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PEDRO LAÍN ENTRALGO: A FUNDAMENTAL PREDECESSOR OF SPANISH BIOETHICS

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Abstract: In this paper we have aimed to approach one of the most important intellectual figures in Spanish culture in the second half of the 20th century: the doctor, medical historian and promoter of the so-called Medical Anthropology, Pedro Laín Entralgo (1908-2001). Addressing him from a new perspective, that is, by relating him to the context of Spanish medical ethics and bioethics, we wanted to show how part of Laín's theories influenced some of the most important authors in those academic fields, taking his disciple Diego Gracia as a paradigm. It is a mistake to consider Laín Entralgo as a bioethicist because, when this discipline was constituted as such in the seventies, the central topics of Laín's thought had already been developed and his intellectual itinerary was already defined. However, his thoughts on medicine, clinical practice or doctor-patient relationship, among other subjects, have served as a theoretical basis for many later thinkers. Thus, from Laín's insights, those who were his disciples have been able to ground their philosophical systems by building a bioethical perspective that includes the application of the Medical Anthropology Laín proposed. Therefore, we believe it is legitimate to conclude that, although Laín Entralgo was not a bioethicist, he deserves to be recognised as an intellectual predecessor whose ideas nourished considerations on bioethics and medical ethics, since he influenced some of the authors acknowledged as authorities in such fields.

Keywords: *bioethics, medical ethics, Medical Anthropology, Pedro Laín Entralgo, Diego Gracia.*

The word “bioethics” first appeared in 1927, when protestant theologian and philosopher Fritz Jahr introduced it in the title of his paper “Bio-Ethik: Eine Umschau über die ethischen Beziehungen des Menschen zu Tier und Pflanze” (Bio-Ethics: A Review of the Ethical Relationships of Humans to Animals and Plants), published in the journal *Kosmos. Handweiser für Naturfreunde*. Four decades later, bioethics started to grow as an academic discipline in North America. In 1969, David Callahan and Willard Gaylin founded *The Hastings Center*, devoted entirely to ethical and social study and reflection on healthcare, medical sciences, and technological progress. In the following two years, the American biochemist and oncology professor Van Rensselaer Potter published two articles and a book pondering the need for a field to reconcile the humanities and sciences, which he called «bioethics».¹ In October 1971, this word first appeared in the name of an institution: the centre *The Joseph and Rose Kennedy Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction and Bioethics* –which was later rebranded as *The Kennedy Institute of Ethics*. In the European scope, Spain was a pioneer in importing the progress being made in North America. In 1976 the doctor and theologian Francesc Abel i Fabre founded in Barcelona the *Institut Borja de Bioètica*, the first European centre for bioethics, intending to introduce this discipline in the Spanish medical and academic fields. But if there is an overall relevant figure in Spanish bioethics it is, without a doubt, Diego Gracia, who has entirely based his career on the study of bioethical issues and promoted its establishment in medical research around the country from virtually its beginnings in the United States.

It must therefore be appreciated how the birth of bioethics as a discipline relates to several other fields of study. In bioethics do not only converge ethics and medical sciences, but also metaphysical and sociopolitical reflections, new and emerging technologies, and issues on religion. In addition, in the history of its development, several personalities appear

¹ The texts in question are: “Bioethics, The Science of Survival”, published in *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* in late 1970; “Bioethics”, published in *BioScience* in November 1971; and the book *Bioethics, Bridge to the Future*, published in January 1971.

which cannot be overlooked, as some of the aforementioned. But many other names have had a strong intellectual influence on the most relevant authors in bioethics which are not, however, widely recognised in the field. That is the case with Pedro Laín Entralgo, a medical doctor and researcher on medical history and anthropology. Laín had a deep influence on the thought of North American bioethicist James Drane and was also a teacher of Diego Gracia, who is broadly considered one of the most important figures in bioethics and Iberoamerican medical ethics. Many of the contributions Gracia has made to these disciplines have been properly his, but it is also logical to consider that his philosophy has some ideas borrowed from his teachers.

Diego Gracia first found Laín Entralgo through the reading of his book *La espera y la esperanza: historia y teoría del esperar humano* (1957). Gracia read this book the same year it was published, when he was only sixteen years old. And shortly afterwards, when Gracia was studying philosophy and considering whether he was on the right professional path –after the great impression reading Xavier Zubiri’s *Sobre la esencia* left on him–, was Laín Entralgo who served him as a model.² Laín had been forced to abandon his philosophy studies due to the Spanish civil war and, through the history of medicine, found a way to reconcile his medical training with his philosophical interests. Gracia planned to do the same, and he then decided to discontinue his studies in philosophy to enrol in medical school, though he did not meet Laín until after finishing his degree in 1970. After graduating, he moved to Madrid to develop his PhD thesis with Laín Entralgo himself in the chair on the history of medicine he held. Thus, Laín went from being an author behind some books to becoming an intellectual mentor fully and constantly present in Gracia’s life.

