

José Corral

# **SURVIVAL AND ALTRUISM**

*A Universal Principle of Ethics*



**LETRAS DE AUTOR**

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# Preface for the English version

From the moment of the publication of *Supervivir amando* in its Spanish original version in October 2016 until the writing of this preface in April 2017 I have hand delivered a little bit over a hundred of this books to a variety of college educated friends and other experts. And I have discussed these matters in several forums. I had already presented my ideas in lieu of an even previously released book called *Supervivir. Ideas para una ética universal*, also in Spanish.

It was my main intention, when producing this body of work, to weigh up the three hypothesis outlined and carried out in this volume. So far I haven't been able to get any expert to *irrefutably* give an opinion on the falseness or truthfulness of these ideas.

The biology scholar Ernst May said, as I point out in the introduction, that new concepts take a long time to be accepted and that those not said in English don't

even exist. That's the reason of this translation, to widen the range of diffusion of my ideas and shorten the time of contrast and eventual acceptance.

What I ask of my English speaking readers, as I've done with the Spanish ones, is to contact me publicly or privately and express freely what they make of these thoughts of mine. And, at the same time, help me spread them widely if true and useful. I'll be grateful for any opinion either way.

For any further communication, please contact this email address.

*José Corral*

Madrid, 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2017

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# **INTRODUCTION**

This work is a revised summary of two previous writings, published in January and December 2015 under the titles: *El mandato ético universal. Ideas para contrastar* (*The Universal Ethical Order. Ideas to Examine*), and *Supervivir: Ideas para una ética universal* (*Survival. Ideas for a Universal Code of Ethics*). Here I shall comment briefly on the author and his work.

## **The Author and His Readers**

I was born in 1941 in Zaragoza, where I did a degree in business studies. I began working in banking and in 1962 I moved to Bilbao to expand my studies in economy. I continued to work in banking in Bilbao, La Coruña, Bilbao again and Madrid, until I retired from management in 2001. I continued as a member of the Board until 2006, and then again from 2011 to 2013. I am married, and my wife and I have three children and two grandchildren.

My studies and professional activity have been focused on the commercial and financial sectors, and the only specialized studies I have received in the areas covered in this book were university courses in Philosophy and Sociology of Economics. I mention this so my readers will not expect specialized language and terminology, and so that you, dear reader, may understand and overlook any omissions or inaccuracies you may discover.



I have written with the following readership in mind:

a) Professors and experts in biological sciences and humanities: anthropology, sociology, philosophy, history, etc.

b) Religious and civil authorities, politicians, business leaders, communicators and spokespersons.

c) People like you, dear reader, and like me, who may or may not fall into the previous categories but who are interested in these points in question.

As I have mentioned, I am but an aficionado of these theses, but it is the third time that I have written about them, and I feel I have attained a certain degree of rigor and clarity which will allow me to be understood by the three groups outlined above. Yet you may encounter omissions or oversights as you read, and I ask that if this is the case, to please advise me.

## **Ideas and Background**

This book is a condensed account of three ideas, hypotheses or conjectures:

*1<sup>st</sup> idea* – What I consider to be the *basic idea*, which can be explained as follows: Like all known species of living beings, our own, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, functions according to the *primary vital purpose of surviving* and the imperative duty to try. The vital purpose and the imperative obligation to try to achieve this is implicit in all men.

*Note: Unless otherwise specified, I use the term “man” according to the first definition of the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (DRAE): “Rational, living being, male and female,” as well as a synonym of “person”: an individual of the human species. End of note.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> idea* – As we belong to a social species, a broad group altruism (instinctive, reciprocal, gratuitous, pure, onerous, selfish...) has been, and is, the most efficient and *effective* way to try to ensure the survival of the species with the greatest degree of well-being.

*3<sup>rd</sup> idea* – If the foregoing ideas are true, we can infer from them a *universal principle of ethics*, which can be stated as: *Is Good/Better, when done altruistically, that which is Good/Better for the survival of the species.*

*Background:* In 1985 I jotted down an idea in my notebook, which stated that our obligation as human beings was, at the very least, to try to save our species. To achieve this, our most critical task was to find the means to convey all possible life to other *livable* places, and to preserve the inhabitability of Earth until we managed to accomplish this task. At that time I was deeply involved with credit and risk management at my bank, and the idea just sat there, gathering dust, until September 2000 when I wrote an 8-page note with the title: *The Vital Imperative. Ideas for a Universal Code of Ethics.*

In that note I fleshed out the *basic idea*, which seemed vital to me because if the idea turned out to be true, it could serve as the foundation for a universal code of ethics, as it set out the primary goal or purpose of Man as a living being. At the same time I was quite surprised to find that, although this was an idea that has been widely sought after by philosophers of every generation and a concept that was so evident and important to me, it had not yet been discovered and examined by scholars and politicians. As I was going to be semi-retiring in several months' time, I resolved to dedicate the rest of my life to studying and developing the idea.

In the years between 2000 and 2013 I tried to read everything that might bear some relation to the basic idea and its background, shouldering the twists and turns that could be expected from my other duties as a semi-retired ex-banker, and in particular due to my scarce prior knowledge of the subject matter.

In 2013 I took the decision to prepare a summary of everything I had discovered, and in January 2015 a print run of 52 promotional copies of *El mandato ético universal. Ideas para contrastar (The Universal Ethical Order. Ideas to Examine)*, was released. It was a 283-page *thing*, and I distributed some 30 copies to philosophers and lay university colleagues. Their comments were limited to incidental or minor criticisms of form, but for different reasons they did not openly support my ideas.

I continued investigating and writing and in December 2015 commissioned the publication of 200 copies of a 367-page tome entitled *Supervivir. Ideas para una ética universal*) *Survival. Ideas for a Universal Code of Ethics*). In 2016 I distributed some 90 copies and I have tried to explain and confirm my ideas in talks and encounters with experts. They have hinted at several reservations regarding form and other marginal aspects, which I have addressed and corrected. Some experts in natural sciences have expressed their approval of the basic idea, with some *technical* misgivings regarding altruism and ethics.

And with this, I continue to believe that these ideas are absolutely essential, and if proven to be true would fill an enormous gap in the history of life and evolution, and another, no less important, in the grounds of a universal set of morals. No common ethical foundation exists at this level, which is why we continue to see partial norms and values whose precepts are not fulfilled because they are not universally accepted.

Here I might comment the lesson of a sergeant to his new recruits, explaining the law of gravity. He told them, “*According to Mr. Newton, things fall to the ground because of the law of gravity.*” He then added, “*And without the law of gravity, they would fall by the nature of their own weight.*” I think the vital imperative is quite similar: it is the priority of our species and of all other species to try, and to continue trying, to

survive, just as we always have, although we have as yet been unable to comprehend and explain the law that commands us to do so.

## **Remarks and an Appeal to the Reader**

As I have already mentioned, the work that you hold in your hands, dear reader, is my third attempt to validate and transmit my ideas in writing. I have endeavored to be briefer and more organized than on previous occasions, and I believe that this document contains sufficient information for you to understand and judge whether my hypotheses are truthful, valid and useful.

As you can see, these ideas are basic and crystal clear, at least to me, yet at the same time they are quite complex and far-reaching in their application and represent many changes in important concepts of the various disciplines they would affect. If you are an authority on the subject, I would ask that you approach a first reading through a multidisciplinary lens, and thereafter turn to your specialty to confirm those aspects that may so require.

