) in the former Czechoslovakia.

IX. How to promote values? Do we need new values – in Europe and beyond?

The final session continued the discussion on the moral predicament of Central and Eastern Europe since 1989. A. Clesse spoke of the appalling treatment of minorities in the East, especially the segregation and discrimination against the Roma in Romania and elsewhere. One of the worst problems is the divergence and discrepancy between legal provision and practical policies – the lack of implementing the law and granting effective protection to minorities speaks volumes about the utter hypocrisy of the ruling elites in the East and their allies and sponsors in the West. He then raised a number of questions about the future. Does Europe need new values? How can Europe address new ethical challenges like bioethics and vivisection? How can anyone justify the suffering of animal life with view to alleviating the suffering and prolonging human life? Research has shown conclusively that the chimpanzee has 99.8% of human DNA.

Beyond the confines of Europe, the problem is about how to raise awareness and how to address cultural differences with respect to long-standing traditions of eating cats and dogs in large parts of Asia (above all China, Vietnam and Korea). Thus, the question is whether it is desirable and feasible to have same norms for the whole world: basic codes of conduct for entire mankind? Ought there be a common catalogue or consensus? Philosophy can provide some conceptual insights and some alternative ideas: for example, Scheler said that he who loves is stronger than the egoist. Likewise, Weber argued that happiness seeks to be legitimised and that all religions are theodicies of happiness: through suffering man can achieve exceptional strength and experience. What has not been sufficiently explored and conceptualised is the phenomenon of tenderness (*Zärtlichkeit*) which cuts across human and non-human categories. Indeed, modern cultures as varied as German Romanticism and American realism not only oscillate between idealism and extreme brutality but also tend to become more trivial and more brutalised.

In response to these thoughts, some participants spoke of the difficulty to conjoin the unity of a good life with the plurality of incommensurable values. Every human being craves for a decent life, yet at the same time, there are rival conceptions of what a good life might be. As a result, a common catalogue of values is impossible because either people disagree on the substance or else they fail to abide by it, not least because Europeans tend to be ego-centric and care only about their own happiness, without regard to other cultures and civilisations. However, other participants contended that the relativity of values does not preclude a joint commitment to a few common values, most of all the duty for our planet and for our actions. Yet others expressed their scepticism about Europe's ability to construct a widely shared identity, not least because Europe lacks the strong moral base which underpins the American vision and binds together Americans across the board. One participant argued that values are artificial constructs; they are the products of conflicts and wars, not unlike nation-states which are 'imagined communities' (Benedict Anderson). As such, catalogues are little more than instruments to justify the actions of governments and to manipulate the masses. This is what Victor Klemperer articulated in his book *Lingua tertii imperii* (published in 1947). Eichmann had no notion of ethics or values but was only interested in techno-scientific efficiency.

A. Clesse concluded the last session and the summer course by raising a series of questions. First, how far should the EU go in defining values and implementing corresponding policies? Could or should the EU venture into non-chartered territories? Based on the works of Karl Deutsch who argued that communication would enhance integration and eventually lead to a ‘security community’, the problem is whether the EU and its member-states are both willing and able to come up with a new vision. This is equally true of the East and the West, as each have their own specific legacies and difficulties. What were the dominant values under Communism? Is abortion a purely medical issue or also an ethical one? What ethical positions are available to Eastern Europe? More fundamentally, if Communism produced a moral void, is there anything which it can be filled with? Such and similar questions will have to be pursued elsewhere, perhaps also at future summer courses in Vama Veche.

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