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TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN: SOME IMPLICATIONS

abstract

The paper aims to analyze the problems that religious truth, particularly Christian truth understood as an event, poses to the category of de re truth. How does the conception of truth ‘as event’ stand phenomenologically in relation to the contemporary analytical debate on truth? Statements in the catechism such as “true God and true man” referring to Jesus, or the same words attributed to Jesus in John’s gospel (14:6) such as “I am the way, the truth or the life” how can they be understood in relation to the category of recently called ‘dual character concepts’? Is there a difference between the notion of ‘true warrior’ and that of ‘true God’? When is a person appropriately categorized as a true man? When is a person appropriately categorized as a true God? What is the relationship between faith and truth?

keywords

God; event; person; truth; faith

1. Introduction In the article, I will begin, in the second paragraph, with a theological theory from a reconstruction of Biblical citations in Amedeo G. Conte's theory of truth in *Adelaster* (Conte, 2016), and then analyze in the third paragraph the possibility of identifying the possible relevance of dual character concepts for theology, with particular reference to Christology. In the fourth paragraph I will attempt to provide a theological reading of the Contean theory of truth in the light of William W. Bartley's pan-critical rationalism, and then I will introduce, in the concluding paragraph, some elements for the configuration of a theory of truth as an event which is capable of developing some insights that seem to me to be present in the Contean theory of truth, and to put placing into dialogue with contemporary theological debate.

I do not intend to argue that there is a theological theory of truth in Amedeo Conte's thought. I simply seek to give an account of the presence of many Biblical references in *Adelaster*, which he assumes to be relevant in conceiving his philosophical theory of truth and which seem to me to authorize the introduction of a theological perspective in philosophy of language, precisely from the distinctions Conte poses. Moreover, this theoretical and theological perspective seems to me capable of showing how the Contean theory of truth is able to contribute to the contemporary debate on dual character concepts, precisely through a theological problematization of the notion of truth.

2. Conte's Implicit Theological Theory of Truth in *Adelaster* In Amedeo Conte's latest monograph text, the theological interest of a theory of the true emerges clearly. The quotations from Biblical texts (especially the gospel of John) are many and relevant. Such a relevance of Biblical texts can be read as nontheological, I think, only assuming in the interpreter some bias about the philosophical status of theology in contemporary debate. In this section I will try to read Conte's concept of truth moving from this theological perspective pointing out how it can lead to a conception of truth further to the classical philosophical theory that thinks of truth as coherence, correspondence, pragmatic truth or identity (Engel, 2002; Engel & Rorty, 2007): the theory of truth as an event, albeit the concept of truth is understood in various meanings from very different authors (Colombo et al., 1988; Sequeri, 1996; Badiou, 2007; 2009; 2022; Žižek, 2014).

Can it be assumed that Conte had a perception of these advances in the contemporary theory of truth?

The initial question posed in the volume is 'Τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια' replaced by the question "What are the entities of which the adjective 'true' is predicated?" (Conte, 2016, p. 22.) If

the utterance ‘Tu es Petrus’ (Σὺ εἶ Πέτρος) is the example of a *de dicto* truth (truth as correspondence of a sentence to a state-of-affairs, Conte, 2016, p. 30) for Conte *de re* truth is also relevant, in which the adjective ‘true’ is predicable of entities that are not utterances.¹ Examples are Popper’s claim that ‘A non-falsifiable theory is not a true theory’ or Conte’s claim that ‘A non-contradictable theory is not a true theory’ (Conte, 2016, p. 25.) In this regard, a further example the author gives is from the Gospel of John, in relation to the notion of testimony: a testimony given to oneself is not a true testimony (John, 5:31, 8:13.) The context of the passage refers to a Jesus’ speech responding to accusations of violating norms (that of the Sabbath) and the relationship between the persons of the Trinity (the Son and the Father), including in relation to Jesus’ origin as sent by the Father (John 5:30).

The problem is thus the foundation of the status of faith precisely in relation to the difference between the status of faith in an utterance and an event, and its interpretation (John 5: 46 “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me” – “εἰ γὰρ ἐπιστεύετε Μωϋσεῖ, ἐπιστεύετε ἂν ἐμοί, περὶ γὰρ ἐμοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν”; John 5: 47 “But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?”; “εἰ δὲ τοῖς ἐκείνου γράμμασιν οὐ πιστεύετε, πῶς τοῖς ἐμοῖς ῥήμασιν πιστεύσετε”).

