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Situated adherence, local examination: religious freedom, autonomy, and the condition of local independence of examinability

Adesão situada, exame local: liberdade religiosa, autonomia e a condição de independência local da examinabilidade

Adhesión situada, examen local: libertad religiosa, autonomía y la condición de independencia local de la examinabilidad

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Abstract:
Religious freedom legally secures a space of possibilities, namely to adhere, not to adhere, to remain, to convert, or to leave a religion; it does not decide whether a given adherence is autonomously attributable to the person who holds it. This article asks to what extent a legally free religious adherence can be autonomously attributed to the individual, given that its formation and maintenance depend on affects, tradition, authority, social relations, and epistemic conditions the individual did not produce. Drawing on William James and Edward Shils to establish adherence as situated in its formation, its maintenance, and its very instruments of examination, it takes from historical and relational theories of autonomy the thesis that social causes do not eliminate autonomy, and shows, through the socially mediated form of the manipulation objection, that reflective appropriation is insufficient when the capacities for examination were constituted by the same process that formed the adherence. Rather than requiring complete or sufficient independence, it formulates a threshold-shaped necessary condition: there must exist at least one effectively accessible avenue of examination in which the relevant reasons can be weighed without their admissibility or force depending on presupposing the very commitment or the authority locally in dispute. The condition is built between four pressures, tradition-constituted rationality (MacIntyre, Shils), the inevitability of some epistemic self-support (Alston), the anti-question-begging motivation of the Independence principle (Christensen), and the rejection of strong impartiality (Pittard), and yields a Principle of Diagnostic Independence for cases in which a member's doubt is converted into evidence of the defect that disqualifies it. A distinction between the burdens of examining and the burdens of leaving shows that freedom of exit is not freedom of examination, and an immanent reading of Ignatius of Loyola, Newman, and Dei Filius shows the condition to be compatible with stability of assent, deferral of change, and trust in authority. The result is symmetrical across inherited religion, conversion, deconversion, and inherited atheism, and independent of the truth of the belief.

Keywords:
religious adherence; autonomy; religious freedom; tradition; manipulation; epistemic independence; immanent critique.

Resumo:
A liberdade religiosa assegura juridicamente um espaço de possibilidades — aderir, não aderir, permanecer, converter-se ou abandonar uma religião —, mas não decide se a adesão concreta de alguém lhe é autonomamente atribuível. Examina-se em que medida uma adesão religiosa

juridicamente livre pode ser atribuída ao indivíduo como sua, dado que a sua formação e a sua manutenção dependem de afetos, tradição, autoridade, relações sociais e condições epistêmicas que ele não produziu. Com William James e Edward Shils, a adesão aparece como situada em sua formação, em sua manutenção e nos próprios instrumentos de exame. Da literatura da autonomia histórica e relacional recebe-se a tese de que causas sociais não eliminam a autonomia; a objeção da manipulação, em sua forma socialmente mediada, mostra que a apropriação reflexiva não basta quando as capacidades de exame foram constituídas pelo mesmo processo que formou a adesão. Em lugar de independência inteira ou suficiente, propõe-se uma condição necessária em forma de limiar: deve existir ao menos uma via de exame efetivamente acessível na qual as razões relevantes possam ser consideradas sem que a sua admissibilidade ou força dependa da pressuposição do próprio compromisso ou da autoridade localmente em disputa. A condição situa-se entre quatro pressões — a racionalidade constituída pela tradição (MacIntyre, Shils), a inevitabilidade de algum autossuporte epistêmico (Alston), a motivação antipseudocircular do princípio de Independência (Christensen) e a rejeição de uma imparcialidade forte (Pittard) —, e dela se deriva um Princípio de Independência Diagnóstica para o caso em que a dúvida do membro é convertida em evidência do defeito que a desqualifica. A distinção entre o ônus de examinar e o ônus de sair mostra que liberdade de saída não é liberdade de exame, e uma leitura imanente de Inácio de Loyola, de Newman e da Dei Filius mostra que a condição é compatível com a estabilidade do assentimento, o adiamento da mudança e a confiança em autoridades. O resultado vale simetricamente para a religião herdada, a conversão, a desconversão e o ateísmo herdado, e independe da verdade da crença.

Palavras-chave:
adesão religiosa; autonomia; liberdade religiosa; tradição; manipulação; independência epistêmica; crítica imanente.

Resumen:
La libertad religiosa asegura jurídicamente un espacio de posibilidades — adherirse, no adherirse, permanecer, convertirse o abandonar una religión—, pero no decide si la adhesión concreta de alguien le es atribuible de manera autónoma. Se examina en qué medida una adhesión religiosa jurídicamente libre puede ser atribuida al individuo como propia, dado que su formación y su mantenimiento dependen de afectos, tradición, autoridad, relaciones sociales y condiciones epistémicas que él no produjo. Con William James y Edward Shils, la adhesión aparece como situada en su formación, en su mantenimiento y en los propios instrumentos de examen. De la literatura de la autonomía histórica y relacional se recibe la tesis de que causas sociales no eliminan la autonomía; la objeción de la manipulación, en su forma socialmente mediada, muestra que la apropiación reflexiva no basta cuando las capacidades de examen fueron constituidas por el mismo proceso que formó la adhesión. En lugar de independencia entera o suficiente, se propone una condición necesaria en forma de umbral: debe existir al menos una vía de examen efectivamente accesible en la cual las razones relevantes puedan ser consideradas sin que su admisibilidad o fuerza dependa de la presuposición del propio compromiso o de la autoridad localmente en disputa. La condición se sitúa entre cuatro presiones —la racionalidad constituida por la tradición (MacIntyre, Shils), la inevitabilidad de algún autosustento epistémico (Alston), la motivación antipseudocircular del principio de independencia (Christensen) y el rechazo de una imparcialidad fuerte (Pittard)—, y de ella se deriva un Principio de Independencia Diagnóstica para el caso en que la duda del miembro es convertida en evidencia del defecto que la descalifica. La distinción entre la carga de examinar y la carga de salir muestra que la libertad de salida no es la libertad de examen, y una lectura inmanente de Ignacio de Loyola, de Newman y de la Dei Filius muestra que la condición es compatible con la estabilidad del asentimiento, el aplazamiento del cambio y la confianza en

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autoridades. El resultado vale simétricamente para la religión heredada, la conversión, la desconversión y el ateísmo heredado, y es independiente de la verdad de la creencia.

Palabras clave:
adhesión religiosa; autonomía; libertad religiosa; tradición; manipulación; independencia epistémica; crítica inmanente.

Introduction

Where religious freedom is legally guaranteed, it protects a range of possibilities: joining a religion, joining none, remaining in one's religion, converting to another, or leaving one's former religion[1]. What this guarantee establishes is that no one may legitimately be coerced into occupying one of these positions rather than another. What it does not establish, because that is not its function, is whether the position someone actually occupies can be attributed to that person as their own. The distinction between legal freedom and autonomy of adherence is not new. Political philosophy formulated it by showing that autonomy requires more than the absence of coercion: it also requires an adequate range of options and the conditions for using them[2]. The question arises from this distinction: to what extent can a legally free religious adherence be autonomously attributed to the individual, given that its formation and maintenance inevitably depend on affects, tradition, authority, social relations, and epistemic conditions that the individual did not produce?

The question goes through several literatures that are rarely found. The psychology of William James' belief and Edward Shils' theory of tradition describe the subject who adheres as a situated subject whose living options, whose affections and patterns of reason were received. The contemporary philosophy of autonomy, in its historical and relational versions, showed that having social causes is not heteronomous, and offered, with the reflective appropriation not alienated, a strong answer to the question; but the same literature built against it the objection of manipulation, according to which the reflection itself may have been shaped by what it was supposed to certify. The epistemology of disagreement and evidence of higher order elaborated,

[1] In Brazilian law, protection is in article 5, VI to VIII of the 1988 Constitution, which ensures the inviolability of freedom of conscience and belief, the free exercise of worships and the guarantee that no one will be deprived of rights because of religious belief. The guarantee is taken as given here; it matters what it does not decide.

[2] RAZ, Joseph. The morality of freedom. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, on autonomy as requiring an adequate range of options; NUSSBAUM, Martha C. Liberty of conscience. New York: Basic Books, 2008, on freedom of conscience as a legal guarantee. The debate on realistic exit rights (OKIN, Susan Moller. "Mistresses of their own destiny". Ethics, v. 112, n. 2, 2002; KUKATHAS, Chandran. The liberal archipelago. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) is the nearest neighbor to the question; the point of departure appears with the distinction between the burden of examining and the burden of leaving (Section VI).

with the principle of Independence, a restriction against the reuse of reasoning in dispute to adjudicate the dispute, and the epistemology of religious experience showed, with the epistemic circularity of doxastic practices, why no restriction of these can prohibit self-reference in general. The philosophy of traditions, with MacIntyre, and the sociology of knowledge, with Berger and Luckmann, realized how a tradition supports the plausibility of what it transmits and how it can still be examined from within. And the psychology of coercion and recent social epistemology described, with Lifton, Albert and Nguyen, the structures that immunize a commitment against criticism. None of these literatures needs to be corrected so that the problem of religious adherence appears; it needs to be articulated with others, in a chain where each link does what the previous one did not do.

From the articulation results four distinctions that are not formulated, in the literature consulted, the way they appear here: examination is not equivalent to suspension of assent; the burden of examining does not equal to the burden of leaving; recognized authority does not equal the capture of the review path; and the global dependence of a tradition is compatible with the demand for local independence in relation to the item examined. The most is received — the distinction between religious freedom and autonomy, coexistence between tradition and autonomy, refusal of self-creation as a requirement, the thesis that heteronomous origin does not imply heteronomous maintenance, the distinction between autonomy and authenticity, plausibility structures, immunization against criticism, echo chambers, tradition as bearer of internal criteria —, and the indication of sources accompanies each step.

The thesis has precise limits. The analysis is symmetrical: it is equally valid for inherited religion, conversion, disconversion and inherited atheism, and takes academic institutions as comparative control; abandoning a religion does not demonstrate autonomy, and remaining in it does not show heteronomy. The result is independent of the truth or falseness of belief: the proposed condition can be met by adherences to true and false propositions, and violated by both. Autonomy here does not mean the absence of causality, tradition or authority, self-creation, or social independence. The general problem of manipulation is left unsolved, and cases of direct implementation of values without relevant social mediation are left out. And five notions that the discussion usually merges — truth, justification, legitimacy, authenticity and autonomy — are kept separate; only the latter is dealt with, and the second only where the structure of the examination routes requires it.

