APPROACHES

to the
THEOLOGY OF MIGRATION

by

Peter Corbellini C.S.
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Forward: Doing Theology

Theology has become an ambiguous term. It is, therefore, imperative for anyone who plans to do theology to clarify the meaning he attaches to the world. I may clarify my idea of doing theology by describing the process of my thought that develops in three phases or three moments, if I may use the Hegelian terminology.

Faith

The theologian is a believer, i.e. he receives through the mediation of the believing community, of which he is a member, the revelation of the saving God who saves us through Christ crucified and raised from the dead. He believes, therefore, that God is planning and working for the salvation of mankind. This plan, however, is hidden in the divine mind so that no man or angel could know it through his natural insight. "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we (believers) have the mind of Christ" (1C. 2:16).

Christian faith, then, is not so much an acceptance of speculative truths or mysteries that appear as contradictions, but rather a surrendering of one's mind to God acting in our history and saving us through Christ. "We have the same spirit of faith of which Scripture says: 'We believed and so we speak, knowing that he, who raised up Jesus, will raise us up along with Jesus and place both us and you in his presence'" (2C. 2:13-14). Theology, then, begins as an effort to identify the mind of the believer with the mind of God in action: the God of the future who prepares a new life for mankind and for individual men through the risen Christ who had to die in order to be raised.

Mediation

The theologian, as a believer, receives God's revelation through the mediation of the believing community of the Old and New Testament. The prophets of the Old Testament had the experience of being called by Yahweh who broke into their existence unexpectedly (Amos 7:14-15:) and against their will (Jer. 20:7-12) The risen Christ went to encounter the disciples who had given up hope (Lk 24: 13-35). The Bible is just the record of the faith of this believing community enlightened by the prophets and the apostles. The prophets and apostles, however, had to use their human minds and their human languages to communicate their contact with the transcendent to the community. The Bible is then a book, by man, conceived and written in a given intellectual and cultural milieu and in a concrete historical human language.

It is up to the literary critic, the philologist, the historian and the exegete to get to the mind of the human author. Yet, theology goes beyond the literary criticism and exegetical analysis. The theologian believes that God speaks to us through the human minds of the authors. He asks, therefore, what does God tell me now through these authors who wrote under His inspiration centuries ago?

So, the writer, or writers, of Genesis and Exodus believed that Yahweh led Israel into Egypt under the pressure of a famine in Canaan, and allowed them
to be made slaves to the Egyptians so that He could then drive them out under
the leadership of His chosen servant Moses. The Exodus from Egypt was a mighty
act of the God of Israel for the Deuteronomist. It was a revelation still mean-

ingful for the Israelites living in Palestine and later, a revelation of a sav-
ing God, faithful to his promises to the exiled in Babylonia to whom the Deu-
tero Isaiah delivered his comforting message. From the migration of Abraham up
to the resurrection of Christ, the plan of the saving God evolves, progresses
and reaches us in our contemporary situation. It is the characteristic of the
Christian faith to believe in the contemporaneity of the word of God. It is the
task of the theologian to scrutinize the word of the prophets and the apostles
in order to submit his mind to God and to judge human history, correct it, call
man to change it so that it may agree with His plan.

Transforming Knowledge

There are two ways of thinking and two way of looking at things:
thoretical or speculative; practical or transforming.

The classical textbooks of Catholic theology have long followed the
model of knowledge described by Aristotle.

"It is crystal clear that we do not look for such knowledge (first philosophy)
for any practical purpose outside of itself. But, just as we call him free a
man who does not live for another but only for himself, so this type of knowl-
edge is the only free knowledge among all others, because it is practiced for
its own sake only" (Met. 892b. 24-27).

Aristotle enjoyed contemplating the unchanging reality that lies under
the changing appearances, the eternal God 'who is thought of thought' who cannot
be bothered by human affairs and whom the philosophers try to imitate. Specu-
latve theology is an end in itself. Its main effort is to think clearly and to
formulate truths in a coherent discourse that does not involve contradictions.
It is an apologetic theology trying to justify and prove correct the declaration
of the infallible magisterium. If it is applied to history, it works like the
philosophy of Hegel.

It is an effort to understand what has happened, and it comes when the
happenings are over. 'The owl of Minerva spread its wings only with the falling

Against such abstract philosophy and theology stands the remark by
Karl Marx. "It was the business of philosophy up to now to describe the world.
It is time to change it" (Theses on Feuerbach. XI.). We live in a world that
is still in the making. in a world where there is hatred and division, where
there are the oppressed and the oppressors. Christ was sent to change this
world and to dethrone its ruler (Mt 12:27-30; John 12:31-36). St. Thomas is
ordinarily proclaimed as the pioneer of speculative theology. For him, theology
is first of all 'the knowledge God has of himself sharing it with those admitted
to the beatific vision (scientia Dei et beatorum. Summa P.I. q.1. a.2). The
theologian, then, is associated, through faith, with the knowledge God has of
himself and shares some glimpses with the 'beatif'.

Thomas knew, however, that God is essentially acting and working on
our reality. We are in "status viae", an itinerant church moving forward, and
called, therefore, to create that perfect reality that lays still in the future.
He asks if theology is only speculative knowledge or if it is by itself practical and creative. He answers, "Notwithstanding that in the philosophical field practical knowledge differs from the theoretical, the sacred doctrine is, by itself, speculative and practical at the same time, just as God with the same act of knowledge knows himself and creates things" (Summa. P.I. q. 1 a. 4); He does not mean that there are some treatises of theology dedicated to the practical aspects of reality. He means that theological knowledge is, by itself, transforming. By contemplating how our God is the theologian acquires and shares a knowledge that transforms human reality. "Yet" Thomas says, "sacred doctrine is more speculative than practical. It concentrates more on contemplating the divine reality than on considering human activity" (ibid.)

The God of the Scripture is revealed to us more in what He does than in what he is. "I am the God that does things" is the main message of the DeuteroIsaiah. We could say that the difference between the biblical theology (derived from the revelation of God in the Bible) and the Greek style theology formulated according to the model of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy is the same as the difference between the Greek word "logos" (discourse) and the Hebrew "dabar" (word). (cf. the article "leto. logos etc.", Theological Dictionary to the New Testament. IV. pg. 63-136).