I have always borne in mind the wise words of Ernst Mayr when he said, *“Non-scientists often naively assume that once a new scientific explanation or theory has been proposed, it will quickly be adopted. Actually,*

*[this has] occurred only very rarely.*” He goes on to say: “*Important work published in Russian, Japanese, or even non-English western European languages is likely to be widely neglected, if not ignored altogether.*” (Mayr 2016: 120-123). Although the date on my birth certificate tells me I don’t have much time left, I will try to be patient. And I will publish this work in English as well.

As I mentioned before, I did not search for these ideas; they came to me intuitively, as Popper assures is often the case (2008, 153). I am driven not by personal interest, but rather by a fundamental interest in the altruism I exhort and the satisfaction I gain from working with this fascinating subject. I would also like to contribute something useful to the world so that when my grandchildren are older, they can boast about their grandfather as compensation for the time that researching and writing these words has taken from my attentions towards them. I dedicate this in particular to Pablo, my youngest grandchild, who is seated with me as I write these lines.

All of this is to ask my readers to be benevolent in their judgments, and to aid in the task of confirming and transmitting these ideas, if they are deserving of such. I can assure you that anything that is done out of love and goodwill for this cause will make you a happier person.

The reader who has made it this far will by now understand what this is all about, and what follows is basically more of the same, so if your interest has not been piqued by what you have just read, I recommend you to stop here.

That's fair warning!

*J.C. Madrid, October 4, 2016*





# **THE BASIC IDEA**

# 1. Argument and Evidence

My basic idea is a conjecture or hypothesis which, in its condensed version, states: “*The primary purpose of the human species is to survive.*”

And a more extensive and expository version: “Like all known species of living beings, the species *Homo sapiens sapiens* has from the beginning been imprinted with the inherent *purpose of surviving and the vital imperative to try.*”

(DRAE: Imperative: 2. *Unavoidable duty or requirement.* Vital: 1. *Related or pertaining to life.* 2. *Of extreme importance or transcendence.*)

This idea is both elementary and evident to me, and I believe that it can be justified empirically through historical causality, as seems to be the case for biological hypotheses (Mayr: 2016, 83-84). In this case:

– According to the most recent scientific theories, since life has existed on Earth, all known species of living beings have had the *primary* purpose of living and *enduring*, i.e. they have tried to *survive*.

(DRAE: Endure: *To continue to exist, despite setbacks, difficulties or the passing of time.* Survive: 3. *To remain in time, to endure.*)

– To achieve this, each species has adopted different strategies and methods which have likewise been studied in detail by specialists.

– This consistent behavior of all known species leads us to infer that this universal and primary purpose of survival does indeed exist.

(DRAE: Universal: 2. *Of, relating to, or characteristic of all members of a species, without exception.*)

– I also understand that this hypothesis or theory is refutable if we apply Popper's concept (2008, 127), because although we can conceive of an observation or argument which could contradict it, no case exists to refute it.

– As far as we know, *Homo sapiens sapiens* is but another species of living beings, and as such, the species likewise has the vital imperative to try to survive, notwithstanding other *higher* or *transcendental* aims.

– Given this, I believe we can consider this hypothesis to be true and accurate.

This idea seems both elementary and evident, yet in the fifteen years that I have been researching it I have not come across a single person who has stated or applied the theory in this way, although indeed some have been very near to doing so. I feel that the originality of my hypothesis lies in merging two concepts which have been considered by others separately. These concepts are:

a) *To consider the species as a subject of survival.* Not genes, individuals, groups, or Life, although this may also be true. (DRAE: Subject: 4. *Something or someone written or spoken about.*)

b) *To consider survival as the primary vital purpose of the species.* Not growth, reproduction, evolution, progress, happiness, world peace, dignity, etc. , which can be considered *positive* but partial aims pertaining to a different category, and which are, in turn, means for achieving the vital purpose.

I shall speak further about these concepts and others in the next sections.

## 2. The Vital Imperative

I believe that there exists a vital imperative or obligation. When something occurs, there is usually a cause that originates it, and if all species and groups of living beings have behaved and continue to behave in the same way, it is clear that there exists a universal and constant cause or motive that originated and continues to sustain this behavior.

I think that both secular scientists and the Church agree that this imperative does indeed exist; the difference may lie in that scientists believe that this cause, or basic law, is part of a *natural* evolutionary process, with no outside intervention (Wilson: 2012, 70; Ruse: 2007, 108), and the Church maintains that the natural law that *ordered and regulates* evolution comes from an external God, creator and sustainer (Trigo: 2010).

There are differences of opinions as to whether or not a supreme lawmaker exists, but for our purposes,

these differences are of no consequence. An unavoidable duty –an imperative– exists, and I refer to it as *vital* in importance because it forms part of the basic laws or precepts which cause living beings to live. The precepts that prompt us to be born, breathe, eat, reproduce and raise offspring; that instruct us to live as individuals and to try to survive as a species.

This imperative is not an instinct. An instinct is an instrument generally associated with individual organisms, nor is it a force or *élan vital*, but rather an order, an imperative decree stemming from primal natural law.

Neither is it an end in itself. To endure, to survive – this is the purpose, and the imperative obligation is to try. We are unaware of the *what for*. Much has been examined and written on the study of the teleology of Life, and there are several possible responses, but there is no *single* answer. The only clear obligation is the endeavor to survive, for whatever design a Someone –if there is a Someone– wishes, or for whatever purpose Nobody –if nobody exists– decides. *Qui vivra verra* – only the future will tell (Jonas: 2000; Teilhard: 1968; Marías: 1995; Ruse: 2007; etc).

*It is an imperative obligation.* This obligation is an unavoidable necessity, a fundamental aspect. It is a primary, essential mandate. “*Highest or higher in importance, rank, privilege, time,*” is the definition given to the term *priority*.

In truth, the first obligation, preceding in both time and order, was to live. But once life was created, i.e. measuring from the first living being until our days, the first and foremost obligation for all living beings has been, and is, to preserve life, to endure, to survive.

And it is possible that the order to create *new* life may still exist on our planet, or in our universe, or in other universes if they exist. But that's a different issue. Here we refer solely to the obligation of currently existing species, and ours in particular.

*Note: Many non-believers are unsettled by the idea of a “mandate” or a “commandment” because it seems to call for the existence of a Creator, or an external Agent with a capital A. At the same time, theologians and philosophers who are among the faithful take issue with the word “species” in reference to humankind, because it seems to place man and animals in the same category. It seems to me that these phobias have hindered understanding between groups on issues that are essentially neutral and that admit both doctrines. End of note.*

Scientists seem to believe that life was initiated and is maintained by the nature of evolution itself through an intrinsic set of rules. If this is the case, the obligation or commandment arises with the first living being,

which could have lived for a time and then died without reproducing, had the mandate simply dictated the creation of sterile living beings.

But it seems that the same law or fortune that created life as we now know it, commanded the first living beings to continue living after birth, reproducing and doing whatever was necessary to ensure that their descendants also continued to live. And these same obligations or commandments would be broadened and enhanced through experience, and handed down through generations.

It is possible that new and unborn species have existed, frustrated living beings that were incapable of reproducing for one reason or another despite receiving the order to reproduce. But I believe that all species capable of reproducing have received the order to do so and have tried.

*The command for Mankind.* In our own species, the primary obligation may have become weakened or concealed by the predominance of the individual over the group and the species. This is a point that has been studied and put forth by scholars and educators in relation to the brain (Damasio: 2010).

It seems that the basic commandment was predominant and practically isolated in the primitive *brain* of the first living beings, but has gradually become weakened and *concealed* as brains have grown from the primitive stem, developing new areas that

have contributed with other mandates, guidelines and strategies which are greater in number the greater the degree of freedom and complexity that is exhibited by individuals and groups.

