

MORAL INTERIORITY IN THE CONTEXT OF DOMINANCE OF THE TECHNICAL AND OTHER POSITIVE SCIENCES

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Abstract

In this paper the author seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the reality of the human personal moral interiority from the perspective of the Belgian moral theologian, Servais Pinckaers. It is understood in the context of present-day dominant scientific view of the world in which the categories of technical and other positive sciences, through their dominance, bring into question the human form of existence and activity. Following introductory thoughts on the importance, value and necessity of interdisciplinary collaboration, we are given an insight into the basic features of human life, which are twofold, depending on whether the same features are underpinned in the moral interiority of the human person or merely stem from the technical and positive view of the world.

Key words: Servais Pinckaers; moral interiority; moral theology; positive sciences; interdisciplinarity

Introduction

The first section of the paper on interdisciplinary consciousness and collaboration is, in fact, an introduction of sorts to the two subsequent sections of the paper. It strives to point out the inappropriate and unjustified exclusivity of current today's dominant technical and other positive sciences¹, and further-

¹ Cf. Andrea MORO, »Umanistico« e »scientifico« ai tempi delle neuroscienze, in: *Vita e Pensiero*, 103 (2020) 1, 95–100; Jelena MIJIĆ, Moralna odgovornost i znanstvena slika svijeta, in: *Filozofska istraživanja*, 40 (2020) 2, 313–328.

more, to warn of their methodological definiteness and disciplinary limitedness which reveal the inability of these to reach and to appropriately deal with the moral dimension of human life, which is beyond the scope of their understanding.² Thus, the need is underlined for a scientific discipline such as moral theology, the main object of its research and presentation being precisely the moral interiority of the human person. One of the tasks of moral theology is to draw attention to the specific nature of moral interiority and its proper moral dimensions, which is also the core theme of this article. This topic is approached from the perspective of the contemporary moral theologian, Servais Pinckaers (1925–2008). He puts forward this topic and develops it in his most important and most influential work, *Les sources de la morale chrétienne: Sa méthode, son contenu, son histoire*³.

This work is comprised of three parts. In the first, Pinckaers elaborates on moral interiority. The title of the first section is very significant, namely, *The Human and Christian Character of Moral Theology*⁴. The first part of the title indicates unambiguously that human character is one of the two essential features of moral theology. It seeks to point out that moral theology is inconceivable without its directedness toward the research, study and presentation of the human, that is, moral features of human existence and activity. Clearly, one of the component parts of Christian moral interiority is its religious character, though this paper does not elaborate on this, rather merely makes mention of this dimension of Christian moral interiority. Likewise, one would do well to stress that this paper does not deal exhaustively with all that concerns human moral interiority. Topics which are very important for the study of moral interiority such as moral knowledge, moral activity, moral experience, moral values, moral method and moral object are not the subject of exhaustive research and presentation in this paper. They are referred to as being self-evident and impossible not to mention in a paper such as this, which deals with the specificity of moral interiority, its proper nature and its proper dimensions.

² Cf. Vjekoslav BAJSIĆ, Izazov prirodoznanstvene civilizacije, in: *Bogoslovska smotra*, 55 (1985) 3–4, 346–359; Ivan KEŠINA, Granična pitanja filozofije, teologije i prirodnih znanosti u prosudbi Vjekoslava Bajsića, in: *Bogoslovska smotra*, 72 (2002) 1, 26–27.

³ Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources de la morale chrétienne. Sa méthode, son contenu, son histoire*, Fribourg, 1985 (Hereinafter: *Les sources...*)

⁴ *Ibid.*, 57–200.

1. Interdisciplinary consciousness and collaboration

1.1. Self-criticality and dialogue

Moral theologians have had and still have a very important task to carry out within the Catholic Church. Being a product of their time, they fulfill their role in keeping with the basic tenets of the particular time in history they live in. Since Modernity up until the Second Vatican Council, moralists had played an important role in the fields of child-rearing and education. Indeed, their moral-theological theories and application thereof, especially in analyses and interpretations of perplexing cases of conscience, had a very significant effect on the formulation and adoption of lawful ecclesiastical moral precepts. All of this, in the context of the prevailing normative concept of morality of that particular time, as well as the existing cultural element of authoritarianism, gave rise to a sort of a feeling of superiority in the case of a considerable number of moralists, but also a certain suspiciousness and dislike for new and related sciences, which also studied human activity but were supported in their proper positive method which differed distinctly from the moral method.⁵

With its strong and very clear turnabout, the Second Vatican Council brought an end to a great historical period, not only in the history of the Church, but also in the history of moral theology. The conciliar opening up to the world meant an opening up to culture and science overall: it meant entering into open dialogue with the other and with those who are unlike us and bringing about close and very much needed collaboration with all those concerned. All of this, in the context of discovering new perspectives in thought, new scientific methods, as well as indisputable and great achievements, especially in the field of the positive humanistic sciences, led not only to feelings of inferiority in, again, a considerable number of Catholic moralists, but also led to doubt in the soundness and justifiability of their proper moral theories.⁶

The previous feeling of superiority of the moralists gave way to a feeling of inferiority, and the previous rejection of the new gave way to a rejection of the old. In both cases, one can note uncritical conduct and rejection. The reasons leading up to this vary, but in any circumstance, one must underline the lack of a much needed and open interdisciplinary dialogue which, at a slow but sure historical pace, would reveal a complementarity between the old and the new, and which would strengthen insight into the whole which may be

⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 70–88.