"Logos" in Greek means a discourse that catches and describes the inner, eternal core of reality. Each being in the world is determined by an unchangeable way of being, an eternal essence, like the mathematical entities. Under these changeable appearances there is an eternal order that only the philosopher can grasp. All events move in an eternal circle. The human discourse, then, can uncover such reality and describe it. Human nature is sick, recognizes Plato, but it can be cured only by contemplation and by reaching beyond the changing appearances.

"I understand, said he (Glacon) that this city with which we deal in our discourses, exists only in theory. But in reality (on the earth) there is not and never there will be one like it. - But, I said, it exists in heaven for all those who want to see it, and the one who sees it lives there already (in his mind), and he uses it like a model. It does not make any difference if there is no one like it, or if there never will be one. These are the things that will take place in that ideal city in it alone and in none other" (Rep. 592B.). Since reality cannot be changed the philosopher jumps out of it to live in an ideal that is the object of contemplation.

The "dabar" on the other hand, is a word the prophet receives which does things, and which changes this concrete reality in which the real men live.

Just as from Heaven the rain and snow come down
and do not return there till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
giving seed to him who sows
and bread to him who eats
So shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
It shall not return to me void,
but shall do my will,
achieving the end for which I sent it. (Is. 55:10-11).

"Dabar", as uttered by God, means the act of a creative mind. The Hebrews identified words and events. They connected their stories by saying
“ahar addebarim abelle” i.e. after those words, that is to say events (for instance Gen. 15.1). These events are there because they are determined by the creative will of God.

The Christian theologian, then, must meditate on this creative word of God in such a way as to produce a thought that will bring reality into agreement with the divine revelation. We are still in statu viae. We are moving toward what God wants us to be. The theologian contrasts what should be according to God, to what is according to men. From human sciences, sociology history, psychology, man learns how things are; but from revelation he learns how they must be.

Reading the Bible

The various books of the Bible appear, at first sight, like any other book. If we read them, as we do other books we may conclude to various theologies. The writers, or redactors, of the historical books of the Old Testament did not write history as an accurate report of facts. They wrote the theology of history and they interpreted history from the revelation of the purposes God had in mind when he directed those events. The Gospels of the New Testament were written within a believing community and expressed the sense of certain events. They were not curious scholars interested in determining what factually happened. The literary critics may then describe the theology of the Yahwist, the theology of the Deuteronomist, of Paul, of John, of the synoptics and so on. Finally they conclude with a Theology of the Old Testament, or a Theology of the New Testament.

These authors do not do theology themselves. They describe the theology of other authors. They are historians of religion more than they are theologians. (cf. De Vaux R. "Is it possible to write a Theology of the Old Testament?", The Bible and Ancient Near East. New York. 1971. pg. 49 ff).

The true theologian does theology from the Bible. Those human authors interpreted history and put in human words the revelation they had received. Through the Bible, God judges human history and gives it direction. The history of the probable composition of a book helps the theologian to understand better the final product. Yet, the theologian believes that the final product is a result of a providential activity of God that reaches us also today. The theologian then stands in judgement of the contemporary scene by trying to identify his mind with God as He is revealed in the biblical interpretation of history.

Theology of Migration

As there are various styles and ways of doing theology there are all various specific human activities on which the theological consideration may concentrate. Fundamentally, theology is always an effort to interpret and judge human reality from the view of the saving God. Human existence, however, offers many aspects and forms. A man may live settled in his own country, may migrate from his country to another, or may have to receive immigrants into his own country.

What does God tell those who are settled in their own country and enjoy the privileges of citizens by birth? What does he tell those who emigrate or who are forced to emigrate? What does he tell those who see immigrants...
coming to them? To ask questions is the proper task of the theology of migration. The theologian must first learn from human sciences what migration is. He must try to realize how bitter an experience it might be to leave one's country and to become a foreigner in another land, as he must also understand how sweet it is for one who is oppressed and limited in their own country to find another where he can achieve economic, political, and intellectual freedom for himself and his children. He may then reach the conclusion of what human migration should be in agreement with the plan of salvation from God. The scientist may describe a fact. In that fact the theologian perceives a call to be

INTRODUCTION: NOTES TOWARD: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIGRATION

The word "phenomenology" has received a special meaning by E. Husserl. The father of modern philosophy, R. Descartes, in the effort to doubt everything found that he could not doubt that he was a thinking being, Cogito ergo sum: "I think, therefore I am." Yet, the expression "I think" is empty. Can I think without an object of my thought? By saying "cogito" Descartes means "I hear, I see, I touch, I desire, I will, I like, I dislike, I love, I hate and so on. I cannot see, however, if there is nothing to be seen; I cannot hear if there is no sound to be heard: I cannot desire if there is no object of my desire; and I can neither love nor hate if there is no one to be loved or hated. The "I" is discovered only in the act in which there is an object of which it may become aware, and a purpose toward which it may be directed. The "I" expresses the awareness of a subject thinking and willing something, or of wanting something or somebody in front of whom the "I" becomes aware of being "I" by addressing the other as "You" or "it". The "I" never exists in itself as pure thought. The "I" exists in the world where sounds are heard, visible objects perceived and other persons are encountered.

Phenomenology, then, is an effort to grasp the reality of the thinking, perceiving, willing, loving and hating "ego" as it exists in a world of objects, purposes and persons. It seeks to be a pure description of the conscious and willing ego free from any presupposition and prejudice. To achieve its purpose the phenomenologist must push aside all preconceived ideas, and value judgements. Emigration from one country to another is considered from different angles by the historian, the moral philosopher or theologian, and the sociologist. The historian tries to describe emigration according to countries and epochs, as part of the history of mankind, or of a specific section of mankind. The moral philosopher or theologian will judge it from the point of view of human rights and human dignity. He may have an idea of what human life should be and tries to appraise emigration according to its contribution toward the improvements of human life or as its damaging effects on the persons forced to emigrate. The sociologist will consider it a phenomenon within a given social group. He will draw statistics pointing to the modifications of human groups through emigration and immigration. The phenomenologist, however, will bracket, or suspend judgement on moral implications and he will try to capture the meaning of migration from the point of view of the human ego. He will seek to ascertain what it means for a conscious willing ego to be a member of a "mother country" and what psychologic structure corresponds to this "word", "foreigner", in opposition to "fellow-countryman"?