² As Gracia said: It happened as I was studying philosophy, Xavier Zubiri published in December 1962 *Sobre la esencia*. I studied it for several months and it had such an impact on me that it convinced me I would never be a philosopher. (...) I thought that the path of philosophy wasn’t for me, that I could be an erudite in philosophy, but doing philosophy was something else, and I thought that maybe it would be fitting for me to approach it through some more concrete knowledge. I had read the works of Laín Entralgo, who from medicine tried to theorise and, in a way, philosophise, so I thought that was a way in which my interests for philosophy and science could converge. The consequence was that I studied medicine in Salamanca (Pérez Oliva, 2006, on line).

As can be expected under the circumstances, such a close relationship between the disciple and his mentor gave place to a strong influence of the second over the first's thoughts and work. In the situation of these two intellectuals, that was the case. The mark Laín left in Diego Gracia is profound and is revealed in several different theses in Gracia's philosophical system. For these reasons, this article aims to focus on exploring the theses of bioethical content Diego Gracia inherited from Laín Entralgo, intending to show there were certain reflections of bioethical nature in Laín's thought that somehow make him, if not a bioethicist, at least a primordial and necessary predecessor which deserves to be highlighted.

One of the issues where the lainian influx on Gracia is notably shown is the subject of the willingness of comprehension as an intellectual disposition towards reality. In Laín Entralgo's intellectual journey, three different interpretations of human comprehension can be found: a vital reading (Dilthey), an axiological one (Scheler) and a third ontological reading (Heidegger). Among these three, the one that ended up prevailing over the other ones in the late sixties, when Laín had progressively secularised his mindset, was the notion of vital comprehension. which he shared with José Ortega y Gasset. It is clear that Ortega greatly influenced Laín's mature conception of comprehension, as the imperative of comprehension draws from perspectivism, ideological plurality, tolerance, and empathy towards others. Comprehending means respecting and, as the goal of comprehension is what is real, it encompasses everything.³ Laín does not conceive of a human knowledge that is not comprehensive; hence he considers the imperative of comprehension as an epistemological method beyond a moral disposition. Only through empathy can the sense of a life's argument be comprehended. This is the great purpose of comprehension: seeing things as possibilities of life and unravelling their meanings. Besides, comprehension is an ethics that aims to capture the meaning of reality itself and cannot do that without an emotionally positive attitude: love. This feeling inspires a fundamental religiosity which consists in loving things and approaching them with truthful intellectual

³ The highest moral aspiration, we said, is to achieve comprehending everything, but first and foremost the goal of comprehension is the human being. As Gracia said: History, we have seen, is for Laín the righteous way of knowledge of oneself. We are history. Therefore, human rationality must consist in "comprehending". (...) Comprehending what? Of course, everything. But first and foremost, comprehending the human being, of being human (Gracia, 2010, p. 358).

altruism. *Without love, there is no possible comprehension*; there lies, again, the fundamental inspiration of orteguian “amor intellectualis”.⁴ Neither can one comprehend without having faith and hope in the goals of such comprehension, as one should not search for what is truthfully human only in intelligence, but also in the basic categories of authentic existence –belief, hope and love.⁵ In this regard, personal comprehending is a vital exercise and not a merely intellectual one, as it encompasses the whole human being. These are the fundamentals of the lainian theory of comprehension between 1956 and 1970. From this year, the importance Laín gave comprehension decreased, as he instead focused on the zubirian apprehension of reality, which became the main way of accessing what is real.

Such conceptualisation of comprehension was also acquired by Gracia, who also considers it a fundamental element.⁶ Going towards things, to reality itself, with an open attitude and a love-filled gaze; only in this way does one reach an appropriate disposition for the proper exercise of authentic comprehension. The human being can only be able to discover the values underlying real subjects in this manner. There is no option of comprehending people other than through perspectivism, entailing tolerance and respect towards others for the simple reason of being persons, though their opinions are not completely shared. These are the basis of the aim to comprehend; the desire to completely embrace reality, which pushes us into questioning all that surrounds us. Loving what is real means wanting to know more to comprehend the sense of what is; such is the *modus vivendi* of intellectual orteguian love. Therefore, in the willingness to comprehend, one can see the predecessor of the open attitude towards the thoughts of others necessary for the proper exercise of deliberating –especially for participatory deliberation. Deliberation is one of the cardinal points of Gracia’s philosophy: a term he uses for reflection, individual or collective, which must happen in all decision-making processes which require them to be prudent and responsible.⁷ In the moral order,

⁴ Gracia, 2010, pp. 401–404.

⁵ Gracia, 2010, pp. 496–497

⁶ (...) comprehension as a method, the attempt to integrate all perspectives, was for Laín almost an asceticism, a vital goal. He put a great effort in integration, and he did so with love. This willingness, which I learnt from him, seems fundamental to me (Pérez Oliva, 2006, online).