⁶ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 312–314; Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life. An Approach to Moral Theology*, Washington, 2000, 75–76. (Hereinafter: *Shaping the Moral Life...*)

glimpsed from the partial perspective of any scientific discipline. Besides the absence of open and engaged dialogue, uncritical conduct ensued most certainly due to inappropriate interdisciplinary collaboration caused by an ignorance of one's proper identity and the real opportunity it provides, finally the overstepping of or disregard for, firstly, one's own disciplinary boundaries and secondly, those of others.⁷

1.2. *Disciplinary complementarity*

With this in mind, prominent Belgian theologian Servais Pinckaers justifiably claims that the demand for a permanent renewal of moral theology should give rise to a construction of a moral system suited to the present moment in time, and that this can be accomplished through cooperation of all those concerned and finally, that all this should take place with a knowledge of and regard for one's proper disciplinary identity.⁸ In this case, knowledge, acknowledgement and appropriation of categories and procedures from other scientific disciplines, such as those of the empirical, positive and technical type, would not pose a threat to moral science, but rather would contribute even more to knowledge about, acknowledgement of and respect for the specificity of such moral knowledge and moral categories that cannot be reduced to the categories of any other science.⁹ In the absence of these, that is, by ignoring the specific identity of moral science and, consequently, an exclusive underpinning in the categories of the other, now dominant, sciences would ultimately bring about the denial of moral science and its irreplaceable role in the Church, society and human existence. One of these roles is undoubtedly the study, presentation, defence and affirmation of the deepest and immutable human values which have always been and still are the basic criterion of moral judgement within any social group in any period of moral history whatsoever.¹⁰

⁷ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 88–91; Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life...*, 65–78.

⁸ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Morality: The Catholic View*, South Bend, 2001, 88; Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life...*, 72–75.

⁹ Cf. Vjekoslav BAJSIĆ, *Izazov prirodoznanstvene civilizacije*, 354–356; Ivan KEŠINA, *Granična pitanja filozofije, teologije i prirodnih znanosti u prosudbi Vjekoslava Bajsića*, 26–27.

¹⁰ Cf. INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *In search of a universal ethic: A new look at the natural law*, in: John BERKMAN i William C. MATTISON III (ed.), *Searching for a Universal Ethic: Multidisciplinary, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Responses to the Catholic Natural Law Tradition*, Grand Rapids, 2014, 25–32.

Respect for one's proper and another's disciplinary identity in any interdisciplinary collaborative effort promotes the respect and advancement of all participants involved in the collaborative group.¹¹ For example, Freud's theory on the psychological development of the human person, if understood within the due bounds of its disciplinary identity, aids the moral theologian in better understanding the psychological processes taking place within the human psychological maturation process. Similarly, moral teaching on the conscience – if understood correctly within the disciplinary boundaries of moral science – aids the psychologist in better understanding moral processes within the psychological maturation process of the human being. Although the moral life is closely connected to the psychological, still its development cannot be reduced and limited only to the psychological, and the reverse. For instance, moral demand imposes itself with its demandingness upon each person regardless of his degree of development in the psychological sphere. Namely, each person must provide an answer to the question: »What is my personal stance toward the true human good and, consequently, the fundamental moral demand ensuing from it?« This is the decisive moral question which appears in some way in the consciousness and conscience of each person from his earliest childhood onward, throughout all stages of his psychological development. Each and every person encounters it, also as the absoluteness of the moral demand, in accordance with the stage of his psychological development.¹²

Something of this sort may be said about respecting one's proper and another's scientific discipline on the basis of the existing collaboration between moral science and sociology. It is common knowledge that sociological research deals with external human behaviour from the perspective of the social environment in which the individual finds himself. The results of such research enable the moral theologian to better understand the social dimension of external human behaviour, but this very same research – due to the nature of its proper positive method – can say nothing about the personal interiority of the human being from his individual perspective.¹³ This is pre-

¹¹ Cf. Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life...*, 75–76; Ivan KEŠINA, Moderna evolucionistička teorija i kršćanska slika čovjeka: O problemu hominizacije prigodom 50. obljetnice enciklike Humani generis, in: *Bogoslovska smotra*, 70 (2000) 1, 95–109.

¹² Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Morality: The Catholic View*, 88–89; Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life...*, 1–3.

¹³ »It [Moral knowledge] comes into being through dynamic reflection on human actions. Starting with the acts themselves, it goes back to their source and origin in the human person. Non content with hindsight, it would capture the interior movement that produces the action, so as to direct it to its fulfillment.«, Servais PINCKAERS, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, Edinburgh, 2001, 56. »If ethics is the science that considers human acts

cisely the core object of research of moral science which strives to illuminate the moral interiority of the human person, his inalienable dignity, as well as those demands which stem from his spiritual nature and involve the created world, one's neighbour and God Himself. At this moral level of human existence, moral science establishes the universality and absoluteness of the moral law which transcends time, space and the specificity of any social environment.¹⁴ In this way, moral science with its proper irreplaceable and inalienable contribution helps sociologists to better understand the human person from his personal and individual perspective. It is at this moral level of human existence that man encounters core human issues, such as: questions on basic human values, on the dignity of the human person and on the meaning of human existence.¹⁵

1.3. *The limitedness of human knowledge*

All that has been said up to this point indicates the fact that every scientific discipline has only partial insight into the truth, and that the totality of scientific and human knowledge is limited in scope when the total truth about 'what is and what is not' is taken into account.¹⁶ Despite our awareness of this, throughout the entire history of science and regardless of the scientific discipline, difficulties are encountered which derive from an inappropriate faith in science and the expectation of a perfect and definitive answer to any human issue. This difficulty arises especially in the field of those sciences which have seen a strong development and huge advancement in their cognitive achievements and potentialities. As this once referred to theology and philosophy – which had for centuries dominated the world of science and public opinion – this now refers to the positive sciences, especially the technical sciences

from the point of view of the responsible person, then the heart of the moral question and the basis of its method will be the knowledge that generates human acts, forms them, brings them to the light of day and joins them to the human will. To reach this goal, ethicists must engage in patient reflection upon human action, pursuing it from its outward show to its inner sources, to its ultimate origin in conscience and personal will. All the dimensions of the human act, all its elements in their harmonious ordering, can be surveyed only from this central point.«, *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁴ Cf. INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, In search of a universal ethic: A new look at the natural law, 25–50.