MOTHER COUNTRY, HOME COUNTRY

"Mother country" the Latins called it patria, or parent country, meaning a
psychological attitude.

I am aware of being a son, of having received existence from a person who could have given me up, or who could have interrupted my existence but who instead wanted me to have life. "Mother" means a person who wants to give life to another: one who accepts all the hardships of childbearing and child rearing that the offspring may exist and grow to be an independent person. This awareness of dependence, of having received existence in an act of unselfish love inspires a psychological attitude the ancients called "pietas".

We become aware of a special bond that ties us to those to whom we owe our life and who guided us to become what we are. Now, the parents and the mother country gave us life and led us to grow and provided us with the means of human existence." (Thomas Aquinas. Summa P. IIa IIae q. 101. a. 1).

The country in which I was born, the people of which I am a member, acted as a mother to give me a human life, a place to be available, a language with which I become a human person, and a history that makes me the substantive person I am.

The psychological attitude implied by this word "home" is succinctly expressed in another little word "mine". Home means, first of all, a place that is there for me, and available just for me. There, I have a bed that is mine, a desk where my books are, that are supposed not to be touched so that I may find them when I look for them. When I am still a son, "home" means a place made available for me by loving parents, adapted by them for my needs according to the means at their disposal.

The French say foyer, and the Spanish-speaking say hogar which literally means "fireplace". The fireplace is the center of the home that makes it warm and livable in winter, where the family meals are prepared and cooked and around which the family can assemble and become one. "Warmth" has always been a metaphor for love and loving care as it calls to the mind the womb of the mother. At home I meet the parents who prepared it for me so that the place itself is a gift and an expression of their love; at home I am with brothers, companions of my life, who feel a special relationship with each other by recognizing the same parents, and living in the same house they share. I know my brothers and sisters and they know me. I understand them and they understand me and by sharing with them the same house and the same parents we are called to the unity of a family.

To feel at home, then, implies being with loving parents and living with brothers, as brothers, i.e. it implies being united by the awareness of having the same father and by sharing the house and the property in common. Cain ceases to be psychologically a brother when he becomes jealous of his brother's success and good fortune (Gen. 4:3-16). God tells Cain: "Why are you resentful? If you feel happy (for the success of your brother) you make yourself happy also. But if you are not, sin will become a crouching demon that will destroy you. He (Abel) is your brother, who clings to you as the older brother (cf. Gen. 3:16) and you will always be his superior and will enjoy also of his successes." (Paraphrase of Gen. 4:7-8). Having ceased to be a brother Cain no longer has a home. We may now concentrate on "mother and Home" country. The country in which I was born and in which I grew up to become the man I am, acted as mother to give me a place, a language, a history or...
with a comprehensive term, a culture. This country is home to me insofar as I can live with my fellow-countrymen as a fellow-countryman, just as a member of a family lives as a brother with his brothers and sisters. Let us analyze the elements that make up the complex psychological attitude of being a countryman.

Place

The place, in which a human is born, seems to share in the responsibility of giving him existence. We point out with pride the place of birth of the great men. The place of birth becomes a characteristic of an individual. Jesus was the man from Nazareth, and David the man from Bethlehem, even when they had moved far away from the place of their birth.

The place where one grows up to become a mature person molds his personality. The people from the mountains acquire virtues and characteristics related to mountain climbing and the hardships of mountain winters. The horizon of the mountain people, who live in the valleys, is more restricted than the horizon of people living on the seashore and the barriers that divide mountain people are more difficult to traverse. A foreigner is more of a foreigner in a mountain valley than on a sea shore. The mountain tends to make people more enduring and patient. They have to take their time to climb without tiring easily. The mountain dictates how houses must be built, how the roads must be traced, what kind of food is available and is required to get the necessary strength and it suggests special forms of amusements and art.

Instead, the people on the seashore face the immense ocean which invites them to adventure and conquest. Their main food is from fishing. They have to build boats and develop techniques and have to look to the stars to determine their position in the sea. Yet, in either locale it is the people who mold the place. They build houses, palaces, squares and streets, factories and marketplaces. A place becomes "home" only insofar as man adapts the place to his needs and enjoyment. The first fathers, or the founders of nation, prepare the place for future generations. Through their preparation, the place becomes "my own". It was prepared for me; it becomes "patria"; it is like the womb of a mother where I can grow up to become a substantive person since it was adapted to provide me with what is necessary for my survival and enrichment. It can be the city, the valley, the village, the fields, the orchards of the plane, or the desert where the Bedouins move. The Bedouin, too, was shaped by and shaped the place. He left signposts and he transmitted to his children the location of the oases where fodder for animals could be found at the different seasons. He erected shrines where the god, who had provided for them, could or should be worshipped. The desert for them became patria a home.

Language

"Home" like the Spanish, hogar, and French, foyer, means a place where there is love and friendship, that special emotional "warmth" that envelops the person and makes him feel that he is welcome, accepted and cared for. When the brothers do not feel or behave as brothers the "homeliness" is destroyed, and "home" is not home any longer. It becomes a place where people are together by chance, as they would be in a hotel, with no togetherness other than that of dwelling by chance in the same place. This special spiritual and emotional togetherness is achieved through language. The ancient philosophers had characterized man as "zoon logon echon" (a conscious being that speaks). I became a person, and I learn to say "I" meaningfully only in front of another person.
whom I address as "thou". "Language is not something that just sticks to man, on the contrary man lives in language" (M. Buber. "Ich und Du" in "Werke". Munchen 1962. vl. I. pg. 103). I am at home when I exist with the other through language in which I meet him and he meets me. By "language" I mean the complete reality of expressing oneself and of being addressed to. I grew up to be with the other person by learning to emit sounds in a special way that stir up a response in him. I molded my oral muscles, throat and tongue, to emit those meaningful sounds. Inadvertently I was trained to accompany my speaking with certain gestures, I learned a handwriting, that became my own as an individual and yet, it embodies some characteristics that make it intelligible to the community in which I grew up. Through language that community became mine, and I became one of them. I may have learned other languages; I may have left my home yet when I meet a person with whom I can talk in my mother's dialect I feel a special closeness with him and I enjoy a special intimacy that puts us apart from the others who do not speak in the same way. What unites me with my countrymen separates me from the others and makes me a stranger to them. We use the expression "foreign accent" to point to the fact that something is missing for the complete closeness and identification when a person betrays, in his speech, that he originally belonged to another community.