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I. Situated adherence

Religious freedom, where it is legally guaranteed, guarantees a space of possibilities: to adhere, not to adhere, to remain, to convert, to abandon. What it seeks to secure legally is a protected space of possibilities, and it's a lot. What it does not guarantee, because it is not in its office to ensure, is that the concrete adherence of someone, who in fact occupies one of the positions of this space, is attributable to that person as their own. The question for the autonomy of adherence begins exactly where the legal guarantee ends, and the first step to formulate it honestly is to recognize how much adherence, in its formation and maintenance, is indebted to conditions that the adherent did not produce. Nothing can be concluded about autonomy. It is about fixing what needs to be explained, and three sources suffice for this: the psychology of William James's belief, Edward Shils' theory of tradition, and, in a deliberately restricted role, Spinoza's theory of affections.

James begins with a distinction that seems technical and is, in fact, the first description of the situated subject. A hypothesis is anything that can be proposed to our belief, and the hypotheses are alive or dead as they appear or not as real possibilities for those who receive them. If you ask me to believe in Mahdi, the idea “refuses to sparkle with any credibility”; for an Arab, “the hypothesis is among the possibilities of the mind: it is alive”[3]. The lesson James draws is what matters here: the living or dead character “is not an intrinsic property, but it is related to the individual thinker”, and “is measured by the individual’s willingness to act”[4]. An option between hypotheses is genuine only when it is live, forced, and momentous, and the vitality of the two alternatives is itself a given of formation: “Be agnostics or be Christians” is a living option for James’ auditorium because, “by the formation you have, each of these hypotheses has some appeal”[5]. Before any deliberation, therefore, the set of religious options that anyone can even consider has already been configured, and configured in a subject who did not choose the configuration. That is why Pascal’s bet, for James, does not convince anyone that he was not already inclined: “Unless there is some pre-existing tendency to believe in Masses and holy water, the option offered at will by Pascal is not a living option”[6].

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[3] JAMES, William. The will to believe. Trad. Cecilia Camargo Bartalotti. São Paulo: Loyola, 2001, p. 9–10. Original: “The will to believe”, 1896.

[4] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 10.

[5] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 10.

[6] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 15.

James' second contribution is a description of what he calls a passionate nature. When we look at certain facts, he writes, “it is as if our passionate and volitional nature were at the root of all our convictions”[7]. And it is explicit about what this nature covers. It is not only about deliberate volitions that establish belief habits, but “all the factors of belief, such as fear and hope, prejudice and passion, imitation and participation, the pressure surrounding our class and our social circle”; “in fact, we caught ourselves believing without knowing for sure how or why”[8]. James takes Balfour’s name as “authority” for “all these influences, born of the intellectual climate, which make possible or impossible hypotheses for us, alive or dead”, and the illustration he chooses does not spare his own auditorium: there all believe in molecules, in the conservation of energy, in democracy, in Protestant Christianity, “all this for no reason that deserves that name”; “not discernment, but the prestige of opinions is what makes them emit the spark”; “our faith is faith in the faith of another and, in the greatest questions, that is almost always the case”[9]. The conclusion he draws is modest, and it is the one that must be retained: “pure discernment and logic, whatever they can do ideally, are not the only things that actually produce our creeds”[10]. Two reading precautions are necessary. The first is that James describes the passionate formation of belief to defend, then the right to believe under certain conditions; the defense does not matter here, and is neither endorsed nor refused. The second is that James does not speak of the autonomy of adherence, and the word “autonomy”, when he appears in the essay, has metaphysical sense, that of being “small centers active by ourselves” in a universe that also contains us as passive parts.[11]. What is taken of James is only the explanation: the list of factors that participate in the belief, the prior configuration of the configuration of options and faith in the faith of another.

James describes the situation from the subject’s perspective; Shils describes it from the perspective of what reaches the subject, and this is the second source. Tradition, in its most elementary sense, is a traditum, “anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present”, and the decisive criterion is merely that, having been created through human actions, it is “handed down from one generation to the next”[12]. This definition says nothing about the truth of what is transmitted or the degree of rational deliberation involved in its

[7] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 12.

[8] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 18.

[9] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 19.

[10] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 21.

[11] JAMES, The Will to Believe, cit., p. 45. To read in this passage a thesis on the autonomy of adherence would be to force the text.

[12] SHILS, Edward. Tradition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 12.

creation and reception. That silence is deliberate: it blocks, from the outset, the opposition between tradition and reason presupposed by the Enlightenment critique of tradition[13]. The traditum includes objects, beliefs, images, practices, and institutions. What is transmitted in practices is not the actions, which cease when performed, but their patterns and the beliefs recommending or prohibiting their reenactment[14]. Three features of this transmission matter here. The first is temporal priority: "Those who accept a tradition need not call it a tradition; its acceptability might be self-evident to them", and what is received "is the past in the present but it is as much part of the present as any very recent innovation"[15]. The second is normativity: every tradition of belief "is presented with the intention of producing affirmation and acceptance", and this normativity "is the inertial force which holds society in a given form over time"[16]. The third has the greatest consequences for what follows. Shils maintains that reason itself is traditional: "The patterns of reason and scientific method are not acquired by each possessor who works them out for himself. They are for the most part transmitted to him". The transmission of what is articulated becomes effective only through receiving what is unarticulated: elements of tacit knowledge acquired "by intimate association and empathy with the acts of exemplification in the persons who perform them"[17]. If this is true, the instruments with which someone might examine their adherence are also received, together with the unarticulated knowledge that makes them operative. This observation will have consequences; for now, it merely joins the others.

Shils is not, however, a theorist of tradition as imprisonment, and both sides of the tension must be read in his work. On one side, he rejects the self-contained individual: those who believe their past begins with their birth have an entirely empty "organ" of the past, "and they are wrong as well"[18]; he also concedes to nineteenth-century liberals that it was not arbitrary to see traditions as limitations on freedom, because "Tradition hems an individual in; it sets the condition of his actions; it determines his resources; it even determines what he himself is"[19]. On the other side, in the same paragraph, he writes a sentence decisive for everything that follows: human beings can reject the beliefs offered to them and choose others among those

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[13] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 12: the conception of tradition "is silent about whether there is acceptable evidence for the truth of the tradition or whether the tradition is accepted without its validity having been established".

[14] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 12–13.

[15] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 13.

[16] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 23 and 25.

[17] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 21–22.

[18] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 43–44, na seção intitulada "The restricted autonomy of the individual".

[19] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 197.

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available, and “Ratiocinated changes of belief draw on previously existent and affirmed beliefs and such changes are the freest which the mind can make”[20]. The freest change of which the mind is capable does not start from nothing; it reasons from what has already been affirmed. Every tradition, however given it may be, “opens potentialities for a diversity of responses”, and “The response to any tradition can be selective”, even when the person responding believes they are accepting or rejecting the whole[21]. There is also more than selection. For Shils, traditions “are indispensable; they are also very seldom entirely adequate. Their sheer existence disposes those who possess them to change them”; some changes “originate within the tradition and are carried out by persons who have accepted it”. It is within devotion, without any intention of originality, that “an alert critical intelligence will first sense that all is not as it should be with the tradition which it possesses”; the perception of defects itself “might indeed be part of the tradition itself”[22]. Shils thus offers a sociological theory of the possibility of endogenous correction, which carries as much weight as his theory of transmission. MacIntyre’s philosophical theory of rationality constituted by tradition and its crises has an antecedent here: Shils had already shown that tradition can be examined from within, albeit without the epistemological elaboration MacIntyre would give it.

Between the subject of James and the Shils tradition there is a layer that sociology of knowledge has named: that the subjective reality of a world, including a religious world, depends on a social basis that keeps it plausible, made up of conversations, meaningful relationships and institutions that continually confirm what is believed to be.[23]. The point is simple: adherence is not only formed by passional factors and transmitted by a tradition; it is maintained by an infrastructure that makes it credible every day, and which was also not produced by those who depend on it.

Spinoza comes in here with a restricted role. James lists the affections among the factors of belief, but does not explain why they are not just disturbances that a well-conducted judgment should filter; and contemporary psychology of coercion describes mechanisms without offering this explanation. Spinoza offers a particularly useful philosophical explanation here: affections do not appear as noise outside judgment, but as part of the causal order itself in which judgment

[20] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 197.

[21] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 44–45.

[22] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 213, 215 and 216. Shils adds, at the close of the book, that “Not all traditions are benign; not all of them merit survival” (p. 328), which removes any apologetic reading from his theory.

[23] BERGER, Peter L.; LUCKMANN, Thomas. The social construction of reality. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966, about maintaining subjective reality through conversation and “significant others”; BERGER, Peter L. The sacred canopy. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967, on the plausibility structures of religion. The notion reappears as the first of the diagnostic instruments (S1).

is formed. In the foreword of the third part of Ethics, he refuses to treat man as "an empire in an empire" and maintains that affections "follow the same necessity and power of the nature of which the other singular things follow", thus admitting "accurate causes, which allow us to understand them"[24]. And in the scholium of proposition 9 of the same part reverses the order intellectualism supposes: "It is not because we judge a thing good that we strive for it, will it, have an appetite for it, or desire it; rather, it is because we strive for it, will it, have an appetite for it, and desire it that we judge it good"[25]. Dealing with James, this explains what James merely notes: fear and hope, imitation and belonging are not noise over judgment, but part of its constitution, and that is why the living hypothesis is alive before it is evaluated. Spinoza's second service is to provide a vocabulary to "be more or less appropriate" that does not require absence of causes. We act, he says, when we are a proper cause of what happens in us or outside of us, that is, when this can be understood by our nature only; we suffer when we are only partial cause[26]. The distinction between activity and passivity is thus a causal gradation, not the opposition between the caused and the uncaused[27]. Two precautions delimit the loan. Neither Spinoza's necessitarianism nor his metaphysics are adopted; one takes the grammar of activity and passivity as heuristic, and nothing else. And in Spinoza the activity coincides with the adequacy of ideas, which, transposed without care, would reduce autonomy to rationality; the reduction is blocked immediately, because the condition to be proposed is about the existence of an examination pathway, not about the truth of what is examined.

All this can be said in a sentence: religious adherence is situated in its formation, because the options that one can consider and the affections that make them live have been configured before any deliberation; it is situated in its maintenance, because a tradition that presents itself with the intention of being accepted and a social infrastructure that makes it plausible to sustain it; and it is located even in the instruments with which it could be examined, because reason itself is received. None of this decides if the adherence is the adherent's. James himself knew it, and his version of the thesis that the philosophy of autonomy would develop deserves to be cited, because it precedes all contemporary literature of autonomy: "It does not matter to an empiricist that part a hypothesis may reach him; he may have obtained it by decent means or

[24] SPINOZA, Baruch de. Ética. Trad. Tomaz Tadeu. 2. ed. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2016, III, prefácio.

[25] SPINOZA, Ética, cit., III, prop. 9, escólio.