⁷ As Gracia said: Deliberation is a process of analysing the problems for reasonable and prudent decision-making. Deliberating shall not be confused with deciding, though.

deliberation brings to our reflection the knowledge of what is ideal – meaning, how things should be – and the specific pondering over what can be accomplished in a given circumstance, aiming to find the optimal course of action. Thus, according to Gracia, deliberation is the most appropriate method for ethics.⁸ Therefore, deliberation is not viable without a previous willingness to comprehend.

Closely related to this subject is another link between both authors. Laín Entralgo learnt, especially through neo-Kantianism and through the Spanish philosopher Xavier Zubiri, that there is an insurmountable distance between what is real and our intellect. He became aware of the fact that human concepts do not completely fit what exists, as our knowledge can never totally deplete reality.⁹ Consequently, the most reasonable way out of this problem is perspectivism, but it requires previously exercising humility in accepting and having in mind that our viewpoints may not be the most certain ones, and that if they were they would never be completely right. Because human knowledge is not all-encompassing and all issues, especially ones of a moral nature, always have different solutions, many of them could likely be considered good. Ethics are not measured by rationality but by reasonability; it is about being reasonable, prudent, and responsible when facing very complex realities. Hence virtues as tolerance, empathy and respect towards the ideas of others are key when trying to get a better understanding of what is real, making of plural thought an ally into such a goal.¹⁰ Beneath this lies the assumption that the human intellect cannot apprehend reality completely, so its knowledge will always be fallible, biased and incomplete. Finding the truth becomes

Aristotle was clear on that. The decision should not, in any case, be in the hands of the deliberating group, but on the person with the duty to take it. Some decisions cannot be subrogated (Gracia, 2004a, pp. 298–299).

⁸ (...) in the order of ethics, as in many others, the process of contrasting decisions is not of proof but something else, as Aristotle stated, named “deliberating”. Proof is to theoretical thought what deliberating is to practical thought (Gracia, 2004a, p. 344).

⁹ In Gracia’s words: Our concepts are not completely adequate for reality. They approximate it closer and closer, but asymptotically. This idea, typically neo-Kantian, can be found several times in Laín’s work (Gracia, 2010, p. 105).

¹⁰ As Gracia said: The moral of his story is that the solution to real and truly human problems cannot be found purely through rational means as if it were a mathematical problem. (...) It is necessary to go towards things in a more humbly and trustful manner, accepting their complexity and, thus, the possibility that others, thinking differently than I, can have, at least, the same reason as I. Hence the respect to the plurality of perspectives and to the dissident or dissenting (Gracia, 2010, p. 497).

a shared task. This conviction can already be found in Laín Entralgo, and Gracia keeps it as a premise of his philosophical system, making perspectivism an element inseparable from good moral deliberation.

Another common ground that Gracia inherits from Laín is a concern for the values, another very important question and maybe the most remarkable connection between them. In his youth, Laín approached the world of values from Scheler's exposition on this subject and the issue of love in several of his writings.¹¹ Laín revisited his thoughts many times during his life and, consequently, went through different stages,¹² but the importance of values was a constant in the content of his philosophy. In Laín, everything points to values: they are the goal towards which human knowledge aspires. The epistemological structure that describes love seeks to discover the most precious thing reality holds, precisely, values. These rely on objects but constitute a whole metaphysical world by itself which contrasts with the materiality of positive facts. There are no pure facts. Reality is not completely contemplated without taking values into account; something Laín saw clearly. For the existence of human beings, values are fundamental and, as happens with anyone's own beliefs, one cannot live without them.

Diego Gracia assumes the radical importance Laín Entralgo bestowed in values and expands upon it. From some zubirian categories, Gracia places value as the foundation of culture, as he starts from the idea that all human activity consists of transforming natural resources into possibilities of life through projection, aiming to add value to them. Thus reality is humanised, filled with possibilities, and from there on culture can be understood as a value system.¹³ He claims this to be objective as he defends

¹¹ Laín read from Scheler works as *El resentimiento en la moral*, *Esencia y formas de la simpatía*, *El formalismo en la ética y la ética material de los valores*, *Ordo amoris*, *Muerte y supervivencia* or *El puesto del hombre en el cosmos*, among others. Laín studied Scheler with great detail and his knowledge on this author's philosophy became very deep (cf. Gracia, 2010, p. 119).

¹² In 1965 Laín Entralgo had already written an autobiographical text as an introduction to a volume of *Obras*. He called it «El autor habla de sí mismo» (The author speaks about himself) and, among others, in his pages he reflected on his political attitude and described the three stages of his intellectual life: “unitary and overcoming assumption”, “pluralism by representation”, and “authentic or true pluralism” (cf. Gracia, 2010, pp. 535–537).