These adaptations of the brain have allowed for the development of social species and vice versa, from the rigorous and highly efficient social group order of hymenoptera to the sophisticated cultures of hominids. Man represents the utmost example with our ultimate freedom, and the predominance of the *autobiographical self* over the *self of the species* and the group *us*, as well as of the group over the species.

But the basic command, all but concealed and diminished by other self-centered and group mandates, remains in force. In our case it is increasingly more evident, starting with the moment the concept of Humanity and a global society came into existence (Morin: 2002,155; Ratzinger: 2011,30;etc.).

Notwithstanding, the purpose and the vital imperative have always been the same, while the strategies of adaptation to the evolutionary process as a means or vehicle have undergone the greatest transformation. It is important to distinguish between the end goal, the imperative and the means.

*Summary of the concept of imperative.* I believe that the idea of mandate, commandment or imperative, with the difficulty that inherently lies in translating the



language of Nature or of possible Gods into human terms, reflects the concept of an *order* that all living beings seem to have received telling us to preserve and transmit life. We can liken it to a relay race where each runner must hand over the baton to the next runner.

As Ortega reminds us in *La Rebelión de las masas (The Revolt of the Masses)* (1961, XIV, 2): “*The etymology of command conveys the notion of putting a load into someone’s hands.*” As a species, we (humankind) have collective life in our hands and are commanded to carry this load until such time as we transmit it to our descendants, endeavoring that they should do likewise.

But if someone does not agree with the idea of a mandate or command, he can disregard what he has read in this section and move directly to the purpose.

### **3. The Aim or Purpose**

The foremost or primary purpose of *Homo sapiens sapiens*, of humanity, is to endure, to survive: *To remain in time, to endure*, is the vital purpose of all species of living beings, including our own.

The idea is that when life emerged, it did so with this intrinsic primary vital purpose, and living organisms developed different methods and strategies in order to achieve this purpose. Even today, this purpose continues to be valid and effectual.

It is a constituent feature of all known theories of evolution. Scientists take it for granted, but they don't focus on it. It is obvious - so obvious, in fact, that without it there would be no history, no evolution. We would simply not exist. It seems to me that this is one of the main reasons why the basic idea has never been examined. The major world religions have ignored it as well, as they have *higher* and more transcendental purposes to attend to.

This concept is the foundation of the basic idea. It is the primary purpose, giving meaning to the partial objectives that each species has adopted as a means for attaining the ultimate goal, and which may at times be understood as global objectives.

We do not know whether it is an *ultimate teleological purpose*, if it is a *what for*, or if it responds to an ultimate *where are we going*. It is an instrumental goal, and necessary, but we do not know if it is sufficient. We are undoubtedly directed to live for a reason: to *progress* towards an undetermined goal; to evolve into a *superior* species; to move on to a more transcendent and determining life. We do not know, either rationally or scientifically, for what purpose we are instructed to endure.

In order to better understand this idea of the basic purpose and its priority, I shall mention some of the many partial goals that species in general, and ours in particular, attempt to fulfill, and which in many cases are means for achieving the basic purpose. In others,

they represent the sublimation or idealization of what initially were instrumental means or strategies. All are seen as primary purposes at different moments and in different cultures.

I first highlight *adaptability* for its importance, and because it is often overlooked despite the vital role it plays in the survival of the species. Adaptability is quite a difficult contract given the rapidity with which our environment is transformed and the relative slowness with which biological changes occur within a species. Regardless, we must consider the different measures of *human* time with respect to cosmic time, and the different theories on adaptive leaps and speciation. I shall now address, in lay terms, several other examples of partial goals.

*Adaptability.* A partial and strategic goal of all species is adaptability to the environment and to potential changes within that environment in at least two areas of focus:

(1) The ability to successfully manage changes in the environment (climate, pressure from other species, alterations brought on by catastrophes, etc.) without changing the species. This seems to be the case with many types of insects, prokaryotes and so on (Mayr: 2016, 215), and the strategies used by these species have been studied extensively. Man, on the other hand, is a peculiar example of adaptability, exhibiting cultural changes rather than genetic ones.

Yet our species, while still quite young, has been capable of making several adaptive genetic changes: general and less evident at first, and more group-oriented as the species has moved and spread around the world. These include physical aspects such as skin color, height, diet and resistance to disease, as well as cultural features reflected in our many technical abilities. Our behavioral rules have likewise evolved, both globally and by group.

It would seem that our adaptability –or our self-destruction– may be conditioned more by our cultural evolution than by biological changes, at least in the short term.

(2) The ability to create *new* species adapted to new environments and circumstances. This is the case of the thousands of species of ants we know today. It actually seems that the majority of known species, including our own, are adaptations of others. Man would be a unique case if we were ever capable of *artificially* creating one or more *new* human species, which now seems to be technically possible, or at least plausible.

Some experts posit that it is unlikely that other *post-human* species will naturally evolve from our own species. I believe there could be a peripatric speciation if a huge catastrophe were to vastly modify our habitat and only certain isolated peripheral populations were to survive. Likewise, if we are ever capable of creating

colonies of humans on other planets or in artificial habitats adapted to differing conditions.

But we shall not go into the concept of species here. I feel that what has been said thus far is valid for either a habit- or biological-based concept, and we shall use this to develop our idea. A large body of literature exists regarding this idea, although it is valid for other concepts as well.

*A higher or transcendent order.* Nearly all religions believe in a higher or transcendent order. These transcending goals tend to focus on the *eternal* survival of the individual, with certain commandments that must be followed in order to achieve this station.

The possible existence of these transcendent ends does not invalidate our basic purpose, nor the fact that this purpose is essential at a biological level. Generally speaking, the beliefs and goals of different religions tacitly accept this vital purpose as necessary, and their religious doctrines and precepts are akin to *natural* ones, therefore favoring compliance (Ruse: 2007; Trigo: 2010).

*Individual survival.* This is the operative vital purpose of each and every individual living being and organism, together with reproduction, and it is first and foremost reflected in the instinct of preservation or the “*set of response patterns that contribute to the preservation of the life of the individual and of the species*” (definition of “instinct” in the DRAE).

*Genetic survival.* This concept has been widely studied within the different theories of evolution, from the hypothesis of inclusive kin selection to the more modern ideas of group and multi-level selection. These goals have been widely debated and documented, and do not question or contravene the vital purpose of the survival of the species, but rather support it (Dawkins: 2002; Wilson: 2012,70-71; Gould: 2002).

*Evolution.* The evolutionary process can be seen as end in itself, and as part of this process, the idea of *progress* is generally considered as one of the goals that upholds it. These ideas have likewise been developed by sociologists, who have studied the history of living beings with great rigor and interest. I believe that the vital purpose we are suggesting is the idea that is lacking in the history of evolution, and that it resolves some of the issues that have arisen, among them the question of *naturalistic fallacy* (Udías: 2010; Wilson: 2012; Ruse: 2007; 2008;etc.).

*The “Ultimate Goal” of philosophers.* Good, with a capital G. The Best. The ultimate goal or crowning Good that man has searched for rationally since we have had the ability to think. As far as I know, no consensus has been reached as to its nature. It seems that Happiness –being happy– is the closest we have come to defining this concept (Marías: 1995).