The reference to Jesus’ self-testimony cited by Conte (John 5:31 “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.”² – Se fossi io a render testimonianza a me stesso, la mia testimonianza non sarebbe vera; – “Ἐὰν ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ἡ μαρτυρία μου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής”) in the discourse is referred to John’s testimony, which Jesus knows to be true, and is referred to the truth of his person (truth *de re*) through the speech of another (John 5:32-33: “There is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that his testimony to me is true. You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth.” – “ἄλλος ἐστὶν ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ ἐμοῦ, καὶ οἶδα ὅτι ἀληθής ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία ἣν μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ. ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλακατε πρὸς Ἰωάννην, καὶ μεμαρτύρηκε τῇ ἀληθείᾳ”). The Gospel then specifies that the testimony to the truth borne by John is exceeded by the testimony that the works done by Jesus (John 5:36, “The works that the Father has given to me to complete” – “ἀτὰ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιῶ”).³ The same context of the self-reference of truth characterizes the passage from John 8:13 recalled by Conte: “Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying on your own behalf, your testimony is not valid.”⁴ – “Gli dissero allora i farisei: “Tu dai testimonianza di te stesso; la tua testimonianza non è vera” – “εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι· Σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς· ἡ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής”.

Here within the concept of *de re* truth is introduced the concept of the truth of an event, particularly of a person’s life as forms of *de re* truth, announced in the next chapter of John’s Gospel, to which we will return in the conclusion of the article.⁵ I might say that here Jesus’

1 Conte within the concept of ‘*de re* truth’ distinguishes between eidological truth (defined as a correspondence relationship to an εἶδος) and idiological truth (defined as a identity relationship with an individual entity) (Conte, 2016, p. 32).

2 (All English translations: NRSV Catholic Edition Bible; all Italian translations: CEI edition, Vatican.va, Greek Text: Nestle-Aland).

3 Cf. footnote 4.

4 Here ‘valid’ translates the adjective ‘true’. The word ‘truth’ appears in Italian translation and original Greek version in John 5:33 precisely in reference to the difference between the true testimony of a man (John the Baptist) and the true testimony of Jesus based on God’s truth. In the dogma of the dual human and divine nature of Christ, we could say, Conte’s eidological truth and idiological truth coincide. If even the Italian philosopher does not take the problem into account explicitly, we cannot avoid the coincidence – even if only ironically posed or with secularizing intent – between the threefold Contian theory of philosophical truth and the problem of the Trinity and thus the dual nature of Jesus Christ. Therefore, let me point to the theological character as implicitly present in Conte’s theory of truth.

5 John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through

contestation of the law, from an epistemological point of view, implies the change of context, as we shall see later in Bartley's theory (John 8:14, "Jesus answered, "Even if I do testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid⁶ because I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going" – "Gesù rispose loro: "Anche se io do testimonianza di me stesso, la mia testimonianza è vera, perché so da dove sono venuto e dove vado. Voi invece non sapete da dove vengo o dove vado" – "ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Ἐγὼ ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ἀληθὴς ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία μου, ὅτι οἶδα πόθεν ἦλθον καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγω· ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἔρχομαι ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω").

If Conte distinguishes between two species of de re truth – eidological (*eidologica*) truth (correspondence to an εἶδος) and idiological (*idiologica*) truth (identity with respect to an εἶδος' i.e., "proper," "individual," "particular") – he specifies how threefold the philosophical notion of truth is, referring to a quote from Aurelius Augustine's *De trinitate* ("Tres vidi et unum adoravit, 2:4). The philosophical problem of reference to the trinity of the theory of truth points to the implicit theological perception of the problem of Christ's dual human and divine nature – and the complexity of the elaboration of Trinitarian dogma – from Nicaea to Chalcedon (Sesboüé & Wolinski, 1996; Cozzi, 2009). Once again: the reference to idiological truth leads to the conception of truth as an *individual event* to be understood phenomenologically⁷ (historical perspective: the revolution for Marxists, Badiou, 2003; religious perspective: the incarnation of God for Christians, Sequeri, 1996).

Finally, in his analysis of eidological truth, the deontic logician, in note, differentiates between the adjective 'ἀληθής' and the adjective 'ἀληθινός,' referring to *Symbolum Nicaenum*: "In ancient Greek, (i) the adjective for "vero de dicto" is 'ἀληθής'; (ii) the adjective for "eidologically-true" is 'ἀληθινός'. For example, in *Symbolum nicaenum* it is 'ἀληθινός' [and not 'ἀληθής'] the adjective (translated as 'true') that appears (twice) in the passage in which it is predicated, of Jesus Christ: "true God from true God." (Conte, 2016, p. 30; DH, 1995, pp. 64-65).

In his analysis of idiological truth, Conte does not refer to the Gospels. However, to qualify the Trinitarian character of truth as a distinct genus in three species (*de dicto*, *eidologica*, *idiologica*) Conte refers to Augustine ("*Tres vidi et unum adoravit*"), specifying how "Tres vidi. But one is the truth. And one is the truth. (la verità *de dicto*) of every discourse on truth ("Veritas veritati non est adversa": Peter Abelard) (Conte, 2016, pp. 34-35).