History

Man is a historical being. He is a being in the making, a product of the past and a creator of a future. He is not a complete, unchangeable essence. He is, fundamentally, a project. The past gives him a launching pad from which he plans his future. History, more than anything else, makes a "people" and a home country.

Our language was born and enriched through a historical process. Poets, writer philosophers and prophets gave us ideas, interpretations of reality and insights that had been embodied in the language we speak. The wisdom of generations is communicated to us through the proverbs we use and the poetry and idioms that are, very often, untranslatable.

The place that is "home" for me was made especially fitted to me by all those who preceded me and who made it livable and enjoyable, or, maybe, ugly and painful.

History is expressed in the word "ancestors" or "forefathers". The ancestor is not just the physiological forefather. He is the one who started that spiritual process that ended up in the building of the country that is mine.

History molds the human personality and creates through tradition a "home" and a "mother country". The child becomes the concrete person that he is by relating himself to his father, and grandfather, and so on and on up to the founder of the family or of the nation. The family name distinguishes a person from another in his connection with his past. Through tradition the descendant identifies himself with the forefathers, who through tradition, are presented always as heroes. It feels great to be the descendant of Abraham who got out of the idolatry of his family and consecrated himself to the worship of one God. Tradition does not transmit a cold chronicle of facts. It transmits the past in such a way as to involve the person who receives the tradition. "De te fabula narratur", the traditional discourse about the past is in fact about you now, as it tells you what you are. The poets that enriched the language are
History, transmitted through tradition, determines the present and conditions the future. The ancestors built a cathedral in the center of the city. It is there as their gift to the present generation, to preserve and perhaps to embellish. The city must evolve then around the cathedral.

History creates the "mother country". I am what I am. I am this concrete person speaking and thinking in a certain way, enjoying certain treasures of art and literature, having a certain morality, charged with the crimes committed by my predecessors. Wherever I go, I will go with this treasure and this burden.

Culture

Culture is a word which encompasses all of these elements. Phenomenologically, culture is a style of speaking and conversing, of eating and enjoying foods and the pleasures of life, a way of judging the morality of human acts and human customs, the special style or form of religion and it is a concrete form of thinking.

The land offered certain products which men elaborated to render them enjoyable. The descendants, therefore, have received, or have been trained, to have specific tastes. Each century then has added and changed something, but there is continuity. I feel at home eating meat seasoned in a special way and enjoying coffee brewed in a special way.

From the ancestors I received a "body", a result of combinations of genes and the co-working of the place and eating habits and of various forms of exercising. This body makes me stand out from other human beings with a different history. My body gives me a special point of view to look at the surrounding world. My body will direct me to develop a specific sense of beauty. The beauty of a Greek statue is different from the beauty of an Egyptian Queen.

The surrounding ambience will dictate a style of dressing and cosmetics. What is becoming in one country becomes ridiculous in another. History, as we noted, taught forms of music and dancing corresponding to the activities and the style of life suggested by the environment and the inspirations of the predecessors.

History developed a style of worshipping and practicing religion. All Christians believe in one Father and in one Lord, Jesus Christ. Yet, in one place the Bible was considered the main teacher. Worship was organized around the Bible. In another country, the Bible was still the inspired book, but a living faith was more relevant. The stories of those believers, called saints, was the most relevant means to connect the believers with Christ.

The Catholics and the Orthodox Christians had learned to venerate and pray to the Virgin Mother of Christ. Each country, however, had its own apparitions transmitted through traditions, or special images of the Blessed Mother under a special title, so that Mary under that title became in a very specific way the "Our Lady" of that country. They may address Mary under those special
titles as "Our Blessed Mother" "Our Holy Virgin". They feel that they had been chosen by the Mother of God as her own special people.

Morality

We may define morality as the rule of conduct dictated by the encounter of another person. The child develops into a person when he discovers that his mother is somebody who does many things for him and he can do something for her. A man living in a forest will discover morality by meeting another human being who can lay claims on him. That other can say: "This is my hut, you are welcome any time, but do not ruin or spoil it".

Morality, then, is an answer to a call. The other calls on me, puts claims on me, and I can put claims on him. This call to answer the claim of the other becomes concrete in various forms in the development of human society. These concretizations of moral claims and calls creates various sets of values which vary from society to society.

The male, by becoming a husband, lays some claims on the woman who becomes his wife as he accepts some obligations that follow from the fact of having her as a wife with everything she brings him. The wife, by accepting her role accepts also the obligations of her specific role. Parents by accepting to have children accept the burden of childbearing and by rearing them put some claims on them.

In a form of society the father, being the main provider to the needs of the members of the family, becomes the head and the main authority within the home. The wife and mother becomes submissive to him and may learn to dominate him by her submissiveness. She may conceive of no other role than to accept the authority of the husband and father, since there may be no other way of survival for a girl in that society where the "spinsters" are pushed aside as failures.

In other societies instead, the woman may have means of supporting herself without getting married. She is free to have or to reject a husband. She is not bound to her husband, or submissive to him. She is free to reject him if he wants to rule over her. Husband and wife then will live together as partners.