¹⁵ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 89; INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, In search of a universal ethic: A new look at the natural law, 51–63.

¹⁶ Cf. Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life...*, 77–78.

which for a long time have been determining pace and direction in the scientific world.¹⁷

In speaking of this difficulty, which is actually nothing more than an illusion stemming from an inappropriate faith in one's proper science, Pinckaers uses the expression »imperialism of the scientist«. ¹⁸ By this, he means those scientists who deem that it is precisely their science which sooner or later will resolve all things, will even explain man himself. Confirmation of this way of thinking is found by Pinckaers to be in almost every area of the positive sciences: among biologists who consider that man is merely a very complex group of molecules, among those psychologists who consider that man is merely a mechanism of impulses and desires, among those sociologists who consider that man is merely a puppet in the game of a great and powerful social force, or among those historians who consider that man is a tiny straw which appears for only an instant on the huge waves of history. Unfortunately, this type of imperialism can be noted in other scientific fields as well, such as the humanities.¹⁹ For instance, this holds true particularly for those philosophers who reflect on positive science and, with an justification in its results, come to the conclusion that it is pointless to speak of man as a person and a subject, and that in this respect, the central task of their science is the destruction of man as a subject.²⁰

The aim of this section is to warn of the importance, value and necessity of interdisciplinary consciousness and then to underline the most salient principles for achieving appropriate, successful and productive interdisciplinary collaboration.²¹ According to Servais Pinckaers, these are definitely self-criticality and criticality, openness and commitment to dialogue, knowledge of and respect for the complementary values of individual scientific disciplines and finally acceptance of the incontrovertible fact that human knowledge is

¹⁷ Cf. Tonči MATULIĆ, Primjena i razvoj tehnike iz perspektive kršćanske etike, in: *Crkva u svijetu*, 40 (2005a) 305–311; Šimo ŠOKČEVIĆ, Filozofija moći Romana Guardinija, in: *Diacovensia*, 23 (2015) 3, 264–269.

¹⁸ Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 90.

¹⁹ Cf. Šimo ŠOKČEVIĆ, Filozofija moći Romana Guardinija, in: *Diacovensia*, 23 (2015.) 3, 264–269; Tonči MATULIĆ, Primjena i razvoj tehnike iz perspektive kršćanske etike (II.), in: *Crkva u svijetu*, 40 (2005) 4, 465–468.

²⁰ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 90; »Hard determinism has been presented as the point of view that determinism is true and therefore people have neither free will nor moral responsibility.«, Jelena MIJIĆ, Moralna odgovornost i znanstvena slika svijeta, 326.

²¹ Cf. Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life...*, 72–76.

limited, particularly when the truth about concrete human reality is at issue.²² The foregoing introductory thoughts and guidelines for interdisciplinary consciousness and collaboration are followed by two middle sections, the first of which – in a more affirmative and the second in a negative manner – point to the special nature and salient features of the main object of research of moral science which is the moral interiority of the human person. Insight into this dimension of the human moral reality, is supported in Pinckaers' two-fold description of human life which man possesses depending on whether he acknowledges, respects and lives in accordance with his proper moral interiority, or whether he neglects, ignores and finally rejects it as being a mere illusion belonging to an unreal imaginary world.²³

2. A view of the world of moral interiority

2.1. Inaccessibility of the external method

Owing to their method of external and rigorous observation, the contemporary positive sciences are constantly accelerating development and advancing increasingly on the level of knowledge and its application, especially as regards the technical sciences. The increasing number of scientific discoveries and new technical inventions establishes even more so the dominant role of the exact – especially the technical – sciences, not only in the world of the positive sciences but also on the level of public opinion at the broadest levels of society.²⁴ This is especially evident on the level of the slow but systematic production of a new view of the world and its reality, which is reduced to one and only one dimension – the positive dimension.²⁵ Specifically, in keeping with its proper method of external and rigorous observation, the exploratory view of the positive sciences focuses on phenomena which can be attained by human sensory perception, perfected and reinforced by the powerful technical aids of the contemporary technical sciences.²⁶ All that is found to be behind, underneath or above the observed positive phenomena of sensory perception

²² Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 88–91.

²³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 91–96.

²⁴ Cf. Tonči MATULIĆ, *Primjena i razvoj tehnike iz perspektive kršćanske etike*, 304–311.

²⁵ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 91, 95, 100–102; BENEDIKT XVI., *Caritas in veritate – Ljubav u istini* (29. VI. 2009), Zagreb, 2009, br. 76–77; FRANJO, *Laudato si' – Enciklika o brizi za zajednički dom* (24. V. 2015), Zagreb, 2015, br. 106–107; Maroje VIŠIĆ, *Ogled o tehnologiji i etici*, in: *Studia lexicographica*, 11 (2017) 21, 75–86. Is there perhaps a year missing here?