And again, on the threefold character of the philosophy of truth: "One is truth; but triune is the philosophy of truth, a philosophy that is divided into three philosophies: (i) philosophy of truth de dicto; (ii) philosophy of eidological truth; (iii) philosophy of ideological truth." (Conte, 2016, p. 35). Can the Contian reference to the Trinity be understood as merely linguistic or etymological? It may help to show how the problem of the relationship between theology and epistemology is being analyzed in the twentieth-century context by epistemologists, philosophers of law, and theologians (Bartley, 1984; Robilant, 1994; 2008; Pannenberg, 1999). What, then, is the relationship between philosophy of truth and the Trinity? It seems possible to identify a relationship between idiological truth and Incarnation (as the truth of an event? The historical event of the Incarnation – in the metacontext⁸ – Bartley, 1984 – of Christian

me." Gli disse Gesù: "Io sono la via, la verità e la vita. Nessuno viene al Padre se non per mezzo di me" – "λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμοῦ."

⁶ Here again, 'valid' translates the adjective 'true'.

⁷ "*Tres vidi*. Three are the phenomena that I saw..." (Conte, 2016, p. 35).

⁸ For the notion of metacontext in relation to Bartley's pan-criticism and religious thought (Bartley, 1984). For Bartley three meta-contexts can be identified in the history of thought: the Western tradition of justificationism; the Eastern tradition of non-attachment and the tradition of post-popperian non-dogmatic criticism, which Bartley calls 'pancritical rationalism' or 'comprehensively critical rationalism'. PR or CCR extends criticism to the notion of

belief?) Question to which it certainly seems impossible to provide an answer, but which deserves at least to be posed as a question, not least because the next chapter Conte discusses is devoted precisely to the notion of faith.

First, Conte analyzes the etymologies of the nexus between truth and fides/faith in many languages (Conte, 2016, pp. 39-43), including Hebrew. Following Balthasar, the usual translation the concept of *emeth*, *emuna* is ἀλήθεια and ἀληθινός: “occasionally, δικαιοσύνη and δίκαιος etc., as well as πίστις, πιστός (worthy of confidence), are used instead. Its employment in legal language shows a certain kernel in its meaning: ‘de facto state of things’, ‘state of affairs with legal validity’, and thus simply ‘truth’” (Balthasar, 1991, p. 173). The biblical indication, pointed out by von Balthasar and taken up by Sequeri, concerns the terminological foundation of the original proximity of truth, justice, and faith and how this foundation takes on a constitutive value in legal experience. The intercross of biblical meanings (truth, justice, faith), indicated by von Balthasar and taken up by Sequeri, concerns the terminological foundation of the original proximity of truth, justice, and faith and how this foundation takes on a constitutive value of legal experience in conceiving an affective turn into metaphysics (Sequeri, 2020).

Conte remarks the non-equivalence of semantic truth and ontic truth (Conte, 2016, p. 54). The deontic logician notes that in the conception of truth as correspondence, “Semantic truth has as its condition (as a necessary and sufficient condition) ontic truth.” (Conte, 2016, p. 54). However, the identification of such a relationship “excludes the equivalence of the two truths, since every condition relationship (between a conditioner and a conditioned) is a relationship between two terms, a relationship that presupposes the distinction of the terms of it (precisely because it is a relationship between two terms)” (Conte, 2016, p. 55). He bases this non-equivalence between semantic and ontic on two empirical evidences. ‘True’ in the semantic sense predicates utterances, true in the ontic sense predicates of other than utterances (Conte, 2016, pp. 55-56). Precisely in relation to the second meaning Conte juxtaposes Popper’s falsificationist epistemology with *Symbolun Nicaenum* as examples of ontic truth. Examples of ontic truth are the two propositions “a non-falsifiable theory is not a true scientific theory”; “it is in the ontic sense that the adjective ‘verus’ appears within the syntagma ‘verus Deus de vero Deo’ ... confirmed by the (Greek) text of *Symbolum Nicaenum*”. (Conte, 2016, pp. 56-57).⁹ Conte inserts the example of true in the ontic sense as an utterance about an object, and not as an example of an utterance about an event, so the utterance “The invention of zero was a real revolution in the history of mathematics” is chosen.

However, it is not difficult to see that the enunciate “Deum verum de Deo Vero” refers to an event that is the object of faith: “Credimus ... in unum Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum Filium Dei, natum ex Patre unigenitum, hoc est de substantia Patris, Deum ex Deo, lumen ex lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, natum non factum, unius substantiae cum Patre (quod graece dicunt homousion), per quem omnia facta sunt, quae in caelo et in terra, qui propter nostra salutem descendit, incarnatus est et homo factus est ...”

It is evident from the text of *Symbolum Nicaenum* how the statement, within the Christian context, refers to the event of incarnation: God true from God true insofar as born, incarnate. What is the condition of truth as an event? What is the condition of truth as (an utterance) event? According to Conte, ontic truth concerns an enunciate about an event. Moreover, there

criticism itself, avoiding to propose a dogmatic perspective of Popperian falsificationism: PR reaches Hayek’s extended order that underlies the theory of institutions and of unintended consequences of human action (Bartley, 1984; Radnitzky & Bartley, 1987; Hayek, 1967, 1988, Ricossa & Robilant, 1985; Robilant, 1975; 2008).