[26] SPINOZA, Ethics, cit., III, definitions 1 and 2; and III, prop. 1: the mind acts to the extent that it has appropriate ideas and suffers to the extent that it has inadequate ideas.

[27] Spinoza adds, in the appendix to Part I and in the scholium of Prop. 2 of Part III, that men "believe themselves free, but they do not even dream of the causes that make them have these desires and appetites, because they ignore them". The observation is worth only as a historical note: the thesis that autonomy consists in knowing its own causes is not adopted, and it is not the answer sought.

not; passion may have whispered it or the accident suggested it; however, if the total tendency of thought continues to confirm it, this is what he takes into account to consider it true"[28]. James speaks of truth, not autonomy, and transposition is not immediate. But the structure of the argument, that origin does not decide the status, is the same as Shils formulates when he says that the freest changes of mind are those that reason from the already stated. The question remains whether this structure can be made precise: under what conditions a preference or commitment that has social and historical causes can still be autonomously attributed to those who maintain it.

II. Autonomy without self-creation

The contemporary philosophy of autonomy took this question as its own: under which conditions a preference or commitment that has social and historical causes can still be autonomously attributed to those who maintain it. The answer that this literature has built in recent decades deserves to be presented in its strongest version, and for a reason of method: the objection that will be made to it only has value if it achieves something that deserves to be achieved, not a caricature of proceduralism.

The starting point is the refusal of an equivalence that seems obvious and is not: that being caused by external factors is the same as being heteronomous. If equivalence were worth it, autonomy would require autogenesis, and since no one generates itself, no one would be autonomous; the concept would lose all discriminating function. The literature of personal autonomy refused equivalence by a path that begins in hierarchical and reflective models and then goes through two corrections, the historical and relational ones. In reflective models, a desire or value belongs to the agent when he, when reflecting on it, endorses or identifies himself with him from a higher order of attitudes; what makes the desire mine is not its origin, but my present relationship with him[29]. These models already contain the thesis that external causes do not eliminate autonomy, because identification is compatible with any causal history. But they contain it in a vulnerable way, and vulnerability motivated historical correction.

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[28] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 30.

[29] The classic reference is FRANKFURT, Harry G. Freedom of the will and the concept of a person. The Journal of Philosophy, v. 68, n. 1, p. 5–20, 1971. The distinction between autonomy and authenticity, which the subsequent literature has elaborated, is not developed here; the mention serves only so that the examination path is not confused with the search for a "true self": the proposed condition does not ask whether adherence expresses who the adherent really is, but if he has means of examining it.

The historical correction is due to Christman and Mele. Christman proposed that the autonomy of a preference depends not only on the agent's present attitude towards her, but also on the way she was formed: a preference is autonomous if the agent, by paying attention to the process by which it was formed, would not resist this process, if this absence of resistance is not itself the fruit of self-deception, and if the agent satisfies minimum conditions of rationality[30]. In later work, Christman integrated the social and historical constitution of the self into this condition: the agent who reflects on his history is not a point without position, but a self formed by relationships and narratives that he did not choose, and the condition becomes that of non alienation, that is, that the agent, when considering his history with the reflective abilities at his disposal, does not feel alienated from the preferences that she produced.[31]. Mele distinguished autonomy from self-control and proposed conditions for the values of an agent to be autonomously his: that have not been produced by processes that circumvent his/her assessment and control capabilities, that these abilities are intact and that the agent is not under compulsion.[32]. What the two versions have in common is the dislocation of the criterion: the question is no longer whether preference has external causes, which is always true, but if the causal process that produced it passed through the agent's capabilities or bypassed them, and if the agent, with these capabilities, appropriates it. The heteronomous origin of a preference does not imply its heteronomous maintenance; what decides is the relationship, sensitive to history, between the agent and what history has given him.

The relational correction adds to this thesis a second, without which the first would be incomplete for the problem of adherence. The authors of relational autonomy maintained that their own capacities of reflection, evaluation and appropriation are socially constituted: no one has them by nature, they develop in relationships, and can be developed in a full or atrophied way according to the relationships in which the agent was formed.[33]. Oshana went further and argued that autonomy is not only a socially formed internal competence, but a social-relational status: an agent is autonomous only if his external conditions are effective, and not just his attitudes, allow him to govern himself, which includes having real options, not being under

[30] CHRISTMAN, John. Autonomy and personal history. Canadian Journal of Philosophy, v. 21, n. 1, p. 1– 24, 1991.

[31] CHRISTMAN, John. The politics of persons: individual autonomy and socio-historical selves. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

[32] MELE, Alfred R. Autonomous agents: from self-control to autonomy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, caps. 9–10.

[33] MACKENZIE, Catriona; STOLJAR, Natalie (org.). Relational autonomy: feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, in particular the introduction of organizers.

domination and having the means to act according to what he decides[34]. The relational thesis matters for two reasons. The first is that it allows asking for social conditions of the autonomy of adherence without abandoning the vocabulary of individual autonomy: to ask if the adherent has certain means is not to replace the individual with the structure, but to recognize that individual autonomy has conditions that are not individual. The second is that it prepares the distinction between the internal conditions and the external conditions of the examination: a capacity to examine may exist and be inaccessible, and an examination route may be available to those who do not have the ability to use it.

Taken in its best version, this literature offers a three-layer response. Religious adherence, caused as it is, can be autonomous of the adherent if he, with capacities of reflection that are themselves socially formed, and in social conditions that allow him to exercise them, considers the history by which the adherence was formed and does not alienate itself from it, that is, appropriates it. That's a strong answer. It does not require autogenesis, it does not treat tradition as an opponent, it does not confuse autonomy with social independence and it absorbs without difficulty the two passages of James and Shils quoted: that of James, for whom it does not matter where the hypothesis came from if the total tendency of thought continues to confirm it, and that of Shils, for whom the freest changes of mind are those that reason from the already stated[35]. It is because the answer is strong that she deserves an objection. The question that remains is not whether the answer is false, but whether it is sufficient: if the reflective, non-alienated and socially enabled appropriation of adherence suffices for adherence to belong to the adherent, or if there is a case in which all these conditions are satisfied and adherence is still not his.

III. The decisive manipulation objection

The case exists, and literature has built it against itself. Mele formulated it with two characters. Ann is a philosopher whose values, dedicated to intellectual work, have been formed throughout a lifetime of choices, efforts and revisions. Beth is a colleague whose values were different until, during one night, a team of experts replaced them with Ann's, without her knowing it: Beth wakes up with exactly the hierarchy of desires, judgments of value and reflective attitudes of Ann, and, when reflecting on her new values, endorses them with the

[34] OSHANA, Marina. Personal autonomy in society. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

[35] JAMES, A vontade de crer, cit., p. 30; SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 197.

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same conviction that Ann endorses hers[36]. The case was constructed to show that the reflective conditions, those of hierarchical models, are satisfied by Beth and that Beth, however, is not autonomous in relation to the values implanted. The historical response was designed to account for Beth, and you need to give her fully what she claims. For Mele, what distinguishes Beth from Ann is nothing like what happens in Beth after the intervention, but the objective way in which her values were acquired: a process that bypassed her critical abilities rather than passing through them. For Christman, Beth, if you were to look at the process that formed his values, you would resist him, or, if you didn't resist, this was due to factors that inhibit self-reflection, and his condition contains clauses designed to exclude exactly this hypothesis.[37]. Against Beth, therefore, the historical response has real resources.

The aim is not to defeat that answer, but to locate the point where it ceases to answer the question of adherence. A stress test helps identify that point, provided its scope and limits are stated. Suppose a process affects not only Beth's values but also the dispositions with which she will later reconstruct her own history: the narrative in which the process appears acceptable, the disposition not to feel alienated from the result, and confidence in the capacities with which she evaluates it. This test chiefly presses the conditions of non-resistance and non-alienation, because it asks what makes reflective non-resistance itself capable of certifying the history that produced it, when that history may also have produced the capability. It does not, however, defeat Mele's historical restriction: a process that first installs values and, as part of the same intervention, the dispositions that will later ratify them remains a process that bypassed the agent's critical capacities. Mele's question concerns how the values were acquired, rather than the capacities that exist afterward. What the test shows is narrower, and sufficient: it reveals a residual question about the conditions that make an agent's reflection capable of certifying the formation that produced it, and shows that the genealogy of values does not answer that question, even when the genealogy is fully available[38].

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[36] MELE, Autonomous agents, cit., chap. 9. The reconstruction of the case is mine; the names and structure are Mele's.

[37] CHRISTMAN, Autonomy and personal history, cit., where non-resistance to the formation process is qualified by the requirement that it does not arise from factors that inhibit self-reflection, self-deception or irrationality.

[38] The extension is built from Beth's case; nearby variants exist in the literature of so-called manipulation arguments, especially in cases of global manipulation and designed agents discussed by MELE, Alfred R. Manipulated agents: a window to moral responsibility. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, and the general form of the case is not claimed as original. An observation by Spinoza gives to this insufficiency of reflection a structural reason: "The true knowledge of good and evil, as true, cannot restrain any affection; it can restrain it only as considered as affection" (SPINOZA, Ethics, cit., IV, prop. 14; and IV, prop. 7). If this is true, reflection, as cognitive content, is not by itself a counterweight to what formed it; it is only to the extent that it itself is a force in the affective life of the agent, and this force may have been formed along with the rest. The spinozan theory of affections is not adopted; observation is recorded as a reason not to expect reflection which it cannot give.

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Now remove the manipulator. There is no team, there is no night and there is no intervention; there is the ordinary socialization by which a person was formed, and in it the values, language, assessment skills and criteria of what counts as a reason were produced jointly over years by the same prolonged process. This is the case for religious adherences, and it is also the case that the resources of the historical response, without being false, are no longer sufficient. Not because they have been refuted, but because what they were designed to identify is absent here: no episode of bypassing, because the capabilities were not bypassed; they were constituted; no discontinuity with the previous history, because the process is the previous history; and no resistance to waiting for attention to the process, because paying attention to it is already using what it gave. The relational thesis, which is the strongest point of the position received, is what makes this case inevitable: if reflective capacities are socially constituted, then the structure that constitutes adherence can also constitute the capabilities with which adherence would be examined. However, it must be precise about what follows, because it is easy to conclude too much. From the social constitution of capacities it is not followed that their exercise is unable to evaluate the tradition that constituted them; if this followed, the endogenous correction that Shils describes would be impossible, and MacIntyre would have no object. The following is just this: the social constitution of capacities prevents the mere occurrence of reflection, or non alienation, from being taken, without further analysis, as a guarantee of independence in relation to the formative structure. Reflective appropriation can be exam; it can also be reproduction; and nothing in the fact that it occurred says which of the two things it was.