²⁶ Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 69.

is rejected as being unknowable and unrealistic.²⁷ This leads to the superficial and one-dimensional view of the world with no interiority.²⁸

Such a view of the world may be applied to all that has been encompassed by the aforementioned research of the positive sciences. This means that man himself becomes merely an external phenomenon, something with neither depth nor interiority, a mere image which may be grasped by means of sensory perception, which, at best, has been perfected and strengthened by the powerful aids of the contemporary technical sciences. A one-dimensional and superficial notion of man such as this brings into question the *raison d'être* of moral science which primarily deals with the human personal interiority.²⁹ Since it is not accessible to external rigorous observation, from the perspective of the positive sciences, it is proclaimed to be something that can neither be established nor verified, is unknowable and in this respect unreal and imaginary. Reflection of this kind thus leads to the expulsion of the primary object of moral science from the field of scientific research which is underpinned exclusively in the positive method.³⁰

Since all of this unfolds within the dominant and exclusive one-dimensional worldview, moral science is therewith expelled from the circle of scientific disciplines. It is declared to be inappropriate to the dominant perspective within the scientific world and public opinion. At best, moral science is understood as a theory which has today been surpassed and which, in the past, may have had its rationale in a certain social coercion, but today has lost its *raison d'être*. With all of this in mind, Pinckaers entirely justifiably considers it necessary to stress the uniqueness of the nature of moral interiority which is inaccessible to the positive method of external research but which, regardless, essentially determines human life in such a way that it constitutes in every man his indisputable moral dimension. It is in this very moral interiority that

²⁷ »(...) There is no authentic knowledge except that which is based on the observation of facts according to the positivist method. Every other kind of knowledge is rejected as unrealistic and undemonstrable, and every other method is seen as illusory and wrong.«, Servais PINCKAERS, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 58.

²⁸ Servais PINCKAERS, *La Parola e la coscienza*, Torino, 1991, 209–211; Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk o duhovnom životu*, Zagreb, 2000, 95–96, 209–220 (Hereinafter: *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*; Odilon-Gbènoukpo SINGBO, Philosophical and Theological Contributions by Romano Guardini and Jacques Ellul to the Understanding of Technological Power, in: *Bogoslovska smotra*, 90 (2020) 5, 1042–1046.

²⁹ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, Washington, 200., 59–63; Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 70. (Hereinafter: *The Pinckaers Reader...*)

³⁰ Cf. Guido GATTI, *Tecnica e morale*. Roma, 2001, 17–18, 41–44, 71–74, 79–88; Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 86, 95.

one finds the unquestionable *raison d'être* of moral science, its principles, laws and its proper methods of research, acquisition, deepening and spreading of moral understanding.³¹

2.2. *The specific nature of moral interiority*

Moral interiority (*l'intériorité morale*) is merely one of the dimensions of human interiority.³² The most superficial and also most accessible to external observation is the physical, or rather spacial dimension. As this level of human interiority is to be found also in a lifeless human body, Pinckaers has perceived very well that one can speak of human interiority in the true sense only with regard to a living person. It can be recognized by its proper dynamism, its constant communication with exteriority as much as by the benefit which man gains from his interiority. On the biological level of human existence there exists a strong dynamism of the human biological interiority, which through continual communication with the external world, makes possible primarily man's biological existence, and also human activity which is manifested in the world. The same can be said about the sensory dimension of human existence. At this level of human interiority, there exists a very dynamic and creative consciousness – at which he arrives with the help of his sensory powers – that enables man to build his impressions and perceptions into his human activity completely spontaneously and in accordance with his proper inclinations and needs.³³

Unlike the dimensions of human interiority, which in some way are common to other living and non-living beings, moral interiority is that which belongs exclusively to man insofar as he is a person.³⁴ Like other dimensions

³¹ »The behavioral sciences need moral theory because they deal only with the visible, external aspect of human actions. The richest, most decisive human actions, such as love and hatred, intention and free choice, reactions to suffering and evil, truth and duty, and faith as well – in a word, all the movements of human interiority, which alone can adequately explain what we do – escape them by and large. Nor can they offer practical, satisfactory conclusions in this regard.«, Servais PINCKAERS, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 73, Cf. *Ibid.*, 77–78.

³² Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*, 90–91.

³³ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁴ Servais PINCKAERS, *La parola e la coscienza*, 76–79; Servais PINCKAERS, *The Pinckaers Reader...*, 144–163; Klaus DEMMER, *Fondamenti di etica teologica*. Assisi, 2004, 27–47; Šimo ŠOKČEVIĆ, *Filozofija moći Romana Guardinija*, 264–269; Mislav KUTLEŠA – Ivan DOLIĆ, *Koncept i »svojestva« naravi ljudske osobe u onto-antropološkim i etičkim izazovima i kritikama razvoja umjetne inteligencije*, in: *Obnovljeni Život*, 76 (2021) 1, 25–27.

of human interiority, moral interiority also has a powerful and creative dynamism which allows man to prevail, develop and act on the moral level of his life.³⁵ This dynamism of the human personal moral interiority primarily consists in the basic ability which makes possible the systematic search and fundamental research into the true good: to understand, grasp, accept and experience it in one's life, and finally, to be enriched by it in one's personal moral interiority. Along with this ability, the personal moral interiority enables man also – by the power of his free will – to bring about his free human activity through which he effects change in his very self and the entire world which depends on him.³⁶

This personal moral interiority which gives rise to and shapes human free activity, is not accessible to external observation no matter how systematic, rigorous and reinforced it may be by the powerful aids of the technical sciences. The reason for this inaccessibility lies in the prevalent disproportion between the clearly defined research methods used by the positive empirical sciences and, secondly, the clearly defined object of research which is not within the scope of the method's ability to examine. Namely, the method of external observation reaches only that which includes in itself some sort of material dimension. However, human personal moral interiority, which includes free will – with the help of which man effects his free activity – is not of a material, but rather personal and spiritual nature.³⁷ That which appears, manifests and is formed in human free activity is nothing more than free will giving existence and form to itself in its proper free activity, in no way accessible to the external rigorous observation of the positive empirical sciences, as are the technical sciences.³⁸ Nevertheless, it is precisely within such an interiority – endowed with dynamism, creativity, personhood, spirituality and free will – from which emerge the best, richest, most beautiful and most cherished human acts, specifically, acts of freedom.³⁹

³⁵ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *La Parola e la coscienza*, 57–58; Servais PINCKAERS, *Morality: The Catholic View*, 96–111; Servais PINCKAERS, *The Pinckaers Reader...*, 179–181.