⁹ Conte recalls the distinction already indicated between the adjective ‘ἀληθινός’ and ‘ἀληθής’.

are three conditions for the epistemological legitimacy of a thesis: Waismann's verifiability, Popper's falsifiability, and Conte's contradictibility, to be understood as ordered from the 'strongest' to the 'weakest'. We will return to this epistemological point later, limiting to observe that the introduction of a conception such as truth as an event problematizes this shift from a stronger to a weaker form. Conte analyzes the different meanings of 'true' by articulating the connection between an event, its proof, and belief in the event.¹⁰

The current debate between epistemology and theology reopens a conception of truth that is based on a theory capable of overcoming the modern distinction between reason and faith (Sequeri, 1996) in a context in which verificationist theory is challenged by Popperian falsificationism both on the epistemological level (Pannenberg, 1999; Bartley, 1984) and on the level of legal science (Robilant, 1968; 1975; 1984; 2008; Heritier, 2009.)

Conte defines the triune theory of truth by analyzing the relations between *de dicto* truth and eidological truth as different forms of correspondence truth (to an utterance and an *eidōs*, respectively), while idiological truth refers not to a correspondence relation but to an identity relation. Being unable to consider relationship between Conte's conception of truth and the theological debate on the Trinity in a paper, what I argue is that would not be without interest a comparison between the formulation of Christian dogma, as formalized in the councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon, and the Contian conception of truth. The complex theological debate on the dual nature, human and divine, of Christ (Sesboüé & Wolinski, 1996; Cozzi, 2009; Greshake, 2000; Sequeri, 2023) differently relates the notion of correspondence and that of identity. To indicate just the topic, the phenomenological understanding of Jesus' faith in the Father (Canobbio, 2000; Sequeri, 1996) escapes the distinction between correspondence and identity theory of truth, as it is characterized at the same time as both correspondence and identity. The brief itinerary that follows indicates how the emergence of recent debates can equally be related, if only in an embryonic and indicative way, to the issue of Christ's dual nature.

3. The Dual Character Concepts' Theory

The question to start from is: could the concept of *de re* truth in relation to Christological debates can illuminate the concept of 'dual character concepts' (DCCs)? Reuter points out that DCCs are concepts in which the descriptive and normative dimensions (Bertera, 2023; Di Lucia & Passerini Glazel, 2023; Ricca, 2023) are related but independent (Reuter, 2019), like the concept of artist or scientist: what is it a true artist or scientist? What is the meaning of 'true' here? Independent means that a person can fulfil either of these two dimensions (descriptive and normative) without satisfying the other. The topic is reminiscent of the theological disputes concerning the dual nature, human and divine, of Christ from the council of Nicaea to the council of Caledonia and beyond: are they to be considered separate or related, and in what way related? (Bertuletti et al., 1998; Angelini et al., 2007; DH 1995). Does the concept of God

10 The reference to the Gospels does not stop here. An entire section is devoted to the Gospel of John concerning the examples concerning the distinction between truth *de dicto* (in which the adjective 'true' is predicated of what is said in affirming or testifying) and truth *de actu* (in which the adjective 'true' is predicated of the act of saying, such as in affirming or testifying). Concerning truth *de dictum* Conte refers to John 5:32, 8:14 (just quoted) and 21:24 in which the dictum that is qualified as true is the testimony given "This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimonia is true. - Questi è il discepolo che testimonia queste cose e le ha scritte, e noi sappiamo che la sua testimonianza è vera - Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητῆς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν. Concerning truth *de actu* Conte refers to John 5:32, 8:14 (just quoted) and 21:24 in which the dictum that is qualified as true is the testimony given: This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimonia is true. - Questi è il discepolo che testimonia queste cose e le ha scritte, e noi sappiamo che la sua testimonianza è vera - Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητῆς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν.

imply the dual nature of human and divine? Obviously not, since different religions have different concepts (descriptive and normative) of God. What theory of truth (ontological, phenomenological) does the concept of true religion presuppose?

I will refer to the well-known Husserlian observation that a true warrior should be brave (Heritier, 2023) by trying to replace the theme ‘warrior’ with that of ‘God’ and formulating the question whether a true God should be human, with specific reference to *Symbolum Nicaenum*. Let us begin with a brief analysis of what emerges in relation to the notion of faith in the discussion regarding DCCs. According to Pinal and Reuter,

Knobe, Prasada, and Newman (2013) present a series of original experiments designed to show that concepts expressed by terms such as artist and scientist have two independent criteria for categorization, one of which is inherently normative. They call this unique class of concepts ‘dual-character concepts’ (DCC)” (Pinal & Reuter, 2017, p. 1).

Knobe, Prasada, and Newman imagine two people, the former a physics professor who clings dogmatically against any empirical evidence, the latter an ordinary person who has never been trained in formal experimental methods but approaches everything by revising her beliefs in light of empirical evidence. Note that, by following the perspective, the concept of empirical evidence in the discourse appears self-evident and not falsifiable or contradictable. According to the authors, it makes sense to say that the former is clearly a scientist, but also that she is not a scientist at all. Equally, that the second is clearly not a scientist, but also that it makes sense to qualify him truly as a scientist (Knobe, Prasada & Newman, 2013, p. 242). The two people have two different characterizations of being a ‘scientist’ “one in terms of concrete activities (conducting experiments, formulating theories, etc.), the other in terms of more abstract values (an impartial quest for empirical truths)” (Knobe, Prasada & Newman, 2013, pp. 242-243).