The decisive distinction is between two problems that the word “manipulation” usually merges. The first is genealogical: how the values and capabilities of an agent emerged, and whether the process that produced them passed by the agent or bypassed it. In this problem the historical answer is strong, and there is nothing to add to it. The second is of examination: given the capacities already formed, what relationship they can maintain with the structure that formed them, and whether or not this structure left them some way of questioning it. Even though a historical theory can distinguish Beth from Ann by genealogy, it remains, in ordinary social formations, a different problem: there is not necessarily an episode of bypassing to be identified, because the critical capacity itself was constituted in the same prolonged process that formed adherence, and the question goes from the genealogy of capacity to the contemporary structure of its exercise. The argument does not therefore require that historical autonomy be defeated; it only requires recognition that it responds to the first problem and not to the second.

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Two observations prevent the objection from being misread. The first is that she's symmetrical. The reflection of those who were raised without religion, in a circle that has its own theory of those who believe, was formed by this circle as much as the reflection of those who were raised in a parish was formed by the parish; and the reflection of those who became disconverted in a community of former members was formed by this community. The objection does not distinguish content, nor does it serve to distinguish them. The second is terminological, and it is a decision, not a thesis on literature. The literature on manipulation does not have a consensual definition, and characterizes the phenomenon sometimes by the bypassing of capacities, sometimes by pressure, sometimes by deception.[39]. The term is reserved here for paradigmatic cases in which there is an identifiable manipulative intervention, such as Beth's, and it is not necessary to classify ordinary institutional socialization as manipulation so that the problem exists: what is stated about this socialization is only that the reflective certification of adherence does not, by itself, do what the historical response asks of it, when the certificater was formed along with the certificate. To call this manipulation would be to import into the ordinary case the vocabulary of the limit case, and it is necessary to resist such importation with a discipline of its own.

Thus, a version of the problem that is no longer that of the literature on autonomy is reached. The question couldn't be whether adherence was caused. It could be whether adherence was appropriated reflectively, and the historical and relational response gave this question a strong content. This question remains legitimate, but it is no longer enough: in the socially mediated case, the fact that the agent reflects competently, does not alienate himself from his history and endorse the result is not enough, by itself, to show that the formative structure left open a way through which adherence itself could be questioned. What we need to know is under what conditions the structure that formed adherence and reflection left, or not, the adherent some way of examining the first one that is not only the second to confirm it. This question has to be asked to structure, and not just to the agent, and that is why the social and institutional form of religious adherence goes to the foreground: in it, the structure that transmits the commitment is the same that can provide the instruments of its examination.

[39] For an overview of competing characterizations, see NOGGLE, Robert. The ethics of manipulation. In: The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018 (rev. 2026), and MELE, Manipulated agents, cit.

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IV. The social and institutional form of religious adherence

The objection left the problem in a form that is not yet definitive. The reflection by which an adherence becomes, for those who keep it, object of identification and appropriation may have been shaped itself, and therefore the fact that an adherence has passed through the agent's reflection does not decide whether it is his. The cases of direct implementation, without relevant social mediation, were left aside; there is the way in which those who shape reflection are not a punctual handler, but the ordinary structure by which adherence was transmitted and is sustained. It remains to be shown why this form of objection is especially relevant to religious adherences, and to show it without anticipating two steps that belong elsewhere. It is not a question of proving that some religious structure manipulates or makes heteronomous its members; that would be to resume the objection under another name. Nor to say what condition separates the influence of capture. What is established is more modest and indispensable: the same social structure that forms adherence can also participate in the formation of the means by which adherence will be examined. The decisive word is “may”, and no other would fit here.

A religious tradition, seen from the position of the member, does at least four things at once. It conveys the commitment, in the precise sense that Shils gave to the transmission: it presents it with the intention of being accepted, and presents it before the receiver is able to ask or refuse it.[40]. It supports its plausibility, in the sense that Berger and Luckmann gave to the expression: it maintains, through daily conversation, by meaningful relations and by institutions that confirm what is believed, the subjective reality of the world in which commitment makes sense[41]. It organizes the practices in which the commitment is incorporated: worship, catechesis, frequency, habits of the calendar and body, by which to adhere is not only to believe, but to do. And it provides the authorities to whom the member appeals when the commitment needs to be interpreted, applied or defended. These four functions aren't four organs. In the concrete life of a community, they are often exercised by the same people, in the same places and in the same acts: the weekly liturgy transmits, makes it plausible, incorporates into practice and presents an authority, everything in an hour. It is this concentration, not any of the functions alone, that prepares the point.

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[40] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 12–13 and 23–25.

[41] BERGER; LUCKMANN, The social construction of reality, cit.; BERGER, The sacred canopy, cit., on the dependence of religious plausibility on its social basis.

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The point is that the same structure can also provide the instruments of the examination. This follows from a thesis by Shils that here receives its weight: if the patterns of reason itself are received, and received along with the inarticulate that makes them operant[42], then the member who turns to examine his adherence does so with a vocabulary, with categories and criteria that, to a large extent, tradition gave him. It's worth being specific about what that includes. It includes the language in which doubt can be articulated, because a doubt that does not find words yet cannot fully operate as an articulated object of examination, and the available words come from somewhere. It includes the people to whom doubt can be addressed, because the natural interlocutor of those who doubt a tradition is often someone formed by it and charged with representing it. It includes the criteria of what counts as a relevant reason, because a tradition that has a world theory also has a theory of what is evidence, what is reliable testimony and what is admissible argument. And it often includes a theory of doubt itself: tradition not only responds to objections, but has a doctrine about what doubt is, where it comes from and what it means in who feels it. None of this is, by itself, a pathology. It is the normal way any transmission structure operates, and it is also, and this is the other side that one cannot lose sight of, the condition of possibility of endogenous correction: if the perception of defects of a tradition can be part of tradition itself[43], it is because tradition has provided the instruments with which its defects are perceived. The structure that can form the means of the examination is the same that makes the internal examination possible. This participation is therefore not suspect; it is ambivalent.

Why, then, is religious adherence the case especially relevant, if the structure described is common to all transmission? Not because religion is the only one to display it, but because in it four traits that in other adherences appear separately tend to appear together. The first is the totality of the object: a religious tradition offers an interpretation of the world that includes the subject himself who examines, and so his theory of doubt is not an addition, but a consequence of his theory of man. The second is the coincidence, in the same people, of the functions of transmitting and judging: the one who taught the commitment is often the one who will be consulted on the objections to it. The third is that the compromise focuses on the criteria themselves: to adhere to a religious tradition is, among other things, to accept a conception of what counts as a reason in the matters it covers, so that the dispute over P can be, at the same time, a dispute about what is admissible in the assessment of P. The fourth is the affective and practical depth of adherence, which James described: a living religious hypothesis is alive by

[42] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 21–22.

[43] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 213–216.

the affections that sustain it and by the practices in which it is incorporated, and not just for the reasons that support it. None of these traits are exclusive. An academic department provides its PhD students with the categories with which their paradigm will be criticized, and Shils showed that science is, in this regard, as traditional as anything else.[44]; a party has a theory of dissent; a family has a theory of the child that departs. These cases serve as comparative control, and the difference is of degree and concentration, not of nature. That is exactly why analysis can be symmetrical: what is worth to inherited religious adherence is worth, with the adjustments of degree, to the disconversion sustained by a community of former members, to inherited atheism in a circle that has its own theory of who comes to believe, and to adherence to a discipline.

The literature that describes the extreme of this spectrum is useful here, as long as it is said to describe the extreme. In analyzing the reform of thought, Lifton identified under the names of sacred science and doctrine about the person the state in which the doctrine presents itself as unquestionable by nature and in which the experience of the individual is reinterpreted to fit it, rather than the doctrine being reviewed in the light of experience.[45]. Albert catalogued the strategies by which a system of convictions immunizes itself against criticism, making every objection, by construction, confirmation[46]. And Nguyen distinguished, with an accuracy that much will depend, the epistemic bubble, in which relevant voices simply do not arrive, from the echo chamber, where they arrive and are actively discredited by a structure that teaches members to discount them.[47]. The distinction of Nguyen matters because it undoes an easy answer to the problem. It might seem that the participation of the structure in the formation of examination instruments is neutralized by the simple exposure of the member to outside voices, and that a pluralistic society, in which this exhibition is guaranteed, solves the issue. It doesn't, because the exposure doesn't decide if what's heard can count. A structure that teaches you to cash in beforehand everything that comes from outside is compatible with unlimited exposure. But what Lifton, Albert and Nguyen describe are cases in which the participation of the structure in the means of examination has become much more comprehensive and systematic, and the ordinary case is not that. The ordinary case is that of tradition which provided the instruments of examination and which may or may not have left in these

[44] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 21–23.

[45] LIFTON, Robert Jay. Thought reform and the psychology of totalism. New York: W. W. Norton, 1961, chapter 22. Lifton describes the limit situation of totalism; from it is taken the description of the mechanism, and none of the diagnosis of particular groups.

[46] ALBERT, Hans. Traktat über kritische Vernunft. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1968. Trad. bras.: Treaty of Critical Reason. Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1976.

[47] NGUYEN, C. Thi. Echo chambers and epistemic bubbles. Episteme, v. 17, n. 2, p. 141–161, 2020.

instruments a way in which the compromise is not the judge of itself. To say that the structure can form the means of examination is to say that the issue is open, not that it is closed.

The question for the autonomy of adherence could not be “adherence was caused?”, because all adherence was, nor “did adherence go through the agent’s reflection?”, because the reflection may have been formed by what she examines. It now gains its own object: it is about the structure of the means of examination available to the member. If the same structure that it transmits, makes it plausible, incorporates and authorizes the commitment can also provide the instruments with which it will be examined, then what we need to know is not how much of this structure is external to the member, nor how much of the outside he hears, but if there is, for him, at least one way of examining the adherence in which it is not assumed by what examines it. To formulate this demand so that you do not ask for the impossible, that is, an independence that no one has, nor dissolves on a scale without cutting, is what remains to be done.

V. The condition of local independence of examinability

Religious adherence is situated in its formation, in its maintenance and in the instruments with which it could be examined, and none of these three circumstances decide, by itself, whether it belongs to the adherent. That the formation and maintenance do not decide, the literature of historical autonomy has already shown; that the procedural response, which is content with the reflective examination, does not decide, the socially mediated form of the objection of manipulation showed; and the third circumstance is the one that distinguishes the religious case from the others. What remains is to say what kind of condition could separate, without appeal to a clean origin or to a sovereign reflection, the adherence that belongs to that which only passes through it. The answer proposed here is not a theory of autonomy, and does not mean when an adherence is autonomous. It says something smaller and therefore more defensible: without what an adherence cannot be ascribed autonomously to those who hold it. It is a necessary condition, formulated in the form of a threshold, and its object is not the content of adherence or the state of mind of the adherent, but the structure of the pathways by which adherence can become the subject of examination.