¹³ As Gracia said: History is the result of the interaction of humankind with nature. It is humankind that makes history (...). Nature has “resources”; called “natural resources”. The human being, to survive, must transform these resources into

that the possibility that comes from human action becomes autonomous, gaining independence immediately after being created and, with it, its contained values are objectified. Therefore, to Gracia, culture is the shared deposit of a community forged from the values that its members –and even its supra-individual structures– embody in their actions. A society formed by individuals of great moral quality will give place to a cultural deposit of positive values, while a corrupt community that promotes negative values will only lead to a morally questionable culture. This is of great importance as Gracia defends that culture is an *a priori* of the thought each generation inherits at birth from the previous ones, and it shapes the identity of its individuals. We are values. In this way, values are passed and promoted from one generation to the next in the form of tradition, be they positive or not.¹⁴ This mechanism is not optional: there is no humanity without values, as the human being is not only a natural reality but also an ethical one, so the promotion of values entails an authentic moral duty. May there be good or bad, there will always be values. If a large proportion of the members of the same community evoke negative values through constant negative actions, this repetition will result in the development of generalised bad habits and customs (vices). This is troublesome as every human action promotes values which make up the collective cultural deposit and, if these are negative, they will contribute vices to the shared culture which will end up laying its ground. When a society has incorporated negative values into its cultural deposit –such as corruption– the only way to reorient the situation is through moral, social, and political education on the intrinsic values: those truly important to the human being and which are self-consistent. According to Gracia, the damage can be reverted through educating a corrupted society so that it can walk in the opposite way leading to degeneration.¹⁵ This, though, requires time so

possibilities of life. These possibilities are always human creations. The human being creates possibilities from resources, elaborating culture and making history. History is, therefore, the process of transforming natural resources into possibilities of life (Gracia, 2004a, p. 27).

¹⁴ As Gracia said: The possibilities we create, positive or negative, once created have their own life, becoming independent from their creators and objects. (...) Precisely because they objectify, the cultural creations constitute a sort of “deposit” which is handed by previous generations upon birth and gives us the “possibility” to make our own life (Gracia, 2004a, p. 28).

¹⁵ Both authors share a deep faith in the education of younger generations as a means to improve society. For Lain, educating young people meant teaching them the

that its people can develop actions that promote positive values until these become good habits, and culture and society can finally be regenerated.¹⁶

However, education on values cannot happen without a prior reflection on the values themselves. Gracia is clear on this matter: values – closely linked to elements such as feelings, desires, beliefs, and traditions– are not rational as mathematics could be, but cannot be considered in a derogatory way as irrational or subjective, as passions were considered until the 17th century. Values must be reasonable. One must know and think about them, so deliberation is needed. Deliberating is, therefore, the appropriate method for responsible management of values, and an essential condition for the development of a pedagogy and ethics built upon them.¹⁷ The issue of values is key for Diego Gracia, as he defends them to be structural in everything concerning the human being. They

way of comprehension, to achieve new generations knowing to reconcile any difference and accepting the good in every thought, regardless of from who or from where it came. This is through meaningful figures who were worthy of being taken as an example, educate youth in comprehension, tolerance and respect to one another by the fact of being persons. As Laín, Gracia also thinks that the perfect “pupils” to receive said teachings are the younger generations, as through them one aspires to improve society. However, he holds that every person must be taught the intrinsic values so that they can better manage them, as their realisation constitutes a fundamental part of our moral duty. The importance of this is also epistemological: reality is built on facts, on values and on duties, and deliberating on them must be taught. It is clear that education on values is required to attain a deeper apprehension of what is real. Because human life is not only based on facts, but the axiology and ethics are equally relevant; therefore, education and the deliberative method are crucial when comprehending the world that surrounds us, and for autonomous and responsible decision-making. According to all said the above, moral education must also be social and political. Only in this way a community formed by well-educated and responsible citizens will give way to a mature society rich in positive values. The concern for civil ethics has been intensifying in Diego Gracia’s work, becoming one of the structural themes of his moral discourse during the last years. Gracia fervently defends that the language of society is ethics, and society itself must solve its ethical problems instead of sending them to other spheres –like the legislative. Such goal requires strengthening and widening the moral foundations of society which is, precisely, the role of education. (cf. Gracia, 2020, pp. 152-153, 264-266).

¹⁶ Gracia, 2020, pp. 100-102, 114-115, 192-193.

¹⁷ As Gracia said: Values are not rational as any mathematical theorem is, but they are “reasonable”; even further, we have the duty to reason on them, to give reasons for them and manage them responsibly and prudently. (...) the deliberation on values must be promoted (Gracia, 2020, p. 206).

compose the personal identity: first in a heteronomous way by being the cultural deposit inherited from a tradition into which one is born and which is assumed uncritically. Afterwards, when psychological and moral maturity is reached and after a critical analysis of this axiological inheritance, the values autonomously chosen will become a fundamental part of the identity of one's reality.¹⁸ Besides that, as culture is the collective deposit of the values portrayed and objectified through human actions –in other words, through work– these values are also part of the bedrock of a society, or, in more general terms, any supra-individual structure. And it does not have a single value deposit, but also a variety of cultures: what is known as «axiological pluralism». This points out again the importance of tolerance and respect, as without them it is not possible to coexist with plurality.