*Note: I am not sufficiently prepared to be able to compare this concept with the goal of survival,*

*which is a task best left to the experts. I do suspect, however, that we can draft an outline of the “Ultimate Goal” of man on at least three different levels according to the ideas of the draftsman.*

*Level 1. Our goal for the survival of the species as a “material” aim. This level pertains to man, and coincides with all other living beings.*

*Level 2. A possible second level for man’s spiritual self, in addition to his material nature. Is it here wherein lies*

*Happiness? Wisdom? Individual or collective goals? The Progress of the species?*

*Level 3. A third level if man has transcendent or higher goals, most probably individual. Is this for all of humanity, according to Christians, a “redeemed” alliance?*

*In the edition of “Supervivir...” (Corral: 2015, 44), I suggest to a friend, an expert, that he study our species as a system, applying the modern theory of systems. And to another, an enthusiast of the philosophy of history, that he study the historical evolution of our species through the lens of our basic idea.*

*And I now entreat my readers who are professional philosophers to compare the primary vital purpose with the second-level ultimate goal or crowning good that is at the core of their specialty. Theologians from different religions will find the third level to be quite accessible. End of note.*

*Other aims or purposes.* We should now mention a few global aims that are of increasing prominence in our times, including those which appear in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the dignity of all people, peace, freedom and liberty, social justice, the eradication of hunger, the conservation of our natural environment, care for other living beings, sustainable development, care and conservation of water, etc.

All of these goals would seem to be good and desirable, but they are partial goals, and they are means that contribute to the attainment of our basic purpose.

*Summary.* We could write volumes on this basic idea, but I feel that what we have said is sufficient to clarify what I call the *primary vital purpose*.

I feel that the certainty of this concept is clear, as well as the need to state it explicitly. It is implicit in the theory of evolution, and there is also room for it in the Catholic doctrine as a goal of humanity that man shares with all other living beings, as explained by Saint Thomas.

## **4. The Species as a Subject**

The goal of living and reproducing is a priority for all living beings as a means of preserving life. Thus it would seem that preserving life is the common and universal goal or purpose of living beings *on every group level*.



I consider that species are subjects (or systems, or units, or groups) that are capable of attempting to respond to the imperative duty of survival.

This has been my idea or intuition from the start, and it has been corroborated by current theories on the subject.

Many a debate has been had regarding whom or what was the *unit of evolution*. Darwin himself wasn't sure, nor were many of his adherents. The self-proclaimed sociobiologists (Wilson, Ruse, etc.) speak of social behavior, yet they consider individual organisms as evolutionary subjects.

In reading Dobzhansky, Gould, Mayr, and the Book of Genesis, I found confirmation of my first intuition that species are subjects of the imperative duty of survival, both in an active and beneficiary role, notwithstanding the possibility that other groups or organisms may also be subjects: genes, cell lineages, individuals, demes, clades...

I consider species to be active subjects when they function for the purpose of their own survival, and as beneficiary subjects when they are the result of their own activity and that of their surroundings.

The basic idea posits: the survival of each species as a beneficiary subject is the primary goal of the same species as an active subject, and to achieve this, each species selects and adopts, as far as possible, the behavioral norms it sees fit based on its circumstances and its surroundings.

Individuals always act in accordance with their own norms and those of their species, depending on their surroundings and their degree of freedom. The species *selects* and preserves where possible the individual and group changes and behaviors that offer the most favorable results. Specialists have studied these mechanisms of interaction between subjects, groups and species, although we will still find differences regarding types of causes and mechanisms.

I will now summarize in basic terms the roles and functions of individuals, groups and species in their common purpose of trying to fulfill the vital imperative of survival.

*Individuals as commanded and as active subjects.* Every living being has a personalized precept, which from the moment life begins, orders it to try to survive as an individual and to participate in the reproductive process to preserve the species, acting individually or as part of the group depending on the strategy of the species. And somewhere in the genetic makeup of each individual is a set of guidelines that explains what must be done to fulfill this personal precept, depending of course on the degree of individual freedom.

These individual rules are positive for achieving the main purpose of the species if they have been properly assumed and transmitted by the species, and they will be both effective and efficient depending on the degree of fulfillment by each individual and the way in which

the individual adapts to the circumstances surrounding it at any given moment.

*Groups as subjects of survival.* Doubts exist regarding whether groups, or at least which type of groups, can be considered subjects or *targets* of natural selection (Mayr: 2016, 218-219). Without going any deeper into this subject it seems clear that within social species, the group relationship of mutual cooperation enhances the capacity for group survival, the individual and the species.

These internal group relations are governed by the common rules of the species as well as by the regulations for each group, and in this sense, each of these interspecies groups, which tend to differ among themselves by habitat, feeding strategy, geographical separation, etc., have different probabilities of survival. In extreme cases, they may even constitute new species.

It is also interesting to note that in *superior* social species, where individuals have greater freedom, group behavioral norms differ from those of the individual members of the group. I feel that failing to make this distinction could lead to misjudgment and misunderstanding, in particular in reference to our own species.

*Species as active subjects.* Mayr proposed in 1940 (2016, 146-147) that species are “*groups of actually or potentially interbreeding natural populations which are reproductively isolated from other such groups by physiological and behavioral barriers.*”

And Dobzhansky (2009: 132) suggests that “*Mankind, like other sexually reproductive communities, is a Mendelian population. [...] More specifically, it is a community of linked subordinate Mendelian populations,*” and “*a Mendelian population is a supraindividual evolutionary system.*”

In 2002, the year of his death, Gould edited a 1430-page treaty compiling all of the theories of evolution, stressing the idea of “*species as individuals in the hierarchical theory of selection*” (Gould: 2004, 95). He continues, “*...species must be construed not only as classes (as traditionally conceived), but also as distinct historical entities acting as good Darwinian individuals.*”

And while not of a scientific nature, I should recall the commandment to both Man and beast in Genesis 1:22, 28: “*be fruitful and multiply.*” Said otherwise, we are commanded to endure, to survive. And the subjects of this imperative precept are clearly living species, humankind in particular. Gould mentions this precept as well (2004, 626) when he says, “*The downward shift of agency, from a purposively benevolent deity to the amoral self-interest of organisms, embodies the most distinctive and radical aspect of Darwinism.*” The incertitude as to whether the *agency* of an *external* lawgiver exists is perhaps one of the issues that has hindered understanding among doctrines and the vision of the basic idea. We shall come to this quandary shortly.

*The human species as beneficiary.* Our primary goal is the survival of our species. The explicit idea of the risk of extinction is a very recent concept. Elsewhere I have noted my satisfaction on reading Hans Jonas and his desire to justify the importance and urgency of avoiding this prospect through an appeal to our responsibility. He could have saved himself some effort had he realized that the precept for survival has been recorded in our genetic makeup from our very origin (Jonas: 1979).

There have been many other voices, both lay and religious, warning us of the danger of our potential self-destruction and of the extinction of the species through natural causes. These warnings and exhortations, together with the creation of the concept of global humanity, will facilitate acceptance of the basic idea as it becomes known.

*Other possible beneficiaries.* From the moment I began making notes, it occurred to me that the purpose of survival could refer not only to the species, but to Life itself, and to the different levels on which it exists or can exist.

I discovered a scale outline of this idea in the writings of L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of the Church of Scientology, who established eight levels or *dynamics* of survival which range in ascending order from “*Self*” to “*Infinity*” or “*Supreme Being*,” although from what I have seen neither he nor his successors developed these ideas further.

We find a similar diagram in Frans de Waal's *Primates and Philosophers* (2007). Page 205 shows us a pyramid in which the upper level is "*Self*", followed by "*Family / Clan, Community, Tribe / Nation, Humanity, All Life Forms*," and in black, at the base of the pyramid, "*Resources*." The footnote reads, "*The expanding circle of human morality*." While de Waal does not refer explicitly to survival, we can deduce that among other purposes, morality must be preserved for survival, and the diagram is a valid illustration of this.

It is clear that there are different subjects of *survival*: from the survival of the individual, which is the most visible and immediate, to that of *all life forms*, or *Life Itself*. We can also include *resources*, particularly those which are used more directly to create and sustain life. And it is possible that these goals were goals in themselves in a non-anthropomorphic world, or a reflection of our own basic purpose, or the purpose they would substitute in the event that our species were to become extinct, in order to create another or others that would be more or less similar.