Two formulations that occur naturally fail, and seeing why they fail is the best way to correct formulation. The first would require that the examination route be entirely independent of the tradition of adherence. That demand calls for what no one else has. Shils said it with the figure of Archimedes: the point of support outside the world was never provided, and whoever

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wants to move the inheritance has to do it from it[48]. MacIntyre made the impossibility of this point the axis of his philosophy of research: there is no rationality that does not consist of a tradition, and the illuminist claim of a neutral court is itself the heritage of a particular tradition that has forgotten to be so.[49]. If full independence were the condition, no adherence would satisfy, including scientific adherences, and a condition that nothing discriminates against is not a condition. The second formulation seems more modest and is worse. It would require that the pathway be sufficiently independent, and with this it transforms the question into a scale without a cutoff point. The only way to fix the cut would be to reintroduce, now as a regulatory ideal, the same neutrality as the first formulation asked for as a fact. Besides, the scale measures the wrong thing. It tells how much from the outside it reaches the adherent, when what matters is not how much he hears, but whether what the adherent hears can count. Nguyen's distinction between epistemic bubble and echo chamber is exactly this: the bubble is a structure in which relevant voices have been omitted, and it breaks with exposure; the chamber is a structure in which relevant voices are heard and actively discredited, and exposure, far from undoing it, can strengthen it.[50]. The relevant variable, therefore, is not the amount of independence, but its location.

That's what the condition seeks to capture. I propose to formulate it as follows:

> An adherence to a commitment P, formed and maintained under social, affective, and traditional conditions that the adherent did not produce, is autonomously attributable to the adherent only if there is at least one effectively accessible path of examination in which the relevant reasons for assessing P can be considered without their admissibility or force depending simply on presupposing the truth of P or the authority whose legitimacy is locally disputed.

Each term of the formulation has a function. “Only if” marks a necessary condition; the existence of the pathway is not enough for autonomy, and the condition is silent about what would be needed most. “At least one way” is what gives the condition the form of threshold rather than scale: the question is not how many paths there are or how independent they are, but if there is one that satisfies the clause. “Effectively accessible” prevents the merely formal existence of a pathway from counting; a path whose access to that adherent has, for that adherent, a prohibitive burden is not a way, and it is by this clause that the condition is linked

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[48] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 198. The same idea appears, in the epistemological record, in Shils' thesis on the traditionality of reason itself: the patterns of reasoning and the method “are not acquired by each possessor who works them out for himself. They are for the most part transmitted to him” (p. 21).

[49] MACINTYRE, Alasdair. Whose justice? Which rationality? Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988, cap. XVIII (“The rationality of traditions”), especially the criticism of what he calls the neutral observer’s perspective.

[50] NGUYEN, Echo chambers and epistemic bubbles, cit. The consequence that is drawn here — that the variable relevant to the autonomy of adherence is not the amount of exposure, but the admissibility of what is heard — is self-development, not Nguyen's language.

to diagnostic instruments. “Relevant reasons for assessing P” includes the reasons against P and the reasons in favour, because what is in question is the exam rather than the output. “Admissibility or strength” distinguishes two ways of neutralizing a reason: that of not letting it in and letting it in already emptied. “Simply” is the word that avoids excess: reasons related to the content of P are obviously admissible on a path that examines P, and the condition is violated only when assuming P does all the work. And the final clause, “of the truth of P or of authority whose legitimacy is locally in dispute”, covers the case, frequent in religious adherences, in which the item disputed is not a proposition, but an authority; it is written so as not to convert into disputed item any authority that supports P, because an authority can sustain P without being questioned, and the condition must remain strictly local.

What the condition does not require is as important as what it requires. It requires no neutrality without tradition, no Archimedean viewpoint, no lack of authority, no independence from the social context. The examination route can be entirely internal to tradition. A Catholic who examines a Marian dogma by the history of dogma, by Scripture and by the conversation with a confessor is using three internal routes, and the condition is satisfied if, in these ways, the reasons that weigh against dogma do not have their admissibility conditioned to presuppose dogma. Conversely, the exposure of someone to a secular university does not satisfy the condition if what is heard there against their adherence is previously discredited so that only assuming adherence the contrary reason loses force. And symmetry is in the other direction: the unbeliever whose only way of assessing his disbelief disqualifies beforehand every religious testimony as an illusion, so that only assuming the falsehood of religion the witness loses strength, is in the same structural position. The condition doesn't know whose side the truth is, and you don't need to know.

The main source of the condition is MacIntyre, both in what is taken from him and in where he departs. What we take is the thesis that rational research consists of a tradition and at the same time constitutive of it, and that the rationality of a tradition is not measured by its conformity to external standards, but by its ability to recognize the epistemological crises themselves and to solve them by resources that, even innovative, keep continuity with what tradition already was.[51]. This means that MacIntyre has already granted what the condition requires: a tradition can examine itself, it can be defeated in its own terms, and rationality is not neutrality, but the ability to sustain internal examination. Shils provides the sociological

[51] MACINTYRE, Alasdair. Epistemological crises, dramatic narrative and the philosophy of science. The Monist, v. 60, n. 4, p. 453–472, 1977; MACINTYRE, Whose justice? Which rationality? XVIII, where solving a crisis requires innovation to solve the problems that tradition did not solve, explain why tradition failed them and maintain continuity with previous fundamental beliefs.

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correlate of this concession, in another record and with equal weight. For Shils, the traditions "are indispensable; they are also very seldom entirely adequate", and their simple existence provides those who have them to modify them; there are changes that originate within tradition and are carried out by those who accepted it, and a critical intelligence alert perceives first, within devotion, that not everything is as it should be; the perception of defects can be, itself, part of tradition[52]. The departure from both lies in the unit of analysis. MacIntyre's unity is tradition, in confrontation with his crisis and rival traditions; Shils' is the tradition in its transmission. The unit here is the member and his adherence. And the difference is not just scale. A tradition can be rational in the sense of MacIntyre, that is, endowed with resources to recognize and resolve the crises themselves, and a member of it may not have effective access to any way in which these resources operate, because resources exist at the level of their theologians and not at the level of their parish. The condition proposed here is about the member, and therefore a rational tradition can harbor adherences that do not satisfy it, just as a tradition in crisis can harbor adherences that satisfy it.

The form of the condition, and not its content, comes from the epistemology of disagreement, and it is necessary to say exactly what is taken of it. What Christensen called Independence is the demand that, when assessing the epistemic credentials of those who disagree with me about P, I do not rely on the very reasoning that led me to believe in P, because doing so is presupposing, against those who disagree, exactly what is in dispute[53]. The principle is not adopted here, for one reason Pittard made clear in the religious domain itself: in its strong form, the demand for impartiality in relation to the reasons themselves is excessive, the cases that motivate it can be explained by weaker principles, and fundamental disagreements, as are religious ones, it cannot be satisfied without prejudice to the rationality of those who satisfy it.[54]. What is taken of Christensen is therefore something weaker than its principle: it is the motivation that sustains it, the perception that there is a form of epistemic self-protection that

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[52] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 213–216. Shils offers a sociological theory of the possibility of endogenous correction; MacIntyre, a philosophical theory of traditionally constituted rationality and epistemological crises. Both are taken in division of labor, without subordination to each other.

[53] CHRISTENSEN, David. Disagreement as evidence: the epistemology of controversy. Philosophy Compass, v. 4, n. 5, p. 756–767, 2009; CHRISTENSEN, David. Disagreement, question-begging and epistemic selfcriticism. Philosophers' Imprint, v. 11, n. 6, p. 1–22, 2011, whose summary formulates the requirement that the assessment of the credentials of disagreement be independent of the initial reasoning on the disputed matter. Christensen later reworded the principle in: Formulating independence. In: SKIPPER, Mattias; STEGLICH-PETERSEN, Asbjørn (org.). Higher-order evidence: new essays. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. p. 13–34.

[54] PITTARD, John. Disagreement, deference, and religious commitment. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020, where criticism is directed to the strong demand for impartiality of reasons and culminates in the defense of a weak reconciliationism. The dispute between Christensen and Pittard is left unadjudicated; Only Pittard's reason for not importing the principle is adopted in its strong form.

consists in reapplying the disputed reasoning as if it had already solved the question about its own reliability. From this motivation, a restriction of less scope is abstracted, proposed regardless of the impartiality requirements that Pittard discusses: the locally contested item cannot, without additional support, provide the decisive reason for disqualifying its challenge.

A second pressure, in the opposite direction, prevents this restriction from growing until it prohibits all self-reference, and it comes from Alston. Alston showed that a fundamental doxastic practice, whether sense perception, memory or mystical practice, cannot have its reliability certified from a point entirely external to it, and that the forms of self-sustaining in which it then relies are not by itself epistemologically vicious[55]. If circularity as such were faulty, everything would be defective, and the condition proposed here would fall along with everything else. It is useful, then, to separate three things that the word “circularity” usually confuses. There is constitutive dependence: I reason with a language, with categories, with practices and with a tradition that I have not created, and in this there is nothing problematic; it is what Shils and MacIntyre have established. There is global epistemic self-support: a fundamental practice inevitably uses some of its own products when assessing its reliability, and Alston shows why this cannot be simply prohibited. And there is the local adjudication that presupposes the dispute: P is precisely in dispute, and P, or the authority of P, is then used as a decisive reason to determine that the objection to P does not count. Only the third phenomenon is what the condition excludes. The decisive conclusion comes from the combination of the three sources, and it does not belong to any of them alone: there is no need to eliminate global dependence in order to ban a specific form of local circularity. The condition is built in the space that remains between four pressures, and each prevents it from deforming in one direction. Shils and MacIntyre prevent her from becoming an Archimedean; Alston prevents her from becoming anticircular; Christensen's motivation prevents her from becoming permissive; Pittard's criticism prevents her from becoming too strong a demand for impartiality to be satisfied. The adherent is not asked to come out of the circularity in which every connoisseur is. It is asked that, when P is in dispute, there is a way in which P is not the judge of himself.

There is a specific way of violating the condition that deserves a proper name, because it is the most characteristic form of institutionally sustained adherences and the most difficult to see from within. An institution can answer the doubt of a member not answering the doubt,

[55] ALSTON, William P. Perceiving God: the epistemology of religious experience. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991, on the epistemic circularity of doxastic practices and on the practical rationality of engaging in socially established practices. From Alston we take only the negative thesis that self-reference and self-support are not automatically disqualifying; nothing else of his epistemology of religious experience is assumed.

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but reclassifying those who doubt. Doubt comes to be read as a symptom of a condition of the member, and the condition, once attributed, decreases the epistemic strength of the doubt that revealed it. I call the Principle of Diagnostic Independence the restriction that prevents this movement from closing on itself:

> When an institution or authority assigns to the member a condition that would diminish the epistemic force of its doubt, this assignment cannot have as its sole or decisive justification the very occurrence of doubt or the assumption of what is being questioned.