This is reminiscent, from a legal point of view, of St. Paul’s famous statement, considered to be the founder of natural law according to which. In fact,

For it is not those who hear the law who are just in the sight of God; rather, those who observe the law will be justified. For when the Gentiles who do not have the law by nature observe the prescriptions of the law, they are a law for themselves even though they do not have the law – οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλ’ οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται. ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος· (Rm. 2:13-14).

Here, like in the case of human-divine nature of Christ, do we have some kind of unprecedented DCCs case, in which ‘true’ Jews (or ‘true’ jurists, the *jusnaturalists*) are those who put the law into practice by nature (whatever is meant by ‘nature’), just like the scientist who relies on empirical evidence (whatever empirical evidence is in everyday life)? They are ideally contrasted, in the Epistle to the Romans, with the ‘true’ Jew (or the ‘true’ positivist jurist): who are identifiable instead “according to the law.” Here the descriptive and normative parts of the definitions refer not to a theological concept but to a legal one, or perhaps precisely to the distinction between the legal and theological spheres, which are considered not independent.

The problem concerns exactly the relationship that exists between “abstract values” (in the case: legal and moral) and a “set of concrete features”: i.e., the two elements that concern the definition of dual character concepts according to the three authors (Knobe, Prasada

& Newman, 2013, p. 243). In fact, DCCs involve the fact that “each dual character concept contains two different ways of characterizing members of the category to which it applies and that these two ways of characterizing members of the category stand in a particular type of relationship” (Knobe, Prasada & Newman, 2013, p. 243): regarding the list of features and the abstract value that the concept aims to realize. The difference between natural kind concepts and DCCs (Keil, 1992, pp. 36-42, 588-589), following the three authors, is that in natural kind concepts the observable features are caused by or dependent on a ‘hidden essence’; in DCCs the concrete features realize the abstract values (Knobe, Prasada & Newman, 2013, p. 244, 255). Moreover, the natural kind concepts and DCCs seem to be but just two of the many possibilities that need to be integrated within a more general account of conceptual representation. Thus, the question about the dual nature of Christ could be made to fall within the scheme of natural kinds if it moves in theology from an ontological juxtaposition? Or, a hypothesis yet to be explored, within the framework of DCCs, if it moves from an anthropological juxtaposition to the Christology proper to twentieth-century theology, referring it to a conception of truth as an event, as we shall see synthetically?

Or does the inclusion of theological examples, as in the case of the interpretation provided of Conte’s theory of truth (triune, but in a different sense from the claimed truth of the Christian Trinity) imply a different notion of truth (truth as an event)? Far from answering this question, I will limit myself in the article to something much more circumscribed.

Within the bibliography that develops the problem concerning DCCs in the context of gender studies (Leslie 2015) or in relation to the social context (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2017; Reuter, 2019), I will only analyze the reference to the concept of father in one article (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2015), interpreting it in a theological sense and referring it to the relationship between Father and Son in the Christian Trinity.

Following Del Pinal and Reuter, Knobe, Prasada, and Newman (2013) present DCCs as the concepts (expressed by terms such as artist and scientist) that have two independent criteria for categorization, one of which is inherently normative. The two authors imagine a different scenario:

John has two biological children. He materially provides them with all their needs, including food, proper schooling, and some nice toys. However, John does not think doing so is his duty; in fact, he is only a good father because he thinks that his behavior will advance his career as a politician. Is John really a father? (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2015, p. 554)

Let us try to place the question in the (imaginary or real) context of the Christian religion as a specific area of social cognition, reformulating the scenario theologically with the terms placed in parentheses:

- (1) a. There is a sense in which John (*God*) is clearly a father (*of Jesus*).
- b. However, if you think about what it really means to be a father, you would have to say that John (*God*) is not a true father after all (*of Jesus*) (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2015, p. 554)

Del Pinal and Reuter imagine a different scenario: John’s career foundered; he abandoned his two kids. However, John’s brother, Mark, who has no biological children, decided to care for the kids, but, since is not as materially successful as John he can’t provide the kids with some of their needs. So, the question will come back:

Mark really loves the kids and works very hard to make sure they have everything they

need. Is Mark really a father? In response, consider whether you agree with (2-a) and (2-b):

(2) a. There is a sense in which Mark is clearly not a father. b. However, if you think about what it really means to be a father, you would have to say that Mark is a true father after all (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2015, p. 554).

Within their vision, Del Pinal and Reuter, give central importance to commitment. Identifying in this trait a characteristic proper to the non-predictability of human behavior:

Given these basic properties of human behavior, information about the relevant commitments is essential to make useful categorizations and predictions. In particular, it is useful to know not only whether Jack is good or bad at something but also whether he is committed to it (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2017, p 494).