³⁶ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 61–69, 92; Servais PINCKAERS, *La Parola e la coscienza*, 206–207; Klaus DEMMER, *Fondamenti di etica teologica*, 241–248.

³⁷ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 81.

³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 70–87, 92.

³⁹ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *La Parola e la coscienza*, 209–211; Tadija MILIKIĆ, *Pravilo ljudskoga i kršćanskoga života: Savjest prema Klausu Demmeru*, in: Ivan ANTUNOVIĆ – Ivan KOPREK – Pero VIDOVIĆ (ed.), *Život biraj – Elige vitam*. Zbornik radova prigodom 75. rođendana msgr. prof. dr. sc. Valentina Pozaića umirovljenog pomoćnog biskupa Zagrebačke nadbiskupije, Zagreb, 2020, 164–166.

2.3. The salient features of moral interiority

Human moral interiority, just as the human free activity stemming from it, are recognizable in their proper inalienable moral dimensions. Aside from interiority, there are four more essential dimensions: depth, height, solidity and breadth of human moral interiority, or rather human moral activity.⁴⁰ Described below are these dimensions as understood by Servais Pinckaers.⁴¹

2.3.1. Depth and height

When speaking of depth in regard to moral interiority (*la profondeur*) Pinckaers has in mind that dimension by means of which man succeeds in overcoming the superficiality of his impressions, feelings and notions. It is this cognitive moral dimension which is supported in its proper moral reflection and personal moral experience.⁴² It is through these that man succeeds in reaching the very core of his human personal reality and fundamental moral issues which are closely linked to the original moral knowledge existing at the foundation of any moral reflection and any moral knowledge as their source, inspiration and criterion of moral rectitude.⁴³ This dimension of moral interiority indicates a certain perfectness which initiates, develops, shapes and is achieved within moral interiority on the level of moral knowledge.⁴⁴

Similarly, the second dimension of moral interiority reveals its proper perfectness. However, it is perceived through its capacity for a systematic and permanent transcendence of moral imperfection and shortcomings which, in the course of the human being's moral progress, completely spontaneously emerges on the surface of clear consciousness and demands an added effort. Through responsibility and commitment on this level of moral activity, man discovers and affirms his directedness toward the heights of moral quality. It

⁴⁰ Of all five terms referring to the moral dimensions in the original French (*l'intériorité morale* – moral interiority, *la profondeur* – depth, *la hauteur* – height, *la densité* – solidity, *ispunjenost*, *la largeur* – breadth) only the fourth term *ispunjenost* is a slightly freer translation from the French into the Croatian language. The reason for taking this liberty is Pinckaers's description of moral solidity and on the other hand regard for the spirit of the Croatian language. Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 91–94.

⁴¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 91–96; Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*, 96–99.

⁴² Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 93.

⁴³ Cf. DRUGI VATIKANSKI KONCIL, *Gaudium et spes. Pastoralna konstitucija o Crkvi u suvremenom svijetu*. (7. XII. 1965), br. 16, in: *Dokumenti*, Zagreb, 2008; Tadija MILIKIĆ, *Uvid u moralno znanje kod Servaisa Pinckaersa*, in: *Diacovensia*, 28 (2020) 1, 17–19.

⁴⁴ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*, 97; Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 62–63, 93.

is for this reason, that this dimension of moral interiority is called »height« (*la hauteur*) by Pinckaers. It may be discerned primarily in the greatness of the human spirit which always grants man the ability to come to know the sublimity and beauty of moral quality and to admire it; then, with the strength which is manifested at the highest level of human moral commitment, and which enables man – by keeping his focus on the true human good – to overcome his captive state in regard to any imperfection or limitedness. In accordance with the Christian experience, this overcoming of moral imperfection, or rather the ascent toward the pinnacles of moral quality, retains its moral quality only when in the presence of humility. Humility, being a moral virtue rooted in the depths of moral interiority, ensures not only openness toward reality in all its truth, but also obedience to the fulness of the revealed word of God.⁴⁵

2.3.2. *Solidity and breadth*

Solidity (*la densité*) is that dimension of moral interiority which evolves through a slow and patient fostering of the fruits of morality which may be attained through the depth and height of man's dynamic and powerful moral interiority.⁴⁶ Some of these fruits are indeed, moral reflection at the depth of one's personal moral interiority, moral strength which accompanies this reflection and engages the whole of man, and finally the unique experience of moral quality and true human good which attracts man by its very nature. By the fostering of these fruits, the awareness of one's proper moral interiority is deepened, one's cognitive world is enriched, one's directedness toward the true good is strengthened and, ultimately, the fundamental human capacity for freedom is developed.⁴⁷ Moral freedom can be perceived especially through one's inner collectedness, one's focus on moral quality, perseverance in attaining the true human good and finally through the prompting of human activity which emanates the solidity of moral quality and the solidity of attraction to the true and inexhaustible good.⁴⁸

By advancing in the fields of the outlined three dimensions of moral interiority, man slowly discovers and enters into the fourth dimension, which

⁴⁵ Cf. *Ibid*, 93; Servais PINCKAERS, *La Parola e la coscienza*, 78–79; Guido GATTI, *Tecnica e morale*, 105–112.

⁴⁶ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 93.

⁴⁷ Cf. Marco REALI, *La libertà nella teologia morale fondamentale: il pensiero di Servais Pinckaers OP*, in: *Sacra doctrina*, 61 (2016) 1, 281–291.

⁴⁸ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *La Parola e la coscienza*, 49–52; Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*, 98.