Regardless, while collective goals have *always* existed, humankind has explicitly felt, reasoned and tried to fulfill them as we have recognized and felt ourselves part of the family, clan, tribe... and *lived* as a part of these groups or communities. Now we increasingly feel and understand that we form part of

a fraternal species, a common fraternal humanity: a very powerful species as an active subject, and the same species as *beneficiary*, for better and for worse.





**A BROAD CONCEPT  
OF ALTRUISM**

## 1. Concept

The idea is that within the evolutionary process, altruism in a broad sense is the primary element used by social species for survival.

And I say in a broad sense because this term has very different definitions which in many cases limit our understanding of the concept to the selfless acts performed to benefit others. I think that the scope used in Ethology on animal altruism is closer in meaning to a broad sense of altruism, but even then it is not sufficient. Actually, altruism in its broadest sense, the way I understand it, refers to *any act or omission which benefits another or others*, and I believe the concept takes on the full weight of its meaning when applied according to my basic idea. Any act, self-interested or not, which benefits another benefits the species, because in addition to direct benefit, it enriches the group by enhancing coexistence and the common good.

In general, an act of altruism involves not only a possible material compensation, but also some form of moral, spiritual or intangible compensation for the subject that performs it. There exist a wide variety of intangible forms of compensation: obedience of the very principle of ethics, recognition from the group, increased self esteem, merits for transcendent rewards, etc. In many cases these forms of compensation are

sufficient reward for a selfless act of altruism, and serve to reinforce a possible material recompense.

I believe this has all been widely studied, but in an unfocused and fragmented context. The basic idea and its advancement in the evolution of our species serves to unify, supplement and give full meaning to the concept. Furthermore, in this definition we are always referring to an interested or *selfish* act of altruism because it is invariably compensated in some form or another, which I feel explains the apparent uncertainty and contradictions that are often associated with this term, while at the same time leaving room for the variety of uses and content that have been applied to the concept of altruism.

Let's take a closer look at these ideas.

## **2. Acts of Altruism**

*My definition of altruism is any act or omission which benefits another or others, and which likewise enhances group coexistence. My idea does not place limits on altruism according to its implicit or explicit causes, to whether or not compensation is involved, to the result, or to intention or motivation. We will find many theses written on these reductive distinctions, but I prefer the broader definition of the DRAE, which says: Altruism: diligence in procuring benefits for others even at one's own expense. The Academy's*

definition is sufficient. Perhaps it could be improved by adding a comma between *others* and *even*, but it is still the best I have found, as many others place restrictions on the concept. Take for instance those that refer only to selfless altruism: “*Diligence in procuring benefits for others without expecting anything in return.*”

Again, I feel that the definition of the Real Academia Española is preferable if we break it down into two parts:

(1) “*Diligence in procuring Good for others...*” This can include paid acts and immediate or deferred exchange or trade, and is the habitual form of altruism that occurs in human relations of coexistence: working, buying, selling, teaching, help in exchange for help, obeying rules and laws, etc. This can be considered standard *self-interested altruism*. This concept has been the subject of many studies, and it has many uses. In the history of the evolution of social species, it seems that altruistic relations benefit all involved; they procure benefits for others as well as for the promoter, whether directly or indirectly, immediate or deferred, and finally, for group coexistence and the common good.

(2) “*...even at one’s own expense.*” This can be considered *pure altruism*, comparable to selfless love: the sublimation of common self-interested altruism, i.e. the elevation to a higher degree of behavior that is compensated in one way or another by the beneficiary

or by others. Such compensation is moral, and proceeds from the altruistic self. This pure altruism would seem to be the optimum form, and it is boundless. It seems comparable to agape, the love or charity of philosophers and good religions. This altruism/love pays no heed to the compensation, either material or intangible, that the giver may receive from others, and is nearly analogous to the basic purpose, because he who loves as such is primarily concerned with the preservation of the beloved – and the beloved in this case is all humankind, the brotherhood of man, the species.

Both definitions are valid for my idea and as a survival strategy, although the more common is the first definition regarding compensated altruism. As I mentioned previously, we may think that all forms of altruism, including *pure* altruism, are self-interested and compensated, as even pure altruism provides the *internal* reward of happiness upon procuring the well-being of others – the joy we feel from giving to others while expecting nothing in return, although the task itself may be burdensome. Saints and sages, whether believers or atheists, are familiar with this feeling.

And for believers of religions that advocate charity, all acts of altruism/love are rewarding and rewardable acts. In other words, they receive their compensation. We could even say that the purest altruists, the religious saints, are actually the most selfish as they await the greatest of rewards. An eternal reward. They likewise

receive the compensation of happiness while they live and practice altruism. As I noted previously, this effect of obtaining worldly delight as a result of practicing altruism and love is likewise enjoyed by non-believers, although these saints do not look for eternal life as their compensation.

I was pleased to read this statement in defense of love in Edgar Morin's *Introduction à une politique de l'homme* (Introduction to a Politics of Humanity), where he speaks of love *without shame*. He says: "*A flourishing love that wishes to irrigate our daily life (...) and flood over to include the species and the world*" (Morin: 2002, 42).

I recently received a news clipping from a friend on social bacteria that commit altruistic suicide to prevent infection by a lithic virus in the rest of the bacterial community.

*Important note: Consider whether altruism could be present since the moment the very first life forms came into existence, and whether the first cell divisions to create new cells constituted an act of altruism - the altruistic act of giving half of oneself to give life to another being.*

*Building on this, the vital imperative of every living being may have been, and would continue in our days to be a multiple precept: (1) Live, and in doing so, love oneself. (2) Be altruistic and reproduce, if possible, giving part of yourself in the process. In many sexed*

*species there would be a third precept: (3) Continue to be altruistic and care for your offspring so they may also live and reproduce. And in social species, a fourth precept: (4) Pursue the well-being of others in favor or the survival of the family, group and species. And in Humankind, a fifth precept: (5) Love and care for your surroundings and your circumstances (other animal and plant species, the earth, water, etc.) so that your species may have a better life and survive. And a corollary: If you fulfill all of this you will be happy because you will have fulfilled your duty.*

*If we heed these ideas, the entire process of evolution can be considered an operation of altruism/love comprising billions of altruistic actions and acts of love. Even killing others to feed oneself or one's offspring is an act of love. We can undoubtedly look to St. Augustine, who said "Love and do what you will." It seems that all was in order until man ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as told in the Book of Genesis, or, according to the scientific explanation, until he developed awareness and became aware of his self-interested being and the existence of pain and death. But the Good of preserving Life as a purpose, with Love as the vehicle, justifies and purifies pain and death. Roughly speaking. End of note.*

In keeping with the foregoing note, the recommendation to embrace altruism is implicitly hardwired into the first instructions received by living

beings, social beings in particular when their sociability kicks in. Giving or transmitting life and living an altruistic coexistence are the most efficient and effective *natural* forms of survival for individuals, groups and species.

I also concur with Darwin (2009, 122) when he says, “*A contented, happy tribe will flourish better than one that is discontented and unhappy,*” and this offers a greater chance for survival. In other words, the altruism inherent in helping my fellowman to live better and enjoy a greater sense of well-being is a method of group survival and a clear path towards fulfilling the vital imperative, as well as towards fulfillment of the universal principle of ethics, which we will examine shortly.

### **3. Human Altruism**

If we return to the idea expressed before the recent side note, I will try to clarify and expand upon several other aspects, in particular those which are relevant to *Homo sapiens sapiens*, and I will use the term altruism in the broadest sense, as explained previously.