With reference to the theory presented by Leslie (2015), that proposes a specific view of the content of the normative dimension, focusing on the case of social role terms:

Leslie agrees that the normative dimension of DCCs does not represent the usual or even typical function of the corresponding social roles. For example, the normative dimension of scientist does not represent superficial functions such as gathering data, looking into microscopes, etc. What is represented is more fundamental: it is more like an idealization of the basic function of the role (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2017, p. 479).

Del Pinal and Reuter argue, unlike Leslie, that to meet the normative dimension instead one always relates to the notion of a nonbiological father:

what matters most is not whether someone actually fulfills the basic function to some non-trivial degree, but rather whether someone is committed to fulfill it. Consider again the example of a non-biological father. From this perspective, what made us accept that Mark is a true father despite not being a biological father and sometimes failing to fully provide for the kids is his sincere and constant commitment to care for them. We should distinguish, then, between the property of actually fulfilling the basic function of a social role from that of being committed to fulfill it (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2017, pp. 479-480).

In the case of the (narrative referring to) Christian God, can the Father be considered a (true) good Father? Or is the concept of Father used metaphorically, as it were, to indicate something about the very character of the relationship between correspondence and identity (in Contian terms, between *de re* eidological truth and *de re* idiological truth)?

It is precisely this notion of commitment that arose in the analysis of the DCCs that interests me and brings me back to understanding the theological references Conte makes in *Adelaster* in the direction of the need to link truth and faith. Conte in fact proposes a principle of contradictibility alongside the Popperian principle of falsifiability, referring to the problem of the nexus between faith and truth in a primarily etymological sense. In contrast, the nexus between faith and truth appears central to defining the meaning of the Nicene symbol that posits the equivalence between “true God” and “true man” referring to Jesus, in Christian theology.

4. Trial and Error: A Theological Interpretation of Conte’s Theory of Truth in *Adelaster*

Bartley's own position of generalizing the principle of falsifiability in pan-critical rationalism¹¹ (Robilant, 1984, pp. 33-50; Heritier, 2009, pp. 34-44)¹² focuses on critiquing the concept of commitment in Protestant theology (Bartley, 1984). In Bartley's vision, alongside Popper's falsifiability principle aimed at demarcating scientific to non-scientific beliefs, lies the revisability criterion, useful to demarcate "those beliefs that are revisable within the argument situation from those that are not" (Bartley, 1984, p. 135).¹³ Bartley distinguishes here between the kind of commitment required by logic and by Christianity. Within the appendix 1, "A metacontext for rationality", Bartley identifies only three different contexts: 1) the metacontext of true belief – or justification philosophy; 2) the oriental metacontext of nonattachment; 3) The metacontext of fallibilism, or of pancritical rationalism (Bartley, 1984, p. 172), noting how most Western philosophies of science as much philosophies of religion – are justificationist: "they sponsor justificationist contexts of true beliefs" (Bartley, 1984, p. 173). They are concerned with how "to justify, verify, confirm, make firmer, strengthen, validate, vindicate, make certain, show to be certain, make acceptable, probablify, cause to survive, *defend* particular contexts and position" (Bartley, 1984, p. 173), ending up (both philosophies of science and of religion) in commitment and in identification. The reference to the context of Del Pinal and Reuter encounters the same problem: experiment and faith, empiricism and religion, are two meta-contexts, and the attempt I am doing here is to move from one to the other: from the notion of (human) father to (divine) father. In fact, the same problem about the 'truth' of Jesus' father arises in the Gospels: in one sense Jesus' Father is a true non-biological Father (Jesus being called in *Symbolum niceanum* "son of God and begotten, not created"), but in another sense not a true Father (in the metacontext of Christianity) in that he "allows" the Son to be killed by man. The notion of DCCs opens up a linguistic quest that moves not from the identification of essences, but moves from the articulation of concrete characters that we can say in many ways. Twentieth-century Christology has thought of the story of Jesus as an anthropology (Pannenberg, 1976; 1985)¹⁴, starting from a conception of truth as an event (Bertuletti et al., 1998; Angelini et al., 2007; Colombo et al., 1988). As Angelini points out, critical rationalism appears to be a morality of thought in general and of scientific work, which leaves room for decision in which the criterion of demarcation appears as a proposal for agreement or convention (Colombo et al., 1988, p. 63). Pancritical rationalism accurately indicates, thus, how the meta-context of criticism is open, on the basis of the exercise of argumentative criticism itself, to renouncing criticism as a justification of knowledge. This is only a hypothesis, which nevertheless shows how the space of faith approaches that of truth. The Contian principle of contradictibility itself can be read in this sense, although Conte believes that there is a hierarchy between the principle of verification, falsification and contradictibility. Contian generalization of the principle of falsification in contradictibility principle move in a revision of the concept of truth relevant to legal thought: the concept of truth is understood in a rhetorical sense, that is, related to

11 See footnote 8.

12 Robilant introduced in the 1970s a criticism to Bobbio and Kelsen's positivist conception of law by referring to Popper's critique of verificationism (Robilant 1968, 1975). He proposed replacing the notion of theory with that of figure, then developed from its epistemological matrix to a hermeneutical and ultimately aesthetic perspective (Robilant, 2008, Heritier, 2009; 2012).