According to Gracia, then, values are the language of human moral experience due to their universality and primality. Human beings are evaluative; it is an anthropologically necessary action. This is why values lie on the foundations of ethics and, actually, on its origin. Duty is always built on values, and a person's moral obligation is the promotion of those values we want to see realised in a mature society, together with the minimising of those disvalues that would rather be avoided. It is about making the ideal real, even when knowing that the goal will never totally be reached.¹⁹ Thus, the enormous role the world of values plays in any ethical task is clear, logically including bioethics.

¹⁸ With this, Diego Gracia refers to the “Theory on moral development” posed by psychologist Jean Piaget and deepened by his disciple Lawrence Kohlberg. This theory states that, on birth, we immediately assimilate as our own the traditions of our society, which forms our first identity: it is the «preconventional stage», based on obedience to the surroundings. The second level reached is the «conventional stage». From there, the person takes conscience of being part of a society and defends law as the principle for social order. For Kohlberg this is the highest morality level reached by most adults. However, during the teenage years a different path can be taken, as a person can enter what Erik Erikson called an «identity crisis», characterised by protest and rejection of the system of values heteronomously accepted, even if there is no new alternative. The proper overcoming of this critical stage gives place to a new identity: the «postconventional stage», which is distinguished by the “principle of universalisation”. There lies true autonomy, as the person has a global thought, becomes aware of the moral responsibility of their actions and takes on a scale of values critically and reflectively chosen (cf. Gracia, 2020, pp. 297-298).

¹⁹ In Gracia's words: Values are the source of our duties. (...) Duty is built always on the value, consisting of putting the world of values, the realisation of values, into

Another connection between Laín and Gracia is that one can in both find a strong defense of beliefs as a fundamental element for human life. For Laín Entralgo, belief is one of the three constitutive notes of human life, found in the foundations of hope under the form of trust. Without faith, as without hope and love, human life cannot be viable. This belief should not be confused with a religious profession. Following Ortega and Zubiri, what Laín meant is that one can believe in many things, but what is not possible is a lack of belief in anything, as human life demands by itself a believing attitude.²⁰ This is what Diego Gracia subscribes to, despite having to admit that the role of belief holds a more discreet place in his philosophy. Gracia assumes that part of the personal identity is built upon beliefs, and what someone believes in can greatly affect their way of judging reality or the values they defend. Beliefs, in the same way as feelings, emotions, desires, traditions, etc., have a direct influence on our way of seeing things and are therefore elements that should not be ignored.²¹ During centuries positivism has tried to dispose of them from what is real, in an attempt to reduce everything to *facta*, facts, and the only result achieved is a fragmented and incomplete reality. Gracia is well aware that beliefs, emotions or feelings can generate rejection as they are not rational, but states that they do not have to be. What must be reached is for them to be reasonable, and to get there they must be subjected to an always open and constant self-analysis which keeps us in a position of perpetual apprentices.²² Only if we question the reasonability of our belief system can we fight our fanaticism. The importance of human belief also has a moral dimension for Diego Gracia, which is shown in the dialectic between what things are and what we would want them to be. This is what has been known as «wishful thinking». It is based on envisioning

practise. Therefore, ethics is imperative, it prompts action, realisation. What prompts realisation are values, the values that should prevail in a well-ordered society of human beings but are not realised at the time or are only deficiently so. Ethics is about what should be and is not. And what should be and is not is always a value (Gracia, 2020, p. 314).

²⁰ As Gracia said: The human being needs faith. Life is built upon belief. Faith in everything, in exterior reality, in the sun raising up tomorrow on the east and setting down on the west, in the word of others, in what I'm told being true and trusting it, etc., etc. Laín knew well the history of the concept of belief (Gracia, 2010, p. 426).

²¹ Gracia, 2020, p. 315.

²² Diego Gracia calls this attitude «alianza deliberativa» (deliberative alliance) (cf. Gracia, 2020, pp. 56–57).

an ideal but unreachable potentiality of how things should be. While we know we will never accomplish that ideal, it cannot be denied that there is a sort of faith, of trust, in that goal, which acts as a motor and prompts us to work to make it real. Wishful thinking indeed constitutes not only a moral imperative but is also completely necessary to guide human actions.²³

Regarding medical practice, it must be pointed out that Diego Gracia inherited Laín's way of comprehending health and sickness, as well as the new model for a healthcare relation this implies. Between 1956 and 1970, Laín Entralgo focused on developing a theory on the human being. To do so, he devoted himself to the study of philosophical anthropology and, with it, medical anthropology. He wanted to establish a holistic anthropological theory, and this purpose could not be reached without studying the reality of the human being, healthy or sick, to better comprehend it.²⁴ With this goal in mind, medical positivism had to be overcome and medicine turned into a discipline of the spirit –to say it in a Diltheyan way. Going beyond the natural level and isolated facts was needed.