It seems clear that a broader understanding of altruism in its different forms has been in place in groups comprised of social species, and that in the process of natural group selection, those groups that show a greater degree of altruism as part of their



internal behavioral structures hold a greater advantage in terms of cohesion, motivation, mutual support, etc. over those which are less altruistic. And under equal circumstances, the more altruistic groups have shown better chances of survival, which has also been applied to entire species. In any case, it seems that the more altruistic species are the dominant ones in their habitats. See Wilson and social hymenoptera (Wilson: 2012).

The human species shows the most sophisticated degree of socialization among known groups, both in terms of intelligence, language, etc., and in particular in terms of the development and use of altruism in its broadest sense within increasingly larger, related groups. This is thanks to our moral awareness and capacity for judgment, although our judgment may often be ill-considered or self-interested. I believe that moral awareness, *conscience*, as a means of survival is an essential faculty, and we mustn't confuse it with psychological awareness, or *consciousness* (Arana: 2015; Álvarez Munárriz: 2005).

In *inferior* species, such as hymenoptera, altruism is a primary instinct performed by individuals within the group with little to no freedom of choice and no need for judgment. In other more complex species such as birds, primates and other mammals, there seems to exist a second, more complex level of altruism, where individuals acknowledge reciprocity

and other motivations. Group members likewise have differing degrees of freedom and capacity for judgment depending on the characteristics of each species.

The altruism of humankind includes the primary instincts and second-level characteristics of *inferior* species, and we have also developed our own altruism/love. Human altruism embraces universal aspects which are common to all individuals of the species, with variations according to culture, era and circumstances of different groups. These variables often condition *contingent ethics*, which our collective conscience uses to pass *moral* judgment at any given time.

As occurs with other social species, human altruism/love in practice also operates in accordance with the rules of proximity and of affiliation with the same family, tribal or racial group. It can be extended to include other individuals and the species as a whole in that we hold a greater *awareness* of our similarity to others and our sense of belonging to the group. Much has been written in this sense, although in many cases the subject is unclear and reductionist criteria are applied, affecting the possible exactitude of the arguments.

Altruism/love has become a goal in itself within the human species. This converting of a vehicle into a partial aim or objective is seen frequently: feeding, sexual relations, sins and virtues, peace... But altruism/love is not simply a means or another partial goal. It is the primary element or factor which functions, and

has functioned, as a group's ethical norm. What is missing, as we shall soon see, is its extension to the entire species.

*Note: As we are aware, success factors reinforce implicit behavioral norms, acting according to the norms of circular causality, which means that global biocultural altruism will increase the more it is practiced. Similarly there are contrary factors which can influence implicit ethical attitudes, such as the age-old struggle between Good and Evil, which can also be empirically corroborated through this idea. End of note.*

I reiterate here that altruism/love is a vehicle. I do not feel that “*love and do what you will*” can be considered a valid universal principle. We must do what must be done, and do it with love, but *first and foremost comes ethics, and later, aesthetics*. The purpose comes before the means, although not every purpose conforms to every means. Judging this may not be easy, particularly because we may not know if the action being judged is positive for the primary vital purpose, or, if it is indeed positive, whether it is good enough to justify the cost to the wronged individuals and to the species itself. This is the difficulty that arises in applied ethics. But at least the principles are now clear: the primary vital purpose is the survival of the species, and altruism, in

all of its interpretations, is the first and foremost factor to consider in any act or omission performed with this end.

I believe that everyone, whether or not we believe or follow a given religion, will agree that altruism/love is the essential ingredient of every human act because it is a constituent component of the vital imperative. And even were it not, it acts *efficiently* to avoid suffering and enhance individual and global well-being, and in particular, *effectively*, as modern sociology and its predecessors have shown us that it is the best means of survival, superior even to the struggle for existence through natural selection. The peaceful, altruistic group survives and advances in a better manner than the selfish and aggressive one. This is one of the characteristics of the theory of evolution that has become obscured or contorted. Darwin was misinterpreted in his thesis *On the Origin of Species*, and twelve years later he devoted a third of *The Descent of Man* to arguing that happy species live and survive better, and that man “owes [his] immense superiority [...] to his social habits, which lead him to aid and defend his fellows...” (Darwin: 2009, 54). His disciples paid little heed to this *milder* idea, perhaps because the *harsher* concept of competition and struggle was easier to sell. Until today, that is (Darwin: 2009; Kropotkin: 1977). Read Gerald Hüther, who highlights the little-known *altruistic* facet of Darwin and sums it up in the subtitle of his book, *The*

*Evolution of Love: What Darwin Already Suspected and Darwinists Don't Want to Admit* (Hüther: 2015).

That said, love is in itself a superior individual and group aim, perhaps the finest partial universal goal, and with this clarification we can say that “living through love” is a valid individual vital purpose. It is a broad thesis about which much has been written, although in a fragmentary manner containing certain misconceptions derived from mistaking the very different concept of love/altruism for love/desire, one of the primary elements of the process of sexual selection (Darwin: 2009).

It is important to point out that we are not judging whether altruism/love is meek or exacting, peaceful or hostile, mild or rough. In general, *positive* values like gentleness, peace and tenderness are favorable for coexistence and contribute to the final purpose by means of partial goals that are fulfilled by the group. But an occasional reprimand or punishment may also be constructive; likewise a struggle to defend other lives or values or a partial war to avoid greater tragedy. Notwithstanding, while reprimands, war and death may prove effective from a utilitarian standpoint, they are deontologically reproachable and ineffective for the vital purpose and should be used only as a last resort, and always with the filter of altruism/love as a primary element. An extreme example is giving one's life for others.

Another relevant idea is that *internal group altruism* performed up to this point is a partial means. It advances the situation of groups that subscribe to the practice, but does not avoid wars between groups, nor does it mitigate the predicaments of the poorest groups. In this case it may even serve to aggravate a delicate situation. This internal group altruism must be transformed into a global altruism that includes the entire species. Let me reiterate that this is not an entirely *pure* form of altruism, but rather a type of compensated altruism which pertains *primarily* to the inner workings of the group. But there must also exist a global and universal altruism to facilitate a favorable coexistence and collaboration among well-disposed groups and nations that live together in peace. Clearly, a *purer* form of altruism will afford more positive results for the group and for enhanced *implicit* global ethics through circular causality.

The antithesis of altruism/love (selfishness/hate) is likewise a significant factor in the internal relations of a species. I seem to remember having read somewhere, possibly in Teilhard de Chardin, that a species as a group should have a common enemy to despise. It is clear that a common enemy, whether real or fabricated, is one of the factors that most serves to unite groups (families, clans, tribes, nations, nationalities, races, religions, etc.), and politicians are well aware of this fact. I have also read that an extraterrestrial threat from some alien

life form could serve to augment our sense of belonging to the same human race. This is likewise the case when faced with global catastrophes or war.

*Note: I consider selfishness or self-interest to be a negative trait when applied excessively. A sin is a virtue in excess. Pride is born of an excess of self-esteem, greed of an excess of virtuous provisioning, lust of an excess of the reproductive instinct... Selfishness or self-interest as a defect is an overabundance of the instinct of individual preservation, just as hate is an excess of the self, of selfishness, of a divergence with the alter, with the other, with altruism. End of note.*

And considering that selfishness (an excess of individual and group self-interest) and non-altruism/hate have also been predominant characteristics of the evolutionary process, we could consider using them as universal catalysts rather than altruism/love. It is possible that this idea has already been considered and is even being put into practice. But from a personal and scientific standpoint I feel that love is more effective and much more efficient.