The structure that the principle prohibits can be written only once, so that it is clear: if the doubt about P, Q(P), leads to the attribution of a defect D to the questioner, and D reduces the credibility of Q(P), but the only relevant evidence for D is the occurrence of Q(P), then the doubt was converted into evidence of its own inadmissibility, and the structure is circularly self-protective. An example without religion shows that the problem is not religious. An academic department that treats the doubt of a doctoral student about the dominant paradigm as a sign that he did not understand the paradigm, when the only evidence of misunderstanding is doubt, did exactly this movement; and a department that has other evidence of misunderstanding, such as the performance of the doctoral student in tasks that do not involve doubt, did not. The religious example has the same way: doubt reads as pride, as lack of grace, as temptation, when the only evidence of pride, lack of grace or temptation is doubt. What the principle does not prohibit is equally precise. He does not forbid the institution to have a theory of doubt, nor that this theory says that doubt can be temptation; a tradition that could not say that would not be a tradition. It does not prohibit the attribution of D when there is independent evidence of D. It does not even prohibit the content of P from entering into doubt assessment. It prohibits doubt, or the assumption of P, from doing alone the work justifying the attribution that disqualifies it.

The principle has a record. Abramson described, in the interpersonal plane, the structure in which the subject's doubt is converted into evidence of his lack of reliability, so that the more he doubts, the less his doubt counts; it is what she analyzes under the name gaslighting, and her analysis already contains the core of what is formulated here.[56]. Lifton, in describing ideological totalism, recorded under the heading of the doctrine about the person the mechanism by which the individual's experience is reinterpreted to fit in doctrine, and not the revised doctrine in light of experience[57]; and Nguyen's echo chamber is, on one of its faces, the institutionalization of the

[56] ABRAMSON, Kate. Turning up the lights on gaslighting. Philosophical Perspectives, v. 28, n. 1, p. 1–30, 2014. The Principle of Diagnostic Independence generalizes for the institutional plane a structure that Abramson identified in the interpersonal plane; generalization, not structure, is what is added.

[57] LIFTON, Thought reform and the psychology of totalism, cit., chap. 22. Lifton describes the extreme of the spectrum, and it does not generalize; it takes only the description of the mechanism.

pre-emptive discredit that the principle forbids. What the principle adds to these descriptions is not the structure, which they already know, but the normative diagnosis: identifying the trait that makes this specific modality of reclassification of doubt a violation of local independence. It is not the fact that the institution has a reading of doubt, nor the fact that this reading is unfavorable to the doubter; it is the fact that doubt is the only evidence of what disqualifies it. Other forms of capture of the examination pathway are possible; the principle characterizes only this. In the literature consulted there is no restriction of independence formulated for the relationship between an institution and the doubt of its own member; the closest works are those of Pittard, who discusses and criticizes Christensen's principle in religious disagreement between individuals, and those of Abramson and Nguyen, who describe the structure without referring to such a restriction.

A predictable objection seems to threaten the very form of the condition. If the autonomy of adherence requires a path of examination locally independent, will it not require the autonomy of this route a second way to examine it, and thus without end? The answer is in the local character. The condition does not ask that the path be justified from the beginning or that it is independent of everything; it asks that, in relation to P, it does not assume P. The way can rely on everything else that the adherent believes, and this is what Shils had in mind when writing that reasoned changes of belief "draw on previously existent and affirmed beliefs and such changes are the freest which the mind can make"[58]. The requirement that the path be founded at last would be the demand for a final foundation, and Albert showed that this requirement leads to an infinite regress, to the circle or arbitrary interruption, that is, that it is sickness and not healing.[59]. Not even Christensen's principle, in its strong form, asked for independence from all the subject's beliefs; it asked for it in relation to the reasoning in dispute, and the restriction adopted here calls for less than he. The regress only threatens those who confuse the local condition with a requirement for justification.

The condition has a precise range. It does not say if any particular adherence satisfies it; this depends on facts about the paths effectively accessible to a concrete adherent, and these facts require own diagnostic instruments. It makes the question of autonomy independent of P's truth, because it can be satisfied by adherences to true and false propositions, and violated by both. It is symmetrical, and it is valid for inherited religion, conversion, disconversion, and inherited atheism in the same way. And it leaves open, deliberately, three compatibilities that need to be established: whether an adherence can be examined without the assent being

[58] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 197.

[59] ALBERT, Traktat über kritische Vernunft, cit., chap. I (o trilema de Münchhausen).

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suspended, whether the examination can remain open while the change is postponed, and whether trust in an authority can coexist with local independence from it. If these three compatibilities cannot be shown, the condition will be met only by unstable adherences, which would make it useless for the problem that motivated it.

VI. Diagnostic instruments

The condition says without what an adherence cannot be attributed autonomously to those who maintain it, and it says this in terms of the structure of the examination pathways available to the adherent. It does not, however, say how it is observed, for a concrete adherent, whether such a path exists and whether it is effectively accessible. For this verification, some instruments are used, subject to the condition and without pretense to replace it. A minimum notation keeps the distinctions stable when they are resumed below.

Three infrastructures support one adherence, and the first has already been named. The plausibility infrastructure, which will be called S1, is the set of relationships, conversations, institutions and routines that subjectively maintain the world in which commitment makes sense; the term and theory are Berger and Luckmann, and the label only puts them beside the other two.[60]. The practical implementation infrastructure, S2, is the set of practices, rituals, forms of teaching, frequencies and habits by which adherence remains incorporated into conduct, and not only in belief; Shils described the transmission of patterns of action as the core of what a tradition transmits[61], and James showed why a living adherence is alive by the affections and practices that sustain it, and not only for the reasons that support it. It is essential not to treat S1 and S2 as independent causal modules. The same process often occupies the two: the weekly liturgy makes the world plausible and incorporates commitment into practice in one act, and a study community does the same by other means. The distinction is analytical, and serves to ask two different things about the same fact, not to suppose two facts.

The third infrastructure is the one that matters to the condition. The infrastructure of examination, S3, is the set of capacities, relationships, sources and practices by which adherence itself can become an object of examination: the ability to formulate doubt and sustain it without collapse, the people with whom it can be talked about, the sources that can be consulted and the practices, internal or external to the tradition, in which the examination takes place. The threshold form of the condition imposes a discipline in the use of this instrument: S3

[60] BERGER; LUCKMANN, The social construction of reality, cit.; BERGER, The sacred canopy, cit.

[61] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 12–13.

is not a quantity. You don't ask how much examination an adherent has, nor if he has enough, because these questions reintroduce the scale without a cutoff point that the condition refused. It is asked whether there is, in S3, at least one route that satisfies the condition, i.e. an effectively accessible way in which the relevant reasons can be considered without their admissibility or their force depending on assuming the commitment or authority locally in dispute. An S3 rich in paths that all presuppose the commitment does not satisfy the condition; a poor S3 with only one route that satisfies it satisfies it. The Principle of Diagnostic Independence is the instrument to recognize a particular mode of failure of S3, the one in which doubt is converted into evidence of the defect that disqualifies it; other failures are possible, and S3 is open to them.

The effective accessibility clause requires a proper instrument, and this is where the relational thesis shows its scope. It is called extrinsic burden to examine, Oe, the set of social, institutional, economic or relational consequences of asking, reading, researching, talking, confronting or doubting: what happens to someone, in your community, asking a question, reading a book, looking for an outside interlocutor, expressing hesitation. And it is called the extrinsic burden of changing or leaving, Os, which falls upon the agent if he effectively alters or abandons adherence: the loss of relations, position, belonging, means of life, recognition. Both are extrinsic, that is, imposed by social conditions and not by the nature of examination or change; and they are different, although the discussion about autonomy and habitual belonging confuses them. Oe is what determines whether an S3 pathway is effectively accessible: a path that exists, but whose use is prohibitive for that adherent, does not count for the condition. Os, by contrast, does not enter into the condition; it serves a secondary diagnosis, important for other questions, but not for this one.[62].

The two burdens need to be distinguished because they vary independently, and the two crossed cases show what is at stake. First, Oe is low and Os is high. A person belongs to a community where asking, reading, discussing and doubting are accepted practices, in which the confessor or pastor receives doubt as a matter of conversation rather than sanction, and in which the library, outsiders and theological formation are at hand; but leaving this community would mean losing the family, work and place in the world. The adherence of this person can satisfy the condition, because there is an accessible route of examination, and it can satisfy it even

[62] The literature on realistic exit rights is the closest neighbour to this distinction, and its central concern is with Os and the ability to conceive the exit: OKIN, Susan Moller. “Mistresses of their own destiny”: group rights, gender, and realistic rights of exit. Ethics, v. 112, n. 2, p. 205–230, 2002; KUKATHAS, The liberal archipelago, cit. OSHANA, Personal autonomy in society, cit., deals with the external conditions of autonomy, including the availability of options. In this literature there is no explicit distinction between the burden of examining and leaving as two independent axes; the distinction is proposed here, and the proximity to the debate on exit is declared.

though the exit is almost unthinkable. In the second case, Oe is high and Os is low. A person maintains a loose affiliation, that he could walk away without anyone noticing and without relevant loss; but within him the question is read as disloyalty, reading from outside is discouraged and hesitation is treated as a symptom. The exit is free and the examination is not, and the adherence of that person may not satisfy the condition, although she could abandon it tomorrow. The two cases show something decisive: freedom of exit is not freedom of examination. Legal religious freedom protects the exit, and protects it formally; it does not protect, nor could it protect, the examination, whose burden is imposed by structures that the legal standard does not achieve. The distinction between legal freedom and autonomy of adherence is therefore not only conceptual: it corresponds to two different burdens, and the norm only touches one of them.

The instruments are symmetrical. S1, S2 and S3 describe both the parish and the community of former members, both the religious family and the family that has their theory of who comes to believe, both the tradition and the academic department; and Oe and Os describe the burden that any belonging imposes. What the instruments allow us to say, for a concrete adherent, is whether there is an accessible and locally independent examination path, and not whether adherence is true, justified, legitimate or authentic. And leave intact a risk already announced. If the condition could only be met by unstable adherences, by adherents who suspend assent whenever they examine, who change whenever they doubt and refuse any authority that they cannot audit, then it would not be a condition on the autonomy of adherence, but a preference disguised by the unattached subject. It remains to be shown that it is not.

VII. Examinability, assent, and immanent critique

The risk is real, and the most honest way to face it is not to argue abstractly that the condition is compatible with stability, postponement and authority, but to show it within a tradition that has itself elaborate grammars of examination, doubt, assent, authority and review. The method is that of immanent criticism. It comes from MacIntyre, to whom the rationality of a tradition is shown in the ability to examine it by its own criteria.[63], and in the sociological record of Shils, for whom the perception of defects of a tradition can be part of the tradition itself[64]. The novelty lies in applying this method not to the relationship between traditions, which

[63] MACINTYRE, WHOSE JUSTICE? Which rationality? XVIII; MACINTYRE, Epistemological crises, dramatic narrative and the philosophy of science, cit.