History therefore, i.e. man discovering and creating himself, determines the role of husband and wife, of parents and children. It determines also the role, within a wider group of families of leader and crowd, of masters and servants, of workers and employers. In one society the ruling model of human relations is paternalism, in another, instead, egalitarianism as the coexistence of brothers. By determining the various roles of its members society gives them a sense of security. Each one knows what is expected of him and what he can expect from the other. In a given historical society the supreme rule becomes the law, the blind law that makes no distinction and does not accept bribes. In another society more paternalistic, the supreme ruler is the person. In this society only the wisdom an individual person has acquired will make him accepted as the judge in cases of dispute. In this society the most important thing is to have friends who can protect you and help you. In another society instead the rule is the law, the written law and the judge must apply the law that is supposed to be the same for everybody. It is easy to imagine the sense of loss of a person moving from a personalistic and paternaic organization into a society ruled only by the law.
History creates, in various societies, different models of priests and religious rulers. In a certain country the priest is worthy of special respect just because he is a priest. He has been set apart from the others, he shares in the majesty and authority of God.

This image of the priest may have been enhanced by the fact that the people were persecuted because of their religion, so that country and religion had become one and the same thing. The priest as the representative of religion represents also the sacredness of the country.

Other countries, instead, had a different history. The clergy was in authority together with the nobility. The movement of liberation, that stirred up the intellectuals first and then the masses had to hit the clergy too. People became anticlerical. It became bad luck to meet a priest on the streets, it was a sign of poor intellectual development to ask the advice of the clergy.

In certain countries christianity had found a form of sophisticated paganism and it had to work hard to tame it. Therefore, it promoted many devotions along side with the essential christian message of salvation in Christ. Instead of the gods of paganism the Church suggested the devotion to the saints, made special protectors over various sections of human life. Instead of the god Mercury looking after the lost items they suggested St. Anthony, instead of Esculapius, the semigod who cures diseases, it introduced St. Rocco, instead of the mother goddess a special devotion to Mary the mother of God.

In other countries paganism was so rough and inhuman that it had to be ostracized. Christianity took a form of austere religion. The Church became austere houses where people congregate to read mainly from the Book.

Summary

"Mother country" and "home country" means the concrete historical context in which a human being becomes a person. A human being is born as the son of so and so, up to the ancestors and founders of nations. The awareness of owing one's existence to the "ensemble" of ancestors creates emotional ties with one's mother country to which every individual man owes his own existence: mother.

The "mother country" is also the spiritual atmosphere in which one grew up to become a concrete person, speaking a specific language, having certain sets of values that become like a second nature. The countryman feels at home in the place that has been given to him by nature and adapted to become a liveable place by his predecessors.

"Mother country" and "home country" are psychological structures that affect and determine the behavior of any adult person. The common heritage of ancestors, treasures, art and literature and language, unites all the countrymen with brotherly bonds and makes them familiar and close to each other. They may even grow up to hate each other, yet they can even insult each other only because they speak a language in which they all live. Those who are complete strangers to one another could not even hate and become enemies. "Home country" gives a person a point of view from which to look at the world.

Emigration

Some philosophical considerations
"Yo soy yo y mi circunstancia", "I am myself and my environment" wrote Ortega y Gasset the great Spanish philosopher.

I was not born in a vacuum. I became a person, and I learned to think in a concrete language. "Home", or "mother country", is my environment, but my environment is not my total personality. Human thought is the faculty of the possible. I can go beyond everything that was given to me and imagine the infinite. I am not just a creation of my environment, I possess the capacity to create the new and to see and perceive something that had not been perceived by my predecessors.

Mankind did not stand still, it improved and progressed because individual men went beyond the possibilities actualized by their predecessors and invented the new. My belonging to a mother country becomes for me a springboard but it can also be a burden and a hindrance.

It is a "springboard from which I am able to push ahead, and to relate to other cultures with something that is already mine. It takes an outsider to become aware of the bad smell atmosphere of a closed room. I may perceive what is missing in another culture out of what I have assimilated in mine.

It is a "hindrance" and a "burden" as any specific human culture implies a choice and a limitation. A realistic form of art may miss the quiet beauty of an apollinian sculpture. Yet, an apollinian form misses the vigor and dynamism of a dionyssian creation. I may therefore become aware of the limitations and shortcomings of the culture in which I was raised and then my "home country" is not sweet home for me any more, and my mother country becomes like a hateful stepmother to me. I may have been brought up, for instance, to think of Dante Alighieri as the ideal poet of all ages until I discover Shakespeare who may challenge the uniqueness I attributed to Dante.

The Two Faces of Emigration

Emigration, then, from one's country can be either a spiritual death or a liberation.

My mother country is really a home for me. I call it "my country". It was prepared for me by my predecessors. I can communicate easily in a language in which I welcome friends and insult enemies. I enjoy this type of food and I know before hand what is expected from me. If I am taken away from all this I feel lost. The church I go to, the priest, I have recourse to, is not my priest I do not know any more my role as a member of a church, as the worker toward the bosses and the fellow workers. Everything that is new in the new country may become distasteful. I am a foreigner.

The Depressive Experience of Becoming a Foreigner

"... You know the psychology of a foreigner (nepesh hagger) because you were foreigners yourselves in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 23:9).

Tu proverai si come sa di sale
lo pane altrui, e com'e' duro calle
lo scendere e salire per l'altrui scale

"You will experience how salty is other people's bread, and how hard it is to step up and down on other people's stairs" (Dante).
The psychology of a foreigner. The foreigner is isolated. He feels that he is different. He cannot communicate, nor can he share. The foreigner feels that he does not belong. In his country he coexisted with his fellow-countrymen even with his enemies whom he knew and whom he could insult in a language that was understood. We may enumerate and describe the various elements of isolation.

Language

I exist as a person by coexisting in language with other persons. In a foreign country my coexistence is reduced to the universal human language of signs, facial expressions, of laughing or wailing. The new language can be completely different from mine, or it can belong to the same family of languages, or it may differ only in accent or in some idioms. I feel more or less isolated according to the degree in which the other language differs. My ear has been adapted to certain sounds, my mouth and my oral muscles have been modified in a certain way to emit them. The new language sounds unmusical and almost unnatural. "The habits and customs we have acquired from birth become like a nature for us" (St. Thomas Aquinas). My language, my way of pronouncing it, of writing it, have become as the natural way a man should speak and write. For those with whom I am forced to live it sounds strange and unnatural. I was brought up to believe that my way of speaking was the correct way. Now I become incorrect and unnatural to those who surround me.