Laín never tired of repeating that pure facts do not exist. Disease is not merely a biological fact, but rather something more profound: a biographical event, an experience.²⁵ According to Laín, a condition of sickness concerns the healthcare sphere but also extends to other dimensions of the life of the person suffering: affecting their emotions, hopes and fears, values, beliefs, etc. In consequence, multiple levels interfere in the phenomenon of disease, but science tends to ignore them as they are not considered to be “positive facts”. This is a great mistake as, due to its complexity, disease is a moral event; and by extension, ethics is implicit in healthcare practice. Laín's medical anthropology consisted of this: a clinical practice that respected human complexity and was aware of everything positivism had chosen to forget.²⁶ And in this laínian project of

²³ Gracia, 2020, pp. 82–85.

²⁴ Gracia, 2010, p. 461.

²⁵ As Gracia said: There is no place in positivism for the category of “event”. The fact is natural; the event, historical. The event is a human creation, a cultural phenomenon, in which values, beliefs and, in general, everything constituting a human's personal and intimate life intervene (Gracia, 2010, p. 462).

²⁶ Two moments in laínian medical anthropology must be distinguished, corresponding to an evolution in the thoughts of the author. From the fifties to the early seventies, Laín Entralgo analysed disease from a mainly phenomenological approach. He was concerned about feelings –sorrow, threat, loneliness and resources–,

clinical relation with the patient words play a fundamentally important role, as values are expressed using language. It is the only way of explaining them. Words are not only important in the exploratory phase of the medical act, but are vital in every clinical relationship so that this can become authentically personal. Instead, what happened with medicine under the positivist paradigm is that it became centred only on the physical signs of disease. Medical practice became based on evidence, meaning strictly focused on the facts, the signs, and physical tests. What a personal account could contribute was not an objective fact, so orality was depreciated and, in consequence, medicine went silent. This is the great problem that has come out of the introduction of positivism in sciences.²⁷

Instead, Laín defended a healthcare practice in which words could reclaim their therapeutic role and dignify the medical act, allowing for a transfer of values between doctor and patient and a greater intimacy among them. With it, the doctor is capable of seeing the patient not only as a somatic object but as a personal subject. Doctor and patient recognise each other mutually as human beings in a clinical relationship that stops being merely dual but still does not become properly dyadic, resting in a state of «quasi-dyadic».²⁸ For Laín, this doctor-patient relationship must also be based on the three fundamental categories of human existence:

their characteristics –pain, vulnerability, necessity, the value of life, its questionability and its interpretability– and the possible senses –punishment, chance, challenge and test– which are involved in the experience (*vivencia*) of the ill person, as with the background of what is sacred with which, for Laín, the human always lives sickness. This phenomenological perspective was displaced during the seventies for a clearly zubirian rather metaphysical approach. Phenomenologically, Laín started to consider the experiences of invalidity, concern, threat, body suction, loneliness, anomaly and resources in company, in greater or lesser degree, the experience of the patient. Laín then relegated his concern for the meaning of health and disease to increasingly focus on the analysis of its reality (cf. Gracia, 2010, pp. 469–472).

²⁷ The therapeutic power of words did not start to recover until the rise of the psychoanalytical school started by Sigmund Freud at the beginning of the 20th century (cf. Gracia, 2010, p. 463).

²⁸ Laín understands dyadic the relation between two human beings who recognise one another as moral persons, in possession of values and beliefs. On the other hand, the fact that a disease generally affects the body cannot be ignored, and therefore the body must be also objectively examined as a physical reality –in a relationship closer to a dual one. For Laín, the clinical relationship lies between these two poles, assuming a condition of “quasi-dyadic” (cf. Gracia, 2010, pp. 464–465).

faith, hope and love.²⁹ There must be love in the clinical relationship. In lainian philosophy, there are three types of love: distant, instant and constant (or of coefusion, which he first called believing love or of revelation). Distant love is objectifying and would be proper of positivism; instead, in a lainian clinical relationship, we must find an instant love which allows both parts to identify each other as moral subjects.³⁰ Laín called this type of love “medical love” and, being close to the love of donation, he describes it as a technical charity, as the doctor gives help to the patient through the technical exercise of diagnosis and treatment.³¹ In this aspect, the professional medical paradigm Laín had in mind was Gregorio Marañón.³²

Therefore, such a way of understanding a medical relationship necessarily requires a change of mind in how clinical practice is approached. The lainian model puts morality in the structural nucleus of the clinical act. It does so by following the zubirian philosophy after 1964, specifically the idea of the “power of reality”. Laín described the power of what is real as the secret force pushing the human being to take a stance on what reality is in itself, on the fundamentals of what is.³³ This force is the one discovering “our” reality constitutively established in “the” reality, reattaching us to it. And on this attachment (*religación*) that “obligation” is structured, meaning the ethics on the fulfilment of possibilities. To this zubirian thesis Laín contributed his reading of human reality as a radical experience of faith, hope and love, which leads to the conclusion that medical practice, in being a human act, is always a moral practice. For Gracia, moral as the structure of the clinical act is the most important

²⁹ As Gracia said: These conditions, as we know, must be three, faith, hope and love. Each one must believe in others, must expect from them and, especially, must love them (Gracia, 2010, p. 464).