[64] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 213–216.

is the unity of MacIntyre, but to the relationship between the member and his adherence. The chosen tradition is Catholic, for a practical reason: in it three very different texts with very different statuses, the rules of discernment of Ignatius of Loyola, the Apology of Newman and the Dei Filius constitution of Vatican I, offer three distinct grammars of what it is to examine without doubting, doubt without changing and assent under authority. Simplifying them in an opposition between "open" and "closed" would be losing exactly what they teach. It is not a question of evaluating Catholic tradition, but of showing that the same tradition contains more than one grammar, which allows us to analyze institutional practices without imposing an outside liberal model of the subject.

The first result is that examination is not equivalent to suspension of assent, and Newman is the one who establishes it. In the last chapter of Apology, in describing his position since 1845, he writes the phrase that later tradition quoted until exhaustion and which deserves to be read in what he says: "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt, as I understand the subject; difficulty and doubt are incommensurate"[65]. The phrase does not say that difficulties should not be examined; it says that the examination of a difficulty and doubt about assent are things of different orders, and Newman's life, which spent decades examining difficulties of every kind before and after conversion, shows that incommensurability is not an excuse not to examine, but the condition for one to examine without each difficulty becoming a crisis. In the Essay on the grammar of assent, Newman drew up the basis of this distinction: assent is an unconditional act, not the conditional conclusion of an inference, so that the weakness of a particular inference does not itself transfer its weakness to assent, which is based on convergence of reasons and not on a chain[66]. The consequence is precise. A person can examine deep difficulties about his adherence, consider the reasons against him in a way where these reasons are not previously emptied, and not suspend assent; and he can do so not for lack of honesty, but because the grammar of assent is not the grammar of inference. Therefore, adherence can be stable and examineable at the same time, and the condition of local independence, which only asks for the existence of a pathway, is satisfied by this person as much as by what, in the same way, comes to doubt. Stability is not an indication of capture, and instability is not an indication of autonomy; what decides is the path, not the result.

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[65] NEWMAN, John Henry. Apologia pro vita sua. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908 [1865], chap. V ("Position of my mind since 1845"), p. 239. Newman adds, in the following sentence, that he speaks of difficulties intrinsic to doctrines and their mutual relations, and not just difficulties in evidence.

[66] NEWMAN, John Henry. An essay in aid of a grammar of assent. London: Burns, Oates, and Co., 1870, above all the distinction between assent and inference and analysis of certainty. The Newmanian theory of certainty is not adopted; only the distinction between difficulty and doubt is taken.

The second result is that suspending the change does not mean suspending the examination, and Ignatius of Loyola establishes it with a sharpness that philosophy rarely achieves. Among the rules of discernment of spirits for the first week of Exercises, the fifth and sixth deal with what to do in desolation. The fifth prescribes that "en tiempo de desolación nunca hacer mudanza, mas estar firme y constante en los propósitos y determinación en que estaba el día antecedente a la tal desolación"; the sixth adds that, "dado que en la desolación no debemos mudar los primeros propósitos, mucho aprovecha el intenso mudarse contra la misma desolación, así como es en instar más en la oración, meditación, en mucho examinar"[67]. What Ignatius recommends is not to close the exam while desolation lasts; it is the opposite, to intensify it, and to postpone only the decision to change. Three things that the discussion of autonomy usually treat as one are separated here: the suspension of change, which Ignatius prescribes; the suspension of assent, on which the rule says nothing; and the suspension of examination, which the rule forbids. The rule is therefore an internal examination route, and satisfies the condition if, in the intensification of the examination it prescribes, the reasons considered do not have their strength emptied by assuming the compromise. And here comes something that the immanent method allows to see and that an external reading would lose. The same rule can be used in two ways. It can be used as Ignatius writes it, to keep the examination open while postponing change, and in this use the theory of desolation that underlies it is a theory of affective state, which recommends not deciding under it. But it can also be used in another way, reading desolation itself as evidence that the doubt that accompanies it is false, so that the occurrence of doubt, reclassified as desolation, becomes the reason for disqualifying it; and this use is exactly the structure that the Principle of Diagnostic Independence forbids. The rule doesn't decide which of the two uses a community will make of it. What it shows is that the distinction between the use that keeps the path open and what closes it is not a distinction between tradition and its exterior, but an internal distinction to tradition, formulable in its terms.

The Dei Filius constitution, promulgated by Vatican Council I on 24 April 1870, is the third text, and functions not as a symmetrical third case, but as a limit case that tests the principle. In the third chapter, on faith, the text states that it is not equal to the condition of those who adhered to the Catholic truth by the heavenly gift of faith and that of those who,

[67] IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA. Spiritual exercises, rules to feel and know the various motions, first week, rules 5 and 6 [318–319]; Spanish autograph text according to ARZUBIALDE, Santiago. Ejercicios espirituales de S. Ignacio: historia y análisis. Bilbao: Mensajero; Santander: Sal Terrae, 1991. In the English translation of Elder Mullan (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1914): "In time of desolation never to make a change; but to be firm and constant in the resolutions and determination in which one was the day preceding such desolation"; "Although in desolation we ought not to change our first resolutions, it is very helpful intensely to change ourselves against the same desolation, as by insisting more on prayer, meditation, on much examination".

taken by human opinions, follow a false religion, “illi enim, qui fidem sub Ecclesiae magisterio susceperunt, nullam umquam habere possunt iustam causam mutandi, aut in dubium fidem eandem revocandi”; and the sixth canon on faith anathematizes those who say that the condition of the faithful and those who have not yet reached the true faith is equal, “ita ut catholici iustam causam habere possint, fidem, quam sub Ecclesiae magisterio iam susceperunt, assensu suspenso in dubium vocandi, donec demonstrationem scientificam credibilitatis et veritatis fidei suae absolverint”[68]. Read for what it says, the text does not forbid examination and does not name difficulties. What it denies is that there is a just cause for changing the faith received or to question it, and the canon specifies the target with a precision that a hasty reading loses: what is condemned is the thesis that the Catholic may have a just cause to put faith in doubt with suspended consent, until he concludes a scientific demonstration of his credibility and truth. The grammar of Dei Filius is therefore a grammar of assent and just cause, not a grammar of examination; it is closer to Newman, for whom difficulty is no doubt and assent does not wait for demonstration, than for a prohibition of examining. And it is, at the same time, stronger than Ignatius, because Ignatius postpones the change by reason of affective state and Dei Filius denies the just cause in general. That is why it is the limit case. If the text is read as denying in advance to those who received the faith any just cause of doubt, it seems the clearest candidate for a violation of the Principle of Diagnostic Independence. The answer is that the text attributes the impossibility of just cause to the objective condition of the faithful, the gift of faith received under the teaching, and not the fact that he doubts. The structure in which doubt is the evidence of the defect that disqualifies it is not in the text; the assignment is made not to the doubter for doubting, but to the faithful for being faithful, and what the text says of those who doubt is that doubt has no just cause, which is a thesis on doubt and not a reclassification of those who feel it. This structure may, however, be present in pastoral uses of the text, when the absence of a just cause is converted into a diagnosis of who claims one, and it is the distinction between text and use that avoids both antireligious criticism and apology here. If the theological reception of the chapter authorizes this reading is an open issue; what is sustained is only that the Principle of Diagnostic Independence allows precisely formulating where the border would be.

The third result is that the recognized authority does not equal the authority that captures the means of its own review, and the epistemology of trust establishes it. Foley has shown that

[68] VATICAN CONCILIUM I. Constitutio dogmatica Dei Filius, 24 Apr. 1870, chapter 3 and canon 6 of fide; Latin text according to the edition of the Holy See (vatican.va), corresponding to DH 3014 and DH 3036 (DENZINGER, Heinrich; HÜNERMANN, Peter. Compendium of symbols, definitions and statements of faith and morals. São Paulo: Paulinas; Loyola, 2007). The incipit of the passage of Chapter 3 is “Quocirca minime par est conditio eorum..”.

trust in others derives from self-confidence: if I trust my faculties, and recognize that others' are similar to mine, I have reason to trust others, and that reason is not a concession of autonomy, but a consequence of it.[69]. Zagzebski went further and argued that epistemic authority, when rationally recognized, has preemptive force: the fact that authority believes that P replaces my reasons for believing that P rather than adding to them, and this is rational when my own reflective trust in me recognizes that I will more likely believe the truth by following authority than judging on my own.[70]. These theses seem, at first sight, incompatible with the condition of local independence, because a preemptive authority is an authority whose reasons the member does not weigh. They're not. What Zagzebski requires is that preemption itself be founded on first-person reasons, in the reflective assessment that the subject makes of the reliability of authority from the trust he has in himself, and these reasons the authority does not control. This is exactly local independence: the way in which authority is assessed does not presuppose authority. Pathology is not in relying, either in preemptively deference, or in recognizing that authority knows more than the member; it is in the case that all the effectively accessible ways of evaluating authority depend circularly on that same authority, so that the only reason to trust is the one authority provides over itself. A tradition that teaches its members to recognize the authority of the magisterium by history, coherence, fruits and testimony of people that the member has his own reasons for respect left open a locally independent path; one that teaches that the only reason to recognize the magisterium is what the magisterium says about it closed. And the distinction, once again, is internal: Catholic tradition itself distinguishes the reasons for credibility, which are reasons accessible to those who do not yet believe, from the act of faith, and this distinction is a way of evaluating authority that does not presuppose it.

The condition is therefore compatible with stable adherence, because examining difficulties is not to suspend the assent; it is compatible with postponement of change, because suspending the change is not to suspend the examination; and it is compatible with trust in authorities, because recognizing an authority is not to give it the means to evaluate it. None of these compatibilities were obtained by importing an external model of the subject into tradition; all were obtained from grammars that the tradition itself elaborated, and the immanent method is what allows us to say that the condition does not secretly favor the skeptic, unstable or unlinked subject. However, it has not been shown that the examined tradition, or any other

[69] FOLEY, Richard. Intellectual trust in oneself and others. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[70] ZAGZEBSKI, Linda Trinkaus. Epistemic authority: a theory of trust, authority, and autonomy in belief. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, on the preemptive thesis and its justification from epistemic self-confidence.

tradition, actually satisfies the condition for its members; this depends on how grammars are used, and Ignatius' rule shows that the same grammar admits the use that keeps the path open and what closes it.