Sets of Values and Morality

In my country I knew what was expected from me as a man or as a woman, as a child or as a mature person, as a fellow worker or as an employee. Yet, men and women, children and parents, adult and young, fellow workers and employees now act differently and expect me to act differently. What happened to morality. The sets of values and the concrete morality of the new country appear immoral to me. I become aware that I am considered immoral because I differ from them in my evaluation. I am not at home.

Religion

I may have, fundamentally, the same faith as the indwellers of the country to which I had to move. I may even belong to the same believing community that supposedly has not only the same faith but also the same official leaders and the same laws of worshipping and of church organization. Yet, in the new country the relation of the priest to the faithful, the style of worship, the practices of the congregation are not the same. They invoke other patrons than mine, celebrate other festivities than mine. I am not at home even in church. I do not know how to relate to the priest or the minister. I cannot guess what is expected of me. Even the style of the churches is different.

Trifles

I may call trifles the eating habits, the style of dressing, in general the rules of etiquette. Yet they are not trifles and may become emotionally disastrous. All my life was adapted to a certain meal-schedule so that my organism itself had been adapted to it. They laugh at my dress that was considered elegant in my country. They call poison the style of coffee brewing and coffee-drinking that is delicious to me.
Stranger

"Foreigner" may just mean a person that is different or "strange", and "strange a person that is wrong. The language I spoke from birth with that specific tonality to which I have been trained, the style of dressing and eating, the style of life in general to which I have been accustomed, becomes for each person the right thing to do. What differs from this rule then becomes wrong. The foreigner becomes therefore someone to be laughed at, and his manners and lifestyle something to be rejected as improper and inferior.

Emigration as liberation

The horizon of my valley is restricted, but I can imagine other horizons and other worlds. This imagination becomes more concrete as I receive news of other countries and other styles of life. Then my country with its limitations may become like a prison. It is not the whole world. I may even desire to emigrate to become free. There is much more to know and to experience outside the boundaries of one's country and, the little we have received from our ancestors.

... ne dolcezza di figlio ne' la pieta
del vecchio padre, ne' il debito amore
lo qual dovea Penelope far lieta,
vincer poter dentro di me l'ardore
chi' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto
e de li vizi umani e del valore.

Neither the filial love, nor the consideration
due to the old father, nor the sweet love
that should have made Penelope happy
could hold down in me the burning desire
to get acquainted with the total human existence
outside of my country. (Dante. Hell. Song 26).

Emigration can make me a better, stronger man. I may have been forced to leave my country, but the encounter with another culture and other people may become a spiritual enrichment.

Language

Through my language, and within its limitations, I have learned to enjoy poetry to reach a certain understanding of the world, (philosophy, science, religion), and I have been imbued with certain moral values. Yet, my creative intelligenc if it is exposed to a new language and a new thought, can discover other forms of musicality and other ways of thinking. If I live only within my own language and culture I may believe that all other languages are poor and incorrect.

To the Greeks, the sounds of other people appeared strange and funny, like a form of stuttering. They had created, therefore, the onomatopoetic word barbaros. From the idea of "speaking funny" to the idea of barbarian, as uncouth and inferior, there was one easy step. So Plate (Rep. 470-471) could believe that the Greeks who spoke the same language should be friends to one another and enemies instead to the barbarians. Aristotle could proudly state: "It is normal for the Greeks to rule over the Barbarians since by nature it is the same thing to be barbarian and to be slave" (Pol. 1242b). But the sophist Antipho, who had travelled to other countries, had discovered that Hellenism was not the only possible development of human nature. He recognized then that "man" means something greater than "Greek".
"By nature we have been made the same way and essentially equal, both Greeks and Barbarians" (Diels: Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker., 4th Ed. II, Nachtrage XXXVI, col. 2. 10ff).

The Roman poet Ovid used to consider himself as civilized and all the non-Romans as barbarians in the worst connotation of the word. But, when exiled among the Scythians he had to confess: "Here I am a barbarian since I cannot be understood by anybody. They laughed at my Latin tongue" (Tristia, V, 10, 37). The pride of a Roman who believed that Latin and civilized was synonymous was cut down in his encounter with other peoples.

Morality

Nations and peoples may identify their concrete morality with human morality as such. The encounter with another morality, equally reasonable, will lead them to discuss their own sets of values. The Greek intellectuals could consider homosexuality as a normal human development. (cf. Plato: Symposium).

The philosopher could say like Thales "Of three things I am grateful to Good Luck: first: that I was born a human being and not a beast, second: that I was a man and not a woman, third: that I was born a Greek and not a Barbarian" (Diogenes Laertius, I, 7, 33). But it took a bi-cultural man like Paul of Tarsus to perceive the perversion implied by homosexuality (Romans 1:18-32).

Religion

Religiosity, as the awareness of the transcendent, is found everywhere as a manifestation of human nature. In each country, however, religiosity became a concrete form of worshipping, embodying a determined religious tradition. In the Christian world each place and nation developed its brand of Christianity and Catholicism. This concretization of a tradition is partly an enrichment and an impoverishment. A faithful born in a so called Catholic country where one is made Catholic almost by birth, may have grown up without seriously discussing the foundation of his own faith and without having been forced to make a personal commitment to his church. By emigrating to another country he may encounter Catholics who are committed to support their church instead of believing, as he does, that he must be supported by the Church.

A Catholic may have grown up in a country in which the Mother of Christ was venerated under the specific title of "Our Lady of so and so". Under this title she was in a special way his "Our Lady". The contact with another Catholic country where Mary is revered and cherished under another title may lead him to discover "Our Lady of all the Nation" or "the Mother of mankind."

Varieties of emigration

Every country offers limited opportunities to its inhabitants. It does not grow with the population and with new needs that evolution creates. These needs are then intensified by communication. Television, radio and newspapers may portray the abundance of other countries. Life appears richer and healthier elsewhere. The desire to improve and to get for one's children something better than what one's country may offer will push people to look elsewhere.