13 On theories of rationality and pan-critical rationalism (PCR), see Bartley (1987).

14 The comparison Pannenberg made in his volume on anthropology from a theological perspective is perhaps still the most significant systematic dialogue with science, including the thought of Popper, Albert, Bartley and culture of his time, parallel to the Ricoeur's philosophical one. The initial attempt to read DCCs theory theologically is based in this dialogical methodology.

the form of judgment in a case. Traditionally, rhetorical truth is understood as a form of truth belonging to the realm of verisimilar (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969), recent studies show how a different epistemological conception of truth are relevant (Cavalla 1996; Patterson, 1996; Manzin, 2014); in this article I link implicitly to this rehabilitation of rhetorical truth in its philosophical implications, toward a conception of truth as an event.

Connecting DCCS research to a theory of truth as an event seems to me an interesting goal, capable of extending its descriptive and normative meaning in terms of a full phenomenological understanding. The very dual structure of DCCs, opposing the form of natural kind concepts, moves from a set of concrete elements that embody abstract ethical values in defining a concrete character, as in the example of rock music (Knobe, Prasada & Newman, 2013, p. 244). Recognizing the centrality of the commitment to fulfill the idealized basic function associated with the social role leads to the problem of the social context and theoretical meta-contexts indicated by Bartley.

It thus opens up, the space of a quest in which truth can be considered as event-related, in which faith and reason refer to a free making of the divine concept (Christology as anthropology), in which the divine nature of Christ must be understood from the concreteness of the incarnation and the “phenomenology of Jesus” (Bertuletti et al., 1998; Angelini et al., 2007). All truth requires a decision, an act of entrustment concerning the choice of a meta-context: in this, the reopening of the nexus between truth and faith, between reason and faith, allows us to think of a conception of truth as an event. Pierangelo Sequeri’s theory of truth rereads the Christian tradition in a phenomenological direction (Sequeri, 1996, pp. 317-554; Sequeri, 2016; 2023 – regarding affective turn in metaphysics) entering into a dialogue with theories such as DCCs that may prove fruitful. A theory of truth as an event thus seems to extend its scope to both the realm of law and religion.

Some introductory remarks for an interdisciplinary research project concerning truth can be undertaken, without construct a comprehensive discourse.

The question of the theory of truth in legal thought is thus very far from that envisaged by the Hobbesian dictum *Auctoritas non veritas facit legem* (indicated at the third point of the famous Schmittian ‘Hobbes crystal’, Schmitt, 2005). In Conte’s perspective, also far removed from a truthless view of law or ethics such as Scarpelli’s (Scarpelli, 1982), Pintore’s (Pintore, 1996), the theological problem of truth in relation to faith and witness presents itself as a philosophical problem that can no longer be evaded. The configuration of the legal system as referable to the ontic problem of truth is presented in entirely different theories, such as Patterson’s theory of truth, which recovers Quine’s “holistic” perspective in epistemology (Patterson, 1996, p. 161) and the rhetorical vision that Manzin provides (Manzin, 2014, pp. 47-80), based on Cavalla’s theory of forgotten truth.¹⁵

The aforementioned theory of truth as an event stems from the recognition of the original proximity between faith, justice and truth, noted by Balthasar in the Hebrew term *emunah*. The proposal of the “phenomenology of Jesus” establishes a “strict correspondence between the form of the institution of Christological faith and the process of constitution of the Gospel scripture” (Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1998, p. 241), not indifferent to the truthful status of the linguistic form of the testimony (the previously mentioned conclusion of the Gospel text John, 24: 17). Faith, as an anthropological relation is constitutive of truth: in the structure of

5. Elements for a Theory of Truth as an Event

¹⁵ The tripartition between the principle of verifiability, falsifiability and contradictibility formulated by Conte was published in the volume edited by Cavalla (Cavalla, 2007.) Manzin’s (Manzin, 2014) rhetorical theory also moves from a conception of rhetorical truth referable to individual events.

the testimony, but also in the reference of the primacy of the “thing” of the text (Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1998, p. 242). Phenomenology of Jesus means “the founding role of Jesus’ effectivity *vis-à-vis* Christological faith” (Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1998, p. 242) where ‘effectivity’ means “the identity of the theological truth of Jesus and the Christological truth of God” (Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1998, p. 242), i.e., the *eidōs* of Jesus, the inseparability of his truth (as an event) from the history that instituted it (as specified in *Symbolum niceanum*). The formula of Jesus’ *eidōs* is meant to signal “in order to define the status of the original evidence of consciousness, of the impossibility of separating the question of meaning from that of its genesis” (Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1998, p. 244).