³⁰ In the interpersonal relationship between doctor and patient, the three constitutive elements of friendship are given: benevolence, beneficence and confidence (cf. Gracia, 2010, p. 129). However, Laín does not consider the clinical relationship to reach a dyadic friendship in general terms, but a “pedagogical friendship” that aims to educate the patient in order to achieve a good end, namely their health. Therefore, if the type of love that is proper to friendship is the constant one, in the clinical relationship, as it keeps having moments of objectivisation as the procedure of body exploration, is more adequate to speak of instant love (cf. Laín Entralgo, 1964, pp. 235–257, 367–370).

³¹ Laín Entralgo, 1964, pp. 255–256.

³² Gracia, 2010, pp. 472–474.

³³ Laín Entralgo, 1984, p. 439, footnote 3.

point of Iainian's approach to the relationship between doctor and patient. All of this structure of clinical practice lays upon the concept of person Laín learnt from Scheler and especially Zubiri. It was not in vain that Laín spoke about anthropological medicine. It is because the person is considered an absolute, always individual and unrepeatable, that Laín posed a new model of medical anthropology which could serve as a theory of a clinical practice following it; Iainian medicine is clearly personal.³⁴ Diego Gracia inherits this form of comprehending health and sickness, the clinical act and patient relationship. Not only does he share the Iainian perspective, but he also applied his theory of anthropological medicine to the field of bioethics to formulate a clinical ethic which moves away from medical positivism and considers the patient as a personal reality whose values, beliefs and autonomy deserve full respect.³⁵

In the same line of anthropological medicine there is another link that connects both authors: the distinction between biological life and biographical life. This issue is closely related to the steps medicine took in the 20th century, as we were saying, to move away from positivism and search for a more anthropological clinical practice which studied disease also as a biographical event. It is once again about going beyond naturalism in favour of humanism; it is the leap from explanation to comprehension. Laín Entralgo knew about the contrast between organic life and biographical life Ortega developed with his biological concept of "generation".³⁶ Laín also worked on this distinction during the process of maturing his medical anthropology, but he chose to focus on more medical aspects as the relation between disease and biography.³⁷ Indeed, the term "life" has immediate biological connotations, but it is a mistake to consider only this meaning of the word. There is another angle which

³⁴ Gracia, 2010, p. 469, 475.

³⁵ In Gracia's words: It does not make sense to try to make Laín a bioethicist. He was not. But in his work lies rich material on what can be called the moral structure of a clinical relationship, which a rigorous bioethics must deeply take into consideration (Gracia, 2010, p. 467).

³⁶ As Gracia said: There is a life which is biological. But in the case of human beings, it is not the only one, neither the superior or most important one. Ortega y Gasset always contrasted biological life with what he called biographical life. And easing maybe too much into two usual terminologies in Greek, he related the first one with what the Greeks call *zoe*, differently from *bios*, the properly human life (Gracia, 2010, p. 206).

³⁷ Gracia, 2010, pp. 370–371.

is narrative, of life understood as a story, as a biography. While biological life extends to all living beings, biographical life is strictly human. This narration is the expression of everything a person essentially is: their projects, values, beliefs, hopes, etc. And the disease is an experience that is part of this narrative. That is why, during the fifties, Laín considered that the importance of biographical value was necessary for the development of a truly personal clinical practice. However, this subject becomes radical when the perspective of death is introduced. That was the case for Laín, who wanted to make his late years a biographical adventure until the end, without letting himself get devalued by the decline of his organic capabilities. Growing old is an unavoidable biological fact, but Laín defended that, in addition, a person must endeavour to turn it into a biographical event which allows us to keep working towards our personal life project. In the same way, death is the closure of organic life, but is also a personal event, the most transcendental somebody can experience, and must be claimed as one's own.³⁸

Diego Gracia learnt from Laín –and from Zubiri, who shared his point of view on the subject– the radical importance of distinguishing between biological and biographical values. Therefore, he considered it a crucial matter from the perspective of bioethics and general medical practice. To what Laín said, Gracia adds that it is a great error to mistake biological for biographical life, and especially irreparable if it occurs at the end of life. Equating this two concepts is not correct. It can happen that the biological and biographical are not at an equilibrium in a human being, and even that one of them ends before the other. Gracia mentions how the conflict between biological and biographical life is one of the main ethical tragedies of humanity; and that we must then be very cautious about inhibiting any of the two. In old age, as it is the last stage of life, the organic process of deterioration is so clear that biological life as a whole also falls in value. But this cannot lead one to think that biographical life is also devalued. Nothing further from reality. Biological and biographical life are mutually intertwined: no biographical life is possible without organic support and, at the same time, every human needs to give their biological existence a biographical meaning. But, in essence, they are two different concepts. Thus, the fact that a life is organically approaching its end must not compromise the quality of the biographical

³⁸ Gracia, 2010, p. 694.

value of a person. This is what Diego Gracia's bioethics defends and the idea Laín defended through his last days.³⁹