Communication convinces people that not everything that is foreign is wrong or inferior. Elsewhere, there is more freedom than in one's own country, other countries' morality may stress certain values which had been killed in the
concrete historical development of morality in one's country. A woman, who has been imbued with the idea that the only life opened to her was to be a submissive wife and a mother, tied down to her family with no other possibility for her own personal development, may discover how free women are in other countries and she may want to emigrate in search of better spiritual opportunities. Also the woman who has emigrated under the pressure of economical privation may discover new roles for herself by finding out how much more free is the woman in the new country.

A creative personality may become a foreigner and a stranger in his own country Jesus had become a foreigner in his home town and was forced to emigrate to deliver his message to people better disposed to listen to it. (Mk 6:1-5).

Conclusion

Emigration that may look like a privation can be an enrichment of the human personality. Very often the lucky ones are not those who remained in their home country, but those who found a new country and developed into richer personalities.

IMMIGRATION

We now look at migration from the point of view of people receiving foreigners. The foreigner coming from an unknown place, appears as a being "hard to fathom, surprising, unsettling, endowed, maybe "of magical powers" (Theological Dictionary to the New Testament VI. V, pg. 1 ff). He is a menace to the nice, well settled way of living adopted by all countrymen. From another angle the foreigner, with no relatives or friends, may be seen as a powerless, forlorn being, worthy of mercy. Since he has no human protection he must be under the protection of the gods. The greeks expressed both aspects with the word xenos which means both foreigner and guest. The foreigner, becomes a guest, something sacred insofar as he is considered to be under a special divine protection. The divine is unknown and mysterious and the foreigner appears mysterious and therefore someway divine.

In more secularistic and modern terms we can say that the foreigner may appear at first as strange, out of place, but weak and in need of help. It makes me feel superior since I am able to help him. I become a greater person to my own eyes by granting him asylum and support.

At the same time the foreigner, being something new and unknown, may become a menace to my established way of life. He can destroy my neighborhood and pervert my values. Therefore, the receiving country puts around the newcomer a fence of contempt and prejudice.

There are always two aspects of everything. The foreigner, being new has something to bring to a dormant country. The Romans, at the beginning, were diffident, even afraid, of the invasion of the new Greek culture and manners. However, Horace said later, "Graecia capta ferum captorem coepit et artes intulit agresti Latium." "Greece, once conquered, conquered the fierce conqueror and brought arts to the uncouth Latium".
The immigration of Greek philosophers, rhetoricians, poets and artists to Rome transformed the Latin society and refined the Roman culture.

Nations, shut from the rest of the world, receiving no immigrants, without communication with other nations, tend to become stagnant and to remain backward. It is more difficult to accept as a prophet one of our fellow-countrymen, than a prophet coming from nowhere. (Lk 4:24). Immigration of newcomers, after the initial shock, provoked by newness and strangeness, can become a contributing factor for the progress of a country.

Emigration, then, must be considered from various angles. It can be a loss of a home, but it can also be a movement toward liberation. Immigration can appear as a menace to the stability of a country and it may turn out to be a blessing.

These are just notes to inspire further individual reflections.

Now we may ask: What does Christian revelation have to say about this complex human phenomenon? How does it enter into the plan of salvation for all mankind? Can the word of God tell us something on how emigration should be?

MIGRATION OF THE PATRIARCHS

Religious Migration of Abraham and Jacob

"Yahweh said to Abram:

Come on you. Get out of your land, away from your tribe, out of your father's house and move to a land I will show you. I will make you into a great people, and will bless you and will make your name famous. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you. All tribes of the world will say blessings on your account. Abram went his way as Yahweh had told me" (Gen. 12:1-4).

The biblical authors do not work to report facts as accurately as possible to satisfy the curiosity of historians. They write a theology of history. From ancient, unwritten traditions they had received stories, and legends, and rearranged them to express their faith in a plan God has in mind as He leads human history to his own aim.

From those ancient traditions they had learned that the patriarchs were idolaters.

"Joshua said to the general assembly of the people:

Since a long, long time ago, your fathers, Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the river and worshipped foreign gods. . . . .

Therefore, be considerate toward Yahweh and worship him with integrity and sincerity of heart. Throw away then the gods your fathers worshipped beyond the river and in Egypt" (Jos. 24:2...14).

The quoted passage of the Genesis (12:1-4) describes the breaking in of God, into the well settled life of Abraham. He was living a quiet life in his land and within his tribe. He was practicing an easy religion, worshipping gods
a hand to help out in the various contingencies of human life.

Abraham is portrayed as the ideal Hebrew believer. Painful as it might be, he has to sever all national and human ties that can keep him away from commitment to the one jealous God. The author (the Yahwist) insists on details, "out of your land" (hebrew: mearzeka). Human life is tied to the land, from which the sheperds got the fodder for their flock and food for themselves. Abraham knew his land. He could easily find the oases where there was water according to the seasons. He has to venture out into the unknown. He must not rely on his knowledge and experience. He must trust God, "to move to a land I will show you."

The tribe meant his psychological habitat. He had cousins and sisters and brothers-in-law (Gen. c. 24). Away from his tribe he still felt close to his kin and only from them would he accept a wife for his son. He never integrated, according to the biblical authors, into the Canaanite society.

Abraham was always nostalgic of his tribe and the land of his father. "The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and the land of my kin" (Gen. 24:7). He had followed a promise (ibid.) and was always in fear of the people among whom he was a stranger. According to the Yahwist he is forced to migrate to Egypt "since the famine in the land was severe" (Gen. 12:10). He was afraid of the new people and convinces Sarah to declare that she was his sister. According to the Elohist Abraham, plays the same trick to Abimelek, King of Gerar, and explains why: "Oh, I said to myself, maybe, there is no fear of God in this place. Certainly they will ill me on account of my wife" (Gen. 20:11).

The revelation of the new God made Abraham a foreigner in every land he had to go. He had to migrate physically from place to place, and also spiritually he had to leave behind a culture in which he had grown and became a mature person. He had to cut the sweet family ties that make life easier. He became uprooted because he had to rely only on the God of the promises. He was directed toward a future land and a future way of life that could not be found in any organized country, or in any one of the existing cultures.