VIII. Sources and contribution

Gathering the sources, you can see where each one works. The description of the situated subject comes from James: living and dead hypotheses, passional nature as a factor of belief, authority of the intellectual climate and faith in the faith of another. From Shils comes tradition as a traditum transmitted between generations, the prior configuration and normativity of what is transmitted, the traditionality of reason itself, the restricted autonomy of the individual and, with equal weight, the sociological possibility of endogenous correction. From Berger and Luckmann, the plausibility structures. From Spinoza, and only this, the thesis that affections belong to the same causal order in which judgment is formed and the grammar of activity and passivity as causal gradation. From Christman, Mele, Mackenzie, Stoljar and Oshana, historical and relational autonomy, with the thesis that heteronomous origin does not imply heteronomous maintenance, and, from Mele, Beth's case and the objection of manipulation. From MacIntyre, rationality constituted by tradition, epistemological crises, internal criteria and immanent criticism. From Alston, the negative thesis that self-sustaining doxastic practices is not by itself vicious. From Christensen, the anti-question-begging motivation of the principle of Independence, not the principle; from Pittard, the reason not to import it in strong form. From Lifton, Albert and Nguyen, the descriptions of sacred science, immunization and the echo chamber. From Newman, the incommensurability between difficulty and doubt; from Ignatius, the rule of not changing in desolation and intensifying the examination; from Zagzebski and Foley, the compatibility between trust in authorities and rationality. And Abramson, the interpersonal structure in which the subject's doubt is converted into evidence of his lack of reliability.

Integration is the foreground in which there is something new, and it undergoes a test: each link of the chain must do what the previous one did not do, and none must be able to be removed without loss. James and Shils fix the explanation, and without them the question of autonomy would not have an object; Christman, Mele and relational autonomy show why the explanation does not decide the question, and without them would be confused causally with heteronomy; the objection of manipulation, in its socially mediated form, shows why the procedural response is not enough, and without it the argument would stop in reflective

appropriation; the institutional form of religious adherence shows why the objection is here especially relevant, and without it the problem would be generic; MacIntyre, Alston, Christensen and Pittard give the condition their form, between four pressures, and without any of them the condition would deform in a direction; diagnostic instruments make the condition applicable to concrete cases, and without them would be on paper; and the immanent criticism shows that the condition is not a disguised preference for the unattached subject, and without it the condition would be suspicious. In the literature consulted is not found this chain mounted for the problem of religious adherence; the novelty lies in the articulation, rather than in the pieces.

The second plan is the transposition of a restriction of independence into the relationship between an institution and the doubt of its own member, and modesty here is mandatory. Christensen's principle has not been transposed; his motivation has abstracted a weaker restriction, that the locally contested item cannot, without additional support, provide the decisive reason for disqualifying its challenge, formulated for the institutional case as the Principle of Diagnostic Independence. In the literature consulted, there is no restriction of independence formulated for this relationship. The nearest neighbors are four: Pittard and Bogardus, who discuss Christensen's principle and disagreement with the skeptic in the religious domain, between individuals, and not in the relationship between institution and member[71]; Nguyen, whose echo chamber describes the preemptive discredit of external sources, and not the reclassification of internal doubt; and Abramson, whose analysis of gaslighting contains, in the interpersonal plane, the structure that the principle generalizes for the institutional plane. What is added to Abramson is the generalization and normative diagnosis, that is, the identification of the trait that makes this mode of reclassification of doubt a violation of local independence; the psychological structure is hers.

The third level is that of partial results, and there are four, each with its status. The first, of which examination does not equal the suspension of assent, is an application of Newman to the vocabulary of autonomy: the distinction between difficulty and doubt is his, and what is worth to the assent goes, mutatis mutandis, for examination. The second, that the burden of examining does not amount to the burden of leaving, is proposed as a result of itself; the debate on realistic exit rights is its neighbour, and there is no explicit distinction between the two axes. The third, of which recognized authority does not equal the capture of the review pathway, is a Zagzebski synthesis with the echo chamber thesis; they are the formulation in terms of the

[71] PITTARD, Disagreement, deference, and religious commitment, cit.; BOGARDUS, Tomas. Disagreeing with the (religious) skeptic. International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, v. 74, n. 1, p. 5–17, 2013.

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revision pathway and the exact location of the pathology. The fourth, that the global dependence of a tradition is compatible with the demand for local independence, results from the junction of theses that Alston, MacIntyre, Shils and Christensen formulated separately and for other problems; what is claimed is the junction, in the problem of adherence. The reading of the three Catholic grammars is a result of organization, not of doctrine: nothing that Ignatius, Newman and Dei Filius say is new discovery, and what has been shown is that one tradition contains more than one grammar of examination.

IX. Objections

The first objection resumes manipulation at the point where it remained, and is the most serious. If reflection can be shaped by structure, it can also be the very path of examination locally independent: the tradition that forms the member can also form the way in which he will examine tradition, and then the condition is satisfied by a path that the structure has installed. The answer has two parts. The first is that the condition does not ask for the route to be of independent origin; it asks that, in it, the admissibility and strength of the reasons do not depend on assuming the item in dispute. The genealogy of the pathway is irrelevant if the test is satisfied, for the same reason that heteronomous origin does not imply heteronomous maintenance; a path installed by tradition, in which reasons against tradition can count, is a way that satisfies the condition. The second part is a concession. A structure that installs the route and, at the same time, controls what counts in it as a relevant reason violates the condition, and there is no independent criterion here for all cases that tells when the control occurs. There is a local test with a recognizable structure, that of the Principle of Diagnostic Independence, and of the admission that, outside this structure, the distinction between the path that tradition left open and to which it only seems to have left remains gradual.

The second objection is the return: to know if the path is locally independent, another way would be needed to examine it, and so without end. The answer is already in the form of the condition, and it comes down to the local and finite character of the requirement: the condition is about P, and not about everything, and the path can be based on everything else that the adherent believes, as Shils wanted by calling the rationalized changes more free from the already stated[72]. To demand that the path be founded in a final way would be to demand a final foundation, with the trilemma that Albert described[73]. The return only threatens those who

[72] SHILS, Tradition, cit., p. 197.

[73] ALBERT, Traktat über kritische Vernunft, cit., chap. I.

confuse the local restriction with a demand for justification, and the restriction adopted calls for less than Christensen's own principle, which never asked for independence from all the subject's beliefs.

The third objection is MacIntyrean, and it comes from the opposite side: if there are no patterns of rationality outside traditions, local independence is an illusion, because every route of examination is internal to some tradition and presupposes its criteria. The answer is that the condition does not require neutrality, and that MacIntyre is his ally and not his adversary. The paths examined, Ignatius' rule, Newman's distinction, the reasons for credibility, are all internal to Catholic tradition, and satisfy the condition if, in them, the item in dispute does not do all the justifying work. The very Macintyrean notion of epistemological crisis presupposes that a tradition can recognize, by its criteria, that its resources have failed; if this is possible, local independence is possible, because that is exactly what it is. What the condition adds to MacIntyre is the unit of analysis: a tradition can have the resources for its own crisis and a member may not have access to them.

The fourth objection is that of legitimate authority. Religion involves, by nature, authority, and a condition requiring that every authority be auditable by the member would be a condition that no tradition satisfies and which, moreover, confuses autonomy with refusal to grant. The answer is the third result: trust in authorities, including Zagzebski's preemptive deference, is compatible with the condition, provided that the way in which authority is assessed does not presuppose authority; pathology is the capture of all ways of evaluation, not confidence. A tradition that distinguishes reasons of credibility from the act of faith has left open a locally independent path, and has done so on its own terms.

The fifth objection is that of the inevitable burden of belonging. Every belonging makes the way out costly, and the family, the nation and the profession do so as much as religion; a condition that would support it would not distinguish anything. The objection is correct, and that is why the burden of leaving does not serve as a criterion. Onus to examine and burden of leaving were distinguished precisely so that the second, inevitable, does not contaminate the condition; what enters it is the first, which determines the effective accessibility of the path. An adherence that can only be left at the cost of huge losses can satisfy the condition, and an adherence that can be left without any loss can violate it.

The sixth objection is the hardest, and the answer to it is the shortest. The line between influence and capture is undetermined; all training influences the means of examination, and to say when the influence becomes capture seems to require exactly the general criterion that one does not have here. This criterion is neither offered nor promised. What is offered is a local test

with a recognizable structure, that of doubt converted into only evidence of the defect that disqualifies it, and admits that, outside this structure, the distinction remains gradual. It is worth noting that the literature also does not have the criterion: Cassam, when treating the closure of the mind as epistemic vice, and Nguyen, when distinguishing the echo chamber from the bubble, describe structures without offering a general rule that tells where the influence ends[74]. What can be said is that, for the particular mode of capture that the principle identifies, the distinction is clear, and for the others, it is a diagnostic task case by case, with diagnostic instruments, not definition.

Conclusion

The question was to what extent a legally free religious adherence can be autonomously attributed to the individual, since his formation and maintenance depend on conditions which he did not produce, and the answer is proportional to what could be demonstrated. First, the question survives the concession that all adherence is situated, because being caused is not heteronomous, and the literature of historical and relational autonomy had already established it. Second, the response of this literature, the non-alienated reflective appropriation, is insufficient in the socially mediated form of the objection of manipulation, not because it is false, but because it responds to a genealogical problem and not to the problem of examination, which is what arises when adherence and the capacity to examine it were constituted by the same process. Thirdly, a necessary, local and threshold-shaped condition is formulable for this problem, and it can be built without asking for the independence that no one has, without dissolving on a non-cut scale, without prohibiting the self-reference that every doxastic practice requires and regardless of a requirement of too strong impartiality to be satisfied. Fourth, immanent criticism shows that the condition is compatible with stable adherence, with postponement of change and trust in authorities, so that it does not favor the skeptical, unstable or unattached subject.

The limits are equally clear. It has not been shown that any specific adherence, nor any tradition, satisfies the condition for its members; this depends on how the grammars of which a tradition has are effectively used, and Ignatius' rule shows that the same grammar admits the use that keeps the path open and what closes it. A general criterion that distinguishes influence from capture was not offered, but only a local test for a recognizable modality. The problem of

[74] CASSAM, Quassim. Vices of the mind: from the intellectual to the political. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019; NGUYEN, Echo chambers and epistemic bubbles, cit.

manipulation was not solved, and cases of direct implantation remain where the literature has them. And it was not said when an adherence is autonomous, but only without what it cannot be attributed autonomously to those who hold it. The initial distinction is, in the end, more precise than it was: legal religious freedom protects the exit, and protects it formally; the autonomy of adherence depends on the examination, whose burden the norm does not reach and whose paths the very structure that forms the adherence can open or close. When can a social, affective and traditionally formed religious adherence be autonomously attributed to the individual? Not when he begat it for himself, nor when it survived any reflection, but only if it exists, for him, at least one way in which adherence is not the judge of itself.

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