There is still one last and brief point of common ground between Laín Entralgo and Diego Gracia but is, in this case, an observation made by Gracia himself. When dealing with the subject of comprehension we have seen how, from 1970, Laín went to considering the zubirian apprehension of reality as the means of accessing what is real, limiting personal knowledge of others in a necessarily dyadic relationship. Thus, human comprehension stopped being monological to become dialogical, making the lainian theory of comprehension move even more into dialogue and democracy.⁴⁰ This change occurred since, as comprehension of an object or person is never absolute, this could not be considered a personal effort but rather one subject to perspectivism. Therefore, there is a necessary move towards democracy, as the confrontation of perspectives must be collective and public. It must be pointed out that Laín slowly lost faith in absolute reason and self-sufficient and individual human comprehension, which led him to consider comprehensive attitude more as a dialogue. Gracia interprets the intellectual process of Laín on the subject as a deliberative theory.⁴¹ This is only found tacitly in lainian work; there is no formulation of this theory and it is Diego Gracia who uses the word «deliberation». But he states to have enough reason to believe that, had it had enough time to develop, Laín's philosophical evolution would have climaxed in a deliberative attitude, as our author defends.⁴²

We arrive here, then, with the synthesis of the ideas linking Pedro Laín Entralgo and Diego Gracia. In these pages, we wanted to show the importance the relation between a master and a disciple has had in the development of Gracia's bioethical thought. Specifically, we have presented those main elements from Laín's intellectual heritage that were transmitted to his pupils. The world of values, the comprehensive attitude, the conception of health and disease or the structurally moral clinical exercise are some of the topics where the imprint Laín left in Gracia is clearest, and the impact of this thought in the bioethical thesis of the latter. One cannot fully understand an author without knowing the roots upon which his ideas rest. The scale of lainian background in Gracia's

³⁹ Gracia, 2010, pp. 693–694; Gracia, 2019a, pp. 158–160.

⁴⁰ Gracia, 2010, pp. 400–415, 499–515.

⁴¹ Gracia, 2010, pp. 504–505.

⁴² Gracia, 2010, p. 505.

bioethics is such that, without it, his philosophy cannot be understood in all its depths.⁴³ It remains true that Laín was not a bioethicist; when this discipline rose, his intellectual concerns and philosophical system were already clearly determined.⁴⁴ But it is also true that, as an unintentional predecessor, part of his reflections on the human being, medical practice and morals, health and disease, life and death have had a profound intellectual impact in philosophers and doctors who call themselves bioethicists. And this is something that must not be underestimated. In Iainian philosophy lie some very valuable contents for a bioethical theory aiming to be serious and rigorous. Laín Entralgo's thesis, especially in the field of medical anthropology, are of great utility in the theoretical scope. However, the problem Laín had to face was the application of the medical model he promoted and the conflicts that arose from clinical practice. It was there where the blooming bioethics came into play bringing practical solutions. In this way, it must be pointed out that between Laín's medical anthropology and the field of bioethics one can establish a sort of continuity or even complementarity, which is why Laín saw bioethics as applied medical anthropology.⁴⁵ Similarly, the Iainian medical anthropology is a theoretical structure that serves as groundwork for the

⁴³ We have focused the current work on the study of the intellectual legacy of Laín Entralgo that Diego Gracia inherited, and how this can be seen in his bioethics. However, it must be mentioned that at least a very important name in North American bioethics, during the eighties, was influenced by Iainian philosophy. It is the case of the bioethicist James F. Drane, one of the intellectuals who developed American bioethics from its birth. In 1987, Drane was in Spain working with Laín Entralgo on the ethical aspects of clinical relationships. From Laín he learnt the value of the personal dimension of the relationship between doctors and patients, a thesis he then transferred to the American context. From this work he published in 1988 *Becoming a Good Doctor: The Place of Virtue and Character in Medical Ethics*, considered by many one of his most important books and from where the application of Laín Entralgo's thought and the Mediterranean ethical tradition is shown (cf. Herreros, Real de Asua, Palacios, 2018, p. 56).

⁴⁴ However, he did show certain interest in the field of bioethics in the eighties. In 1979, Diego Gracia and José Luis Peset organised an Interdisciplinary Symposium on Philosophy and Medicine in the Juan March Foundation in Madrid, which was the first international meeting on bioethics in the Spanish capital. The subject the Symposium was "ethics of diagnosis". From this event onwards, Laín started to work on this issue, resulting in his 1982 book *El diagnóstico médico: Historia y teoría*, a text exploring the historical past of clinical diagnosis and devoting its two last chapters to ethics and practice of diagnosis (cf. Gracia, 2010, p. 623).

⁴⁵ Gracia, 2010, pp. 621–622.

development of a bioethics focused on values. This is what Gracia did excellently: he gathered the intellectual legacy of his master and, from it, he built his own bioethical model which has led him to become a referent in international medical ethics. For all the reasons mentioned in these pages, it seems then more than fair to state that the figure of Laín Entralgo played a primordial role in the ongoing progress of Spanish bioethics, despite not being on the highlights, still as a decisive influence in the thought of one of the most important bioethicists of the country.

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