Pinckaers calls »breadth« (*la largeur*).⁴⁹ This dimension owes its existence to intense moral reflection, an empowered moral will and an immediate and living experience of the moral good. Owing to all of the above, man comes to know the breadth of his personal moral interiority. In this way, he gains in broadening the horizons within which he exists and acts; broadening his cognitive ability to more easily recognize and better understand the true good, and finally broadening the capacity of the will to acknowledge, accept and enrich himself with any truth whatsoever, regardless of its origin and partialness. Thus, moral progress is achieved and is manifested in the capability to interface the most diverse perspectives, opinions, argumentations and data in accordance with the fundamental moral demand which constitutes the incontrovertible continuity of the spiritual tradition of humankind.⁵⁰

3. A view of the world with no moral interiority

By limiting human knowledge to the sensory – underpinned in the observation of external facts – all the required premises are secured for the denial of moral interiority and its classification as something unestablishable, unverifiable, unknowable and, in this respect, unreal and imaginary. In this manner the illusoriness of the entire moral world is actually established and also of the perspectives and of all dimensions deriving from the thus established non-existence of the moral interiority of the human person.⁵¹ Therefore, instead of a worldview from within moral interiority, there emerges a worldview without this interiority.⁵² This view is underpinned exclusively in the human external senses and their knowledge of the external world. This world is understood merely as a group of all empirical phenomena which – in an external manner – have been allotted with an entire range of elements and relations. By means of external rigorous observation, it is possible to explore, come to know and verify them and, again, in an external manner, to implement all known laws and processes in accordance with one's proper needs and desires.⁵³

⁴⁹ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 94.

⁵⁰ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*, 98.

⁵¹ »When this image predominates and becomes exclusive, a worldview is born that might be called one-dimensional. It concentrates on phenomena, whatever can be perceived by the senses or scientific instruments. Everything else is rejected as unknowable, imaginary, or unreal.«, Servais PINCKAERS, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 78.

⁵² Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*, 95–96, 219–231.

⁵³ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 69–72, 91.

Indeed, this new view of the world involves man himself who becomes a mere empirical phenomenon and external fact. He is primarily and exclusively observed, explored, known and explained in accordance with results attained on the basis of external observation of the external phenomena of human reality.⁵⁴ In this external and, therefore, superficial and one-dimensional sensory perspective, all aforementioned salient dimensions of the moral interior of the human person fade away as illusory realities.⁵⁵ Instead of the fundamental features of the moral world of human existence and life, such as: the interior moral world, depth of moral reflection, height of moral commitment, solidity of moral activity and breadth of moral perspective, there appear fundamental features of the human world and life with no moral interiority with characteristic names such as, external appearance, superficiality, triteness, dissipation and narrowness.⁵⁶ As is evident in the terms themselves, Pinckaers understands, establishes and formulates these from the perspective of a lack of moral interiority and, similarly, an absence of the essential dimensions thereof.⁵⁷

3.1. Exteriority, superficiality and triteness

In this subheading, the first of the features mentioned in regard to human life with no moral interiority is exteriority (*l'extériorité*) which manifests the directedness of human knowledge toward external appearances.⁵⁸ Rather than deepening one's knowledge on the level of reflection, which takes place in the moral interiority of the human person under the aspect of the fundamental natural inclinations of the human person,⁵⁹ cognitive interest ends at the point at which something begins to unfold on the level of empirical appearances

⁵⁴ Cf. Šimo ŠOKČEVIĆ, *Filozofija moći Romana Guardinija*, 264–269.

⁵⁵ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*, 95–96.

⁵⁶ Of all five terms signifying features of human life with no moral interiority in the original French (*l'extériorité* – exteriority, *la superficialité* – superficiality, *la platitude* – triteness, *niskost*, *la dispersion* – dissipation, *ispraznost*, *la étroitesse* – narrowness, *skučenost*) only the first did not demand additional effort for a suitable translation into the Croatian language. The rest of the terms have elicited several criteria demanding a freer translation into Croatian. Firstly, it was important to stay in line with Pinckaers' explanations of these terms in the French language. Then, the contrariety of parallel terms needed to be preserved in regard to human life with and without moral interiority, such as for example, interiority and exteriority, solidity and dissipation.

⁵⁷ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 94–95; Servais PINCKAERS, *Pavlov i Tomin nauk...*, 95–99; Guido GATTI, *Tecnica e morale*, 79–88.

⁵⁸ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 94.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 61–63, 406–462.

which are accessible to the method of external observation.⁶⁰ The components and relations of the external world of appearances are understood as the only elements of the total human reality. Within this perspective, there exists only that which can be seen, heard and which can be determined by human sensory knowledge. Salient stimuli and core determinants of human life are established only on the level of external sensory reality and its various phases. The life of the human person, in the true sense of the word, is dominated by exteriority. It is recognized, acknowledged and accepted as the only reality which is worthy of human cognitive attention. The perceivable signs of such a life are the exclusive directedness toward the external appearances of the world of phenomena and a sort of flight from that which conceals within itself one's interior world or that of another human person. At the forefront are no longer the spontaneous, natural and constant demands of moral interiority aimed at personal maturation and a personal relationship, but rather random, momentary and changeable stimuli of the external environment for a knowledge and mastery of it on the level of external relationships and processes such as the physical, chemical, psychological, sociological, cultural and legal.⁶¹

The second salient feature of human life with no moral interiority is superficiality (*la superficialité*).⁶² Though closely linked to the feature which directs human attention toward that which is present in the external form, and which is accessible to external observation, this feature seeks to highlight the nature and quality of human reflection. When Pinckaers refers to it, he in fact has in mind the reflection which lacks the depth of the personal, and even less so the acuity of a refined personal critical review, and which remains on the level of impressions, perceptions, notions, ideas and public opinion. Reflection of this kind manifests a flight from personal moral responsibility and signifies a sort of capitulation in the face of the challenge to one's personal and moral life within the given conditions of external human reality. Moreover, without moral interiority, the depth and the existing fundamental, immutable and absolute law of human existence and activity, human thought also becomes susceptible to constant and quick change, in which external reality and its phases of change predominate.