Jacob

The second cycle of the patriarchal traditions moves around Jacob. The short account of the life of Isaac performs the function of a link between the two cycles of Abraham and Jacob. Abraham has left his family but he is not integrated into the new culture that surrounds him. He needs ties, he needs a people if not a home country. The tradition reported in Gen. c. 24 still records the command received by Abraham to leave his family and his homeland. (Gen. 24:8). Yet, to stress the idea that a new people was born out of Abraham according to the plan of Yahweh, chapter 24 describes the family of Abraham as worshippers of Yahweh (24:50-51) or at least as people who accepted the new God of Abraham as acting in their own affairs. The home country of the patriarchs was in the future not in the present. They had to be foreigners in every country until God will fulfill his promises (cfr. Heb. 11: 11:8-16).

In the cycle of Jacob, the call to leave the former home country and to live in hope for a new country, that God himself will prepare for his people, is described in a different way than the call to Abraham but the message is essentially the same. Jacob is sent back to his people because the Mother Rebecca wants a girl from her own family for this favorite son. He is not supposed to be in-
integrated with the former tribe. He is destined to a new country, the country promised by Yahweh to his grandfather Abraham. (Gen. 28:6).

The God of Jacob, as the God of Abraham, is always the God of the Future, or, the God of the "promises".

"And there was Yahweh, standing at his side. He said: I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham and the God of your father Isaac. The ground on which you are resting I will give to you and to your offspring. ... You see: I am with you and will protect you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this country. I will never let you go until I fulfill the promises I made to you" (Gen. 28: 13... 15).

Jacob, therefore, will never be integrated into the home of his uncle. His home country is in the future. He has to pay to get as wife and girl with whom he was in love and finally he is forced to leave. His uncle's family, including Jacob's wives, is now portrayed as a family of idolaters. Rachel steals the "teraphim of his father". She wants to take with her not only the sheeps and the possessions her husband earned with hard work, but his father's religion and culture (Gen. 31:19). Yahweh is not the God of the past. He is the God of the future. He prepares Jacob for a new religion and a new people.

"And God said to Jacob: Get up you and move to Bethel and build an altar to the god who appeared to you as you were fleeing your brother Esau. So Jacob addressed his family and all those who were with him: Get rid of the foreign gods you still keep with you. Get clean and put on fresh clothes. We will move up to Bethel. There I will build an altar to the God who answered me when I was in distress and remained with me wherever I went."

So they handed Jacob all the foreign gods they still had with them together with the pendants they wore at their ears. Jacob buried them under the oak that is in Shechem" (Gen. 35:1-4).

From the point of view of literary criticism this passage which, ordinarily is attributed to the Elohistic tradition, seems to reflect a late terminology, for instance, "foreign gods" that sound almost deuteronomic. The theological message stands out very clearly. Jacob had to sever all the bonds that tied him to his past to begin a new history and move toward a future prepared by God. Jacob, like Abraham, represents a religious migration. His home or mother country, i.e. the country and the house of his uncle Laban, was not to be home for him any more. It was a nation and family of idolaters. He has to build new shrines to the new God, and throw away everything he had received from tradition: his family gods, and his religious practices. Rachel had taken so much pain to carry with her the most valuable treasure she had received from her father: the traditional god who had protected the family and the tribe through generations. It was painful. God had promised a new land, a land that was still in the future, and that appeared uncertain from a human point of view.

The new nation was a nation in hope, hope in the promises of the new God who had appeared to Jacob. Jacob's migration had been forced on him and his family by the greed of an uncle. Jacob was looking for freedom, ready to accept the risks of the new. This migration was, in fact, directed by God himself who was preparing a new people for himself.

Migration has sometimes positive advantages. It may prepare a new and better nation.
Joseph and Migration to Egypt

The ancients had a vague recollection of a migration of Jacob into Egypt. "And Jacob and his children went down into Egypt" (Jos. 24:4; Ism. 8:7). In their declaration of faith they had to say: "A lost Aramean was my father and he went down into Egypt and dwelled there. They were few and irrelevant" (Dt 26:5). The story of Joseph elaborates on the old tradition and interprets it as an act of the Providence of God. The gist of this wonderful short novel is expressed in the words of the hero to his brothers: "It was really God who sent me here ahead of you as an instrument for survival" (Gen. 45:5). "Although you meant harm, God directed for a good purpose: the survival of many people" (Gen. 49:20).

The migration into Egypt was determined by economical reasons. The speech of Jacob to his children sounds like a speech of an Irish father to his sons at the time of the periodical famines 1830-33 and great famine 1845-47 that forced so many workers and farmers out of Ireland into North America.

"Jacob came to know that there was corn for sale in Egypt. Jacob then told his children: Why are you just talking to one another? And he added: I hear that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go there and buy some for us that we may survive. So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain" (Gen. 42: 1-3). The denouement of the story begins.

Joseph, like a good son who had emigrated and made a fortune, sends for his father and for all his family.

"They, (Joseph's brothers) reported back to him everything Joseph had told them and he saw the chariots that Joseph had sent to fetch him. Jacob, their father, felt young again and he, i.e. Israel said: Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die" (Gen. 45:27-28).

Migration may mean a family reunion in a better place with better opportunities for a decent living. For Jacob, Egypt, the foreign country, becomes home for him because there lives his son.

Conclusion

The author of the homily to the Hebrews condensed in a few words the theological meaning, still valid for us, of the wandering of the patriarchs.

"By faith, Abraham obeyed the call to emigrate toward the land that he was going to receive as a heritage, without knowing yet where he was supposed to go. By faith, he dwelled as a foreigner in the land of the promise together with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the promise. He was waiting for the city with foundations whose architect and constructor was God" (Heb. 11:8-10).

The patriarchs first left their home and country, that bound them to an established religion, for a new country where they could worship the new God, revealed to them, in a manner convenient to him. The Bible describes the painful severing of all these ties.
God, in his providence, directed human happenings so that migration accomplished his purpose. Jacob was looking for freedom from the oppression of his uncle God directed him to find in him his home, and to throw away the past with the religion, with which he had been imbued that he might adore and love the new God, the god of the future.

The story of Joseph teaches us that God can work for the better. The selling of Joseph as a slave led him to become the front runner of his family into Egypt and prepare a better place for them.