The passive dimension of consciousness, facticity following Heidegger, is not only the external condition, but the very matrix of the act of consciousness: the terminology of *eidōs* says “the immanence of truth in the process of sense, not separable from the process, because genesis is constitutive of sense as the ‘meaning’ of truth” (Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1998, p. 244):

The *eidōs* resists resolution in ideality because it is not separable from the facticity that is the condition and measure of its reality. If one can bracket the judgment of existence (in the naturalistic-objectivistic sense which is already an abstraction), one cannot bracket actual existence, since this is the inescapable locus of truth. Husserlian phenomenology honors this requirement better than Heideggerian thought of ontological difference, because of the hierarchizing tendency this entails that leads it to resolve the ontic in its ontological truth. ‘Meaning’ is not reducible to the ontic, because the act of consciousness is not external to truth.

Beyond Conte’s mere reference to the notion of faith, the original form of consciousness has the form of faith (“there is no recognition of truth except in the subject’s consent-trust on it as the truth of its own actual existence,” Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1998, 1998, p. 245.) The space of theology is to be thought of the genesis: as a condition of the form of freedom of consciousness constitutive of meaning. In this sense, the anthropological theory of faith “is the medium that makes it possible to justify the Christological singularity and its inseparability from the story of Jesus... the story of Jesus realizes the truth of God that it manifests... the truth of God is inseparable from the story of Jesus since the story of Jesus is constitutive of the truth of God (Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1998, p. 245.)

However, the *Symbolum Niceanum* recalled by Conte indicates this correspondence of truth and history with the original in the phenomenology of Jesus by specifying the form of truth as an event: “The *eidōs* of God revealed in Jesus is historical, since it is the *eidōs* of Jesus’ faith... faith is not external to the event of revelation, but is constitutive of its evidence” (Bertuletti, in Colombo et al. 1988, p. 245.)

According to Bertuletti, the relationship between consciousness and truth repeats the generative process indicated in *Symbolum Niceanum* (generated, not created), whereby Jesus’ faith is the irreplaceable medium of God’s truth. God’s truth, Sequeri observes, “is manifested in Jesus Christ, identifying itself precisely in that nondeductible event that is Jesus of Nazareth” (Sequeri, in Colombo et al., 1998, p. 245.)

The theory of truth as an event is produced as a theoretical evolution of *de re* truth in its ideological form: truth takes the form of identity with an individual entity, in the paradigmatic form of Jesus, whose relationship with the Father constitutes both a Christology and a ‘generative’ anthropology: “Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus – *Abbate in voi gli stessi sentimenti che furono in Cristo Gesù* – τούτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὁ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Phil., 2:5). The meaning of this reference to the sentiments of Jesus should not be understood as a mere imitation of Christ, but in reference to the ideological

relationship (Conte, 2016, p. 33) of the Father with the Son, of every parent with his children (Del Pinal & Reuter, 2105, p. 554), in the plural form of freedom related to the “human form”:

God’s attachment to generation. Here is the ultimate term of God’s ontological truth identified in the faith of Jesus, who unscrupulously puts one’s filial confidence in the *abba*’ to the test of God’s eternal openness to the generation of the beloved Son, in favor of every son of man... the weight of “sentimental entry” into the solemn argument of the incarnation/*kenosis* of Jesus’ “divine form” should perhaps be more adequately elaborated in systematic fashion. Indeed, it alludes to a mode of feeling in which the free detachment, immanent to every filial generation, toward the paternal origin is consummated (Sequeri, in Colombo et al. 1998, p. 245.)

The contribution of theology (of the Christology of Jesus’ faith) to the theory of truth does not then appear external to the anthropological dimension. The theory of truth as event takes the form of a development of the theory of truth *de re* in its idiological form (Conte, 2016), and considers freedom as the generative and original foundation that is available to every man. The overcoming of the model of the natural kind concept seems to follow, precisely in the use of the metaphor of the father, the development of twentieth-century Christology, which dissolves the eidetic form into an empirical generative departure, which moves from the concreteness of the experience of man’s feeling (the example of rock music in Knobe, Prasada & Newman, 2013, p. 244.) Every man can give a plural form to the exercise of his own plural freedom: no matter whether he is a believer or not. The theological model recovers this plurality by configuring a nexus between justice and truth that brings the human form of freedom back to the center of legal discourse, overcoming the metaphysical model and after the modern primacy of reason (observed in the shift from the principle of verification to the principle of falsification and contradictibility, finally to a theory of truth as an event.) It does not appear possible here to follow the path that leads Sequeri to a theory of truth as an *affective turn* relevant to the generative conception of justice (Sequeri, 1996, pp. 317-554; Sequeri, 2016; 2020: 2023). Conte’s reference to the Gospels cannot be interpreted as a mere casualness and a mere reference to the text, but as a coherent development of the problematization of the concept of logic truth. Interest in the DCCS proposal can help clarify theological issues through linguistic analysis; at the same time, the consideration of complexing theological issues does not appear irrelevant to the development of human language analysis. The references to biblical language found in Conte’s thought and referable to truth theory cannot be ascribed to a theory of truth as an event (such as the DCCS theory). At the same time, it seems to me that perhaps a reading moving in this direction is possible, moving from the common anthropological sphere of human language.

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