This is manifested especially in the case of reflection which is justified moreso in curiosity and the exclusivity of new information, rather than personal reflection on the nature of human curiosity and a critical examination of

⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 69–72.

⁶¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 91. 94.

⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*, 94.

one's need for new information. However, one would do well to emphasize that any human thought devoid of moral interiority always is deprived of its depth, and in this respect, touches merely the surface of human reality. This conclusion is applicable to that reflection on human reality which is exclusively underpinned in information obtainable through the positive sciences. Their flawless methodology, highly developed technological-technical aids, the precise statistical calculations of powerful computers, the accurate logical judgments and conclusions deriving therefrom, can in no way surpass the scope – limited beforehand – of their proper method of external observation of external reality which always remains on the surface of the human person's moral interiority.

The third feature of human life lacking moral interiority is called by Pinckaers moral »triteness« (*la platitudo*). He understands it in the context of moral height which manifests the ability to overcome moral imperfections, limitations and shortcomings through moral commitment to the pinnacles of moral quality. Thus, unlike moral height, moral triteness manifests an absence of moral commitment and, similarly, an absence of the quest for and discovery of a solution which at that moment demonstrates itself to be the best solution compatible with the demands of moral truth. This is especially evident in that particular human activity which accompanies »the path of least resistance«, which does not veer »off the beaten track«, which seeks »the cheapest, easiest and fastest solutions« and in which it is difficult to recognize a unique human moral particularity.⁶³ Such activity – almost imperceptibly – deprives man of that which is most valuable in him, and, slowly but systematically, acquaints him with that which is neither virtue, nor perfection, nor freedom, nor the sublime uniqueness of human life and the dignity with which it is endowed. All this may be understood as an absence of moral directedness toward the true human good, which is able to bring light into the human moral reality and which is able to give one the necessary strength for righteous human activity. Moral directedness of this kind is perceivable especially in moral commitment and in the ability to overcome our proper moral imperfections.⁶⁴

3.2. Dissipation and narrowness

Pinckaers calls the fourth feature of human life with no moral interiority, »dissipation« (*la dispersion*). However, in the context of the other aforemen-

⁶³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 94.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 93; Joseph RATZINGER, *O Savjesti*, Split, 2014, 41–48.

tioned contrasting terms of the various dimensions and features of human life with and without moral interiority, and Pinckaers' explanations of each feature – but also in the spirit of the Croatian language – this feature of human life with no moral interiority may be termed »ispraznost« (futility, vanity).⁶⁵ It is understood by Pinckaers in the context of moral solidity which marks human activity enriched by moral reflection and moral experience, and also the collectedness of the subject of moral activity and his focus on the moral quality which is manifested particularly in human freedom as the ability to implement the perceived good in keeping with fundamental moral knowledge.⁶⁶

Unlike moral solidity which enables man, regardless of the situation he is in, to be able to carry out moral human activity in accordance with the demands of the moral good, »ispraznost« (dissipation) is understood as a sort of brokenness, dispersion, scatteredness and forsakenness in a multitude of the most diverse insights, such as those on the level of impressions, notions and ideas. The sheer number of insights, their diversity and the pace at which they oscillate render one's proper moral dissipation even greater – dissipation which adds to the absence of collectedness, reflection and focus on the true human good. In this state, external circumstances become determinant and decisive to the extent that the popular saying, »opportunity makes the thief,« may seem totally justified. Human activity is no longer an expression of human moral solidity,⁶⁷ but of moral dissipation which prompts activity which is proper to itself. Words and actions often are void of profound human content and moral significance. Moral strength does not come to light in human speech and human commitment, but rather weakness, which, almost as a rule, is accompanied by contradiction and a sort of moral squalor.

Pinckaers calls the fifth feature of human life with no moral interiority »narrowness« (*l'étroitesse*). He understands it in the context of its opposite, which is moral breadth.⁶⁸ As it has already been pointed out, this dimension of moral interiority appears as a sort of product of the dimensions of interiority: depth, height and solidity. All of these in conjunction lead to a new dimension of moral life, namely, breadth. Owing to this dimension, one gains clarity of moral knowledge, strength of moral aspiration and the capability to create harmony between knowledge and aspiration, in an even more appro-

⁶⁵ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 94.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 61–63, 94–95, 406–462; Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life...*, 50–51.

⁶⁷ Cf. Servais PINCKAERS, *Les sources...*, 61–63.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 94–95.

prate way, and the true human good.⁶⁹ A recognizable sign of interior moral breadth is the increasing ability to seek and bring into being the true human good in the context of the most diverse perspectives, impressions, opinions, thoughts, ideas, attitudes and aspirations which may frequently even be contradictory. Moral breadth reinforces knowledge of the truth of the moral good from the perspective of all those concerned. With the aid of their partial but complementary truth, insight is broadened into the perspective and breadth of the true human good, that is that good which attracts each person insofar as he is a person.⁷⁰

Just as moral breadth, that is the fifth salient dimension of moral interiority which totally spontaneously, like a crown of sorts, emerges from the development and strengthening of other salient dimensions of this selfsame interiority, so too does narrowness, that is the fifth characteristic feature of human life lacking moral interiority appear as a sort of necessary product of the previously constituted and firmly established characteristic features of human life with no moral interiority. Exteriority, superficiality, triteness and dissipation all merge into one and only one term, namely, moral narrowness. Pinckaers understands it as a sort of pettiness of the human mind and heart. Although it is impossible for man to eliminate his fundamental and natural human aspirations toward the truth and the good, still narrowness of the human mind and pettiness of the human heart demonstrate that it is possible to confine and to constrict them.⁷¹

Thus, Pinckaers rightfully concludes that moral imperfections and shortcomings cannot become an absolute hindrance to knowledge and commitment to the moral good, but they can impede one from becoming morally stronger, from developing and maturing into a moral personality endowed with the ability to perceive, acknowledge and bring into being the true human good that effects change in man and in the world which depends upon him.⁷² Moral narrowness manifests itself especially in that reflection in which man is unable to overcome captivity within his own inclinations or to abandon his confinement within his own particular limited perspective. Since reflection of this sort indicates only a complementary part of the truth, with one's focus

⁶⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 414–428.