*Note: The definition found in the DRAE can be used to describe at least two forms of hate. The Academy defines "hate" as: "Aversion and dislike directed against someone or something, coupled*

*with a desire for misfortune to befall them,” a definition which can include aversion for reasons of self-interest, with the desire of receiving a counterclaim (domain, territory, material or moral wealth, etc.). The second type is “gratuitous hate,” which can be considered pure evil.*

## **4. A Personal Note**

The idea of altruism as a primary element for survival did not occur to me until 2013. Since the year 2000 I had viewed the basic idea through the lens of the early Darwinists, under the premise that one of the techniques to achieve the survival of the species was to *improve it*. Here we could justify, and even recommend several measures that seemed effective even though they may seem deontologically amoral: eugenics, selective abortion, contraception at all costs, euthanasia, the sovereignty of the most powerful, etc., and in general any politics or strategy for survival considered to be most effective, regardless of whether they led to pain and death.

This *harsh* vision made me understand (but not justify) the ideas and politics of Darwin’s early followers (Galton, Huxley, etc.), the Nazi experiments with the Aryan race, and the ideas of some modern Darwinists who continue to assert that competition and struggle are the primary vehicle in natural human selection. And as I considered these methods as unethical, I did not venture to express my basic idea. The few times I



spoke of these ideas the reaction of my audience was understandably quite negative.

*Note: I do not wish to say that competition and the desire for self-improvement are bad methods. They are necessary, quite possibly essential, and outstanding resources if used nobly and with love. In the same way, self-love is essential for one to practice altruism. End of note.*

I think that in 2013 I began to realize what an important role altruism plays in group cohesion, and I think it was when I read Dobzhansky that I began to consider altruism as the primary and *most effective* means of development in social groups. This idea was corroborated through further reading. It seems that the priority given to group altruism as a vehicle has been decisive in ensuring that our species, in a short period of time and without any particular physical advantage, has survived until now and has been capable of dominating all other species.

And it was with this conviction that I decided to publish my two ideas in response to *what to do* and *how to do it*. These ideas respond to several theoretical problems, as well as to questions of conscience that arise if we try to apply the basic idea according to the methods of some of the early Darwinists and other later *species improvers*.



**THE UNIVERSAL  
PRINCIPLE  
OF ETHICS**

## 1. Outline

If the basic idea that survival is the primary vital purpose of our species is indeed an accurate one, we could gather that there exists an *explicit universal principle of ethics*.

This principle would be the now non-existent basis with which we could compare the rules, laws, mandates, customs and conventions which explicitly govern or attempt to govern the behavior of each group within our species. Let us look at this statement in greater detail.

## 2. Implicit Norms

If the basic idea is true, the primary vital imperative of preserving and transmitting life is the origin of the subsequent evolution of living beings. In other words, the goal of survival is the reason for our behavior. I shall now elaborate on this idea.

*Living beings* have developed different strategies in order to achieve this purpose, and this process led to the emergence of millions of what we call species, the majority of which became extinct. It seems that today some two million known species exist, and twice as many species that have yet to be identified. It also seems that this number represents less than 2% of all species that have ever existed.

Whatever the case, existing *species* have adapted physically in order to survive. And they have assumed

patterns of behavior that have best allowed them to adapt to their environment and continue living. Some of the behaviors which have allowed species to prosper have become constituent or *implicit* rules and have become part of the dynamic nature of the species and its members through the various mechanisms of evolution.

In addition to the common rules of the species, there may be *groups* within a species that have developed varying successful group strategies for reasons of geographical location, feeding strategy, competition, etc., and these strategies have been transformed into constituent group behavioral norms.

Likewise, the *individuals* of each species must develop their own strategies for survival, which are transformed into individual behavioral patterns. These individual patterns may differ from those of the group and the species depending on the individual, their degree of freedom, the environment and their immediate circumstances.

Many others have described how this works within the previously described model, broadly speaking and for specific species, humankind included.

If we condense this idea, it seems that each individual inherits a series of characteristics from its progenitors: the vital imperative, the behavioral patterns that are common to the human species, and the inheritable patterns pertaining to the group or groups to which the individual's predecessors have belonged, whatever

form these may take. I will not go any further into this point because it is not relevant to the issue at hand, and there continues to exist a disparity of opinions on the topic.

Each level of a species inherits a series of behavioral patterns in addition to those which have been acquired individually. It is not yet clear if families, tribes and races (the Borgias, the Yanomami, Eskimos, etc.) possess genetic characteristics that differentiate them as far as physical capacity and behavior is concerned, but it seems clear that the longer a group has been isolated from others, the greater the uniformity among group members and the starker the difference with other groups. These issues are being studied in depth through the genetic research tools we have available today.

What seems obvious is that each species has certain *physical* characteristics which differentiate it from others, as well as *patterns of behavior* which are common to all of its members, and which may differ slightly or greatly from those of other species

*Species*, then, have at least three types of constituent rules or norms: the vital imperative (permanent, universal and common to all living beings), the specific patterns a species inherits from its predecessors and maintains, and the patterns the species itself has developed up to a given moment. To this we might add group and individual norms for the members of the species.

These patterns are somehow hardwired into each individual and are part of the natural law which determines, *implicitly and from within*, the behavior of each and every living being, or which at least attempts to do so, as errors may occur during transmission. Additionally, individuals enjoy differing degrees of freedom, and they must adapt this fact to their changing environment, which they will do with varying measures of success.

This leads all living beings and the species to which they belong to continue evolving to a greater or lesser extent in hopes of surviving, guided by these natural laws or behavioral patterns which have been transmitted and consolidated since the beginning of life as we know it. These behavioral norms are the nearly-ethical ones for higher-order animals, and the constituent personal ethics of individuals of our species. Allow me to elaborate on this.

I am not using the concepts of normative or substantive ethics here, because they are generally used with different meanings. For our purposes I think it is sufficient to distinguish between two types of ethics: the internal, *implicit* ethics of each subject, i.e. the ethics that form part of an individual's conscience and establish moral judgments, and *explicit* ethics, which are the external behavioral norms that affect each individual and which are *dictated* by the various groups that make up the subject's external environment or

circumstances. Let us look at these ideas in greater detail.

### **3. Explicit Norms**

Many social species such as ants, bees, wolves and dolphins, have transformed some of their implicit behavioral norms into explicit norms, in particular those over which the group or individuals have some degree of liberty to act, and which affect the group as a whole. Each species and each differentiated group has created and maintains its own communication and organizational structures with the aim of transmitting its respective behavioral patterns to its members so that they may be followed. These systems and structures have been studied in relation to many different species: hymenoptera, primates, geese, etc., and these group behavioral norms comprise the cuasi-ethics of the animal world that Darwin, Dobzhansky, Lorenz, Wilson and others have written about.

### **4. The Example of Humankind**

The case of *Homo sapiens sapiens* is quite different in many ways, although for our purposes, we can consider it as simply another species. We needn't discuss here whether the nature of man is different in essence from that of other living beings; we can simply work with the parts we have in common with all others,



the aspects that are indisputable. We will work with man as a creature (Ladaria: 2011, 95-104).

Humankind as a species, like other social species, has tried to explain and transmit our constituent group behavioral norms in different manners and languages, beginning with the most rudimentary groups: family, clan, tribe, and continuing with more recently created groups such as cities and nations. And the different collectives, religions, professions, associations, etc... Briefly put, each human group has tried to specify its own communal behavioral norms and the systems through which they should be followed.

I would like to point out the difference between what I refer to as *constituent*, or *implicit* norms, which are those that the individual has inherited or acquired, and the *explicit* norms of specific groups, which are those established by bodies of people such as family, tribe, religion, city or nation. These norms are expressed in various ways, through gesture, verbally, in writing in the form of laws or regulations, through use and custom, etc.