⁷⁰ Cf. Klaus DEMMER, *Shaping the Moral Life...*, 1–3.

⁷¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 58–64.

⁷² »They [deficiencies: exteriority, superficiality, triteness, dissipation] may not altogether prevent insights or sudden bursts of generosity, but these cannot flourish and become a part of human reality so as to transform and expand it.«, Servais PINCKAERS, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 81.

and narrowness directed toward only this partial truth, man in fact exhibits his indifference to the demands of moral truth and consequently the true human good.

Conclusion

For a number of centuries, the technical sciences, as all other positive sciences with underpinnings in the positive method of external observation of external realities, have been achieving huge progress at an ever-increasing pace in regard to their potentialities. Indeed, they have manifested greater and greater potential in their development. Their contribution to all dimensions of human life is immeasurable and inestimable. No one can deny the fact that current external conditions of human life have been advanced substantially in many respects, owing precisely to science and technology. Furthermore, scientific discoveries and technical inventions – the end of which is not yet in sight, but further development instead – are a sort of a pledge for a safer, better and more beautiful future which many rightfully hope for. Unfortunately, though hope is justified as is the trust in the technical and other positive sciences that they will provide answers to many open human issues, such as the problem of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), many of our contemporaries have exhibited a totally inappropriate attitude toward the very same sciences, when they expect from them answers to those human issues which are beyond the cognitive abilities of these sciences and which questions they are unable to answer.

Based on reasons deriving from their proper method of external observation of external reality, it is entirely clear that these sciences can in no way reach the moral dimension of human reality and that they are, therefore, unable to observe, explore and provide answers to moral problems which concern, for example, our innate and inalienable human dignity or perhaps the natural and spontaneous human sense of the fundamental moral values, such as freedom, responsibility and love. This means that the failure to perceive moral problems as moral, so does the endeavour to solve them with the aid of technical and other positive sciences, in fact, lead to a disregard for moral problems, their neglect and consequently, even greater aggravation of the problem itself. It is not possible to avert this threat without recognition of and respect for the specificity of the moral sciences as well as the reality of the moral interiority which is the core object of research in moral science. This demand gains even more in importance within the worldview which is predominant today. The categories of the technical and other positive sciences of this view of the world

are a substantial threat – due to their exclusivity – to the human form of existence and activity, for they render questionable the issue of existence and activity of a salient and constitutive component of the human person, which is the issue of »to be or not to be« man.

Keeping in mind all that has been said up to this point, two important and closely connected tasks of any scientific discipline may be highlighted. First of all, one must nurture the conscience continually with respect to the interdisciplinary feature of one's proper scientific discipline, that is, foster awareness of the directedness of one's proper discipline toward other scientific disciplines. Furthermore, it is also necessary to invest a permanent effort into improving knowledge of, recognition of and respect for one's proper scientific discipline, its assumptions, possibilities and limits. Having fulfilled these two tasks, the conditions have now been met for an appropriate, successful and productive pursuit of the core object of one's proper scientific discipline. In the case of moral theology this means the study, deepening, systematization and spreading of knowledge of the existence and activity of the moral interiority of the human person. It appears that this task gains in importance even moreso in the context of the positivist view of the world, which spills over increasingly from the narrow circles of the technical and positive sciences into the dominant culture of the contemporary society in all its aspects. Therefore, one would do well to establish once again that the moral dimension of human reality can be neither denied, nor reduced to any other dimension, whether it be physical or metaphysical in nature. Moral truth and the moral good continually demand moral reflection, moral commitment and a moral perspective. These are essential components of moral life which is the core object of research and study in moral science.

Of course, insofar as moral theology is not merely a moral but also a theological science, it must remain loyal to the identity of its proper discipline and in this sense be directed not only toward the dimension of the moral, but also to the religious moral interiority of the human person (Eph 3:16-19). Namely, in his personal moral interiority, the believer, through faith and love, opens himself to the activity of the Holy Spirit and enters into a »secret place« to which he is invited by God and in which God himself looks upon him. (Mt 6: 18). Within this religious moral interiority, endowed by creativity, spirituality and freedom, and in the »secret place« of the divine presence and fulness, are shaped and come into being the best of human acts: those that are free, and among which we shall single out the acts of faith, hope and love.

Sažetak

MORALNA NUTRINA U KONTEKSTU DOMINACIJE TEHNIČKIH I OSTALIH POZITIVNIH ZNANOSTI

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U ovom radu autor nastoji pridonijeti boljemu razumijevanju stvarnosti ljudske osobne moralne nutrine iz perspektive belgijskoga moralnoga teologa Servaisa Pinckaersa. Nju se razumijeva u kontekstu danas dominantnoga znanstvenoga pogleda na svijet, u kojem kategorije tehničkih i ostalih pozitivnih znanosti svojom dominacijom dovode u pitanje ljudski oblik postojanja i djelovanja. Nakon uvodnih misli u važnost, vrijednost i nužnost interdisciplinarne suradnje, daje se uvid u dvostruka temeljna obilježja ljudskoga života, ovisno o tom imaju li ista obilježja svoj oslonac u moralnoj nutrini ljudske osobe ili tek proizlaze iz tehničkoga i pozitivnoga pogleda na svijet.

Ključne riječi: Servais Pinckaers; moralna nutrina; moralna teologija; pozitivne znanosti; interdisciplinarnost