In an aside, I should like to comment that the behavioral norms of different species are often not the most appropriate. They commonly break down because species, groups and individuals are conditioned by their abilities, and in particular by their nature, which does not allow them to adapt to the changing circumstances of their environment at the required pace. This fact has

led to the extinction of countless species. Regardless, for our purposes, all species do everything possible to survive, following the basic precept of the vital imperative.

Our species is likewise affected by these circumstances, as well as by the errors of our own *rational* behavior, making it essential and urgent to bear this in mind and act in consequence (Morin, 2002; Jonas, 2004; Küng, 2000; Gorbachov, 2003; Trigo, 2010; Pope Francis, 2015; etc.).

Traditionally, the transmission of implicit and explicit norms has been done according to the understanding and intentions of those transmitting them: chiefs, shamen, kings, the elite, dictators, the people... Explicit norms, including the customs, laws and mandates of each group, have generally worked to promote cohesion among group members, conferring greater solidity to the group and increasing the ability to survive. Here also the group has habitually recognized and rewarded its members for the virtues of mutual aid, obedience, courage, loyalty, and all those behaviors which enhance coexistence and strengthen the group's capacity to defend and conquer. Likewise, the community has encouraged and regulated the development of other social virtues and values such as honesty, family and group fidelity, sincerity and justice, and punished behaviors that go against these norms through laws and regulations. The group has

also allowed and even encouraged enmity and war with competing groups in order to obtain food, land, slaves, women, etc. (Lévy-Bruhl: 1927; Álvarez Munárriz: 2015; etc.), and we continue with these practices even today, with only slight variations.

It was also discovered that it could be beneficial to get along with other groups, so norms to facilitate friendly relations and collaboration with others were created. Groups aligned with others, whether willingly or by force, to forge the states and alliances we know today.

By and large, the *explicitation* of implicit laws and norms has generally aimed to favor group legislators and their counterparts, which is beneficial provided it does not pose a detriment to the survival of the species or the well-being of other groups. We must recognize and transmit a common universal ethical foundation so groups can take account of their survival and improve the species as a whole without misusing their expanding power and freedom, at least by reason of ignorance.

*Universal and global norms. A reminder.* If we look at the species as a group or universe, I feel we can use the term *universal ethics* to describe the norm or norms that affect each individual of a species equally, and *global ethics* for the sum of the ethics of the individuals of a species at a given moment. It is clear that the global ethic incorporates the universal ethics held by individuals as the cornerstone of their own personal ethic.

The sum of these individual ethics and group ethics result in the Global Ethics of a species, which is in constant fluctuation.

I think that at times the terms universal and global are used synonymously, although I prefer to use them as explained above because they actually refer to different concepts. And let me reiterate here that for me, both forms of ethics can be (a) implicit, i.e. the internal ethic of each individual, and (b) explicit, when they are express norms dictated by and for each and every group.

## 5. The Concept of Ethics

Thus far we have seen a descriptive, historical summary of behavioral norms and several complementary ideas. I will now try to adapt a possible universal principle of ethics to this outline, but I would first like to explain the concept of ethics I am using.

The 5<sup>th</sup> definition of the term “ethics” found in the 22<sup>st</sup> edition of the DRAE, from 2001, says: *Ethics: 5. “Set of moral norms that regulate human behavior.”* This is the definition I have been using, understanding *human* behavior as that of all *human* subjects: individuals, groups and species, and it is valid both for implicit and explicit norms.

In the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the DRAE, published in October 2014, the Academy changed this definition to the following: *Ethics: 4. “Set of moral norms that*

*regulate an individual's behavior in any scope of life."* The definition still does not draw a distinction between implicit and explicit, nor between individuals and legal entities, but that is fine. If a distinction must be made, it can be done as required, as I have done.

It seems, however, that academics have been aware of the possibility that there are different subjects of *human* conduct, and have decided to reserve ethics for people. This is in line with the classical interpretation that ethics is a concept unique to *humankind* and does not apply to other living beings, and that within humankind, it applies solely to individuals. For our purposes, both definitions are valid because the ethical subject is the individual, but moral norms, *ethics* in plural which govern individual behavior are: the vital imperative, the universal norms of the species, and group and individual norms.

*Note: From a layman's point of view, I feel some experts have perhaps made the mistake of considering mankind (people governed by ethical norms) as "creators" of all of these norms. They might have assumed that human ethics arises from the rational nature of man, and have tried to reason Man's "what should be done" from what Man himself thinks and decides.*

*I feel that this idea is excessively anthropomorphic, conferring humankind with absolute freedom*

*and capacity of knowledge and thereby negating the possibility of the influence of the precept of another, whether a god, or nature itself. It is possible that this independence has hindered them from seeing, or from admitting after having seen, the basic idea and the possibility of an “external” precept. This is why Kant addresses only the “good will” in itself, leaving the categorical imperative to one side (Kant: 2005, 73). We find the same in Brentano (2013, paragraph 10). I would say the problem arose in Greece and began to deteriorate further during the Enlightenment. End of note.*

In social species other than humankind, behavioral norms are not generally referred to as ethics because it is supposed that animals are not capable of performing moral acts, which would require at least three abilities: the capacity to anticipate consequences, to make value judgments, and to choose a course of action (Ayala: 2006, 30). These capacities are generally reserved for our species, although some believe that certain animal species also possess them. But that is not the subject at hand.

There also exist differences between believers and non-believers regarding whether ethical norms are a product of evolution. I think that in our days, both believers and non-believers coincide in the conviction that both *material* behavioral norms and ethical norms for social convention, both implicit, are part of

a broader *natural law*, or however else you wish to call it. The differences lie in the *Agency* and in the nature of mankind. But these are also *other issues*.

Confusion may arise because many ethical norms for behavior (do not kill, do not steal, love your neighbor, etc.) are at the same time commandments for achieving a transcendental goal: life eternal, if we look at religions based on the Bible, and other goals for other religions or beliefs.

In fact, natural behavioral norms for humans as living beings or creatures should act in harmony with possible transcendental norms. Natural laws, where they exist, should be the same by definition. Differences may occur due to misinterpretation, individual or group self-interest, or the adaptation of the temporary circumstances of different groups.

## **6. A Possible Explicit Universal Principle of Ethics**

I think we can now contemplate the idea of a possible universal principle of ethics. In short:

The vital imperative, together with the norms that are common to all living beings and those of groups and species, have given rise to the various *implicit* or *constituent* ethics according to which each person forms his or her individual ethic. As you may recall, this individual ethic is: “*a set of moral norms that regulate*

*an individual's behavior in any scope of life,"* and it comprises both inherited and acquired ethics.

As an aside, I should point out that both inherited and acquired ethical norms greatly facilitate the social life of individuals, which is essential to survival, procreation and the survival of offspring. Without ethics and the awareness required to exercise these norms, the individual could not survive.

*Explicit* group laws and norms should also facilitate the life and purposes of its members, meaning that in addition to the basic purpose, these laws must also focus on the partial goals of the well-being and enrichment of its members and of the group as a whole.

This leads us to the understanding that if both individual and group ethics and their expression as explicit norms are correct, they will contribute to the ultimate goal which is the survival of the species, even when neither individual nor group subjects, nor the creators of the explicit norms are aware that this is the case. And this brings us to our present situation.

If we look at this same idea from the opposite standpoint, we could say that survival is the goal that the species aims to achieve through the partial aims and ethics of individuals and groups, although group members may be unaware that this is the primary purpose of the species.

Species attempt to consolidate the behaviors of individuals and groups that improve their chances



for survival. This is what we consider as evolutionary progress if the species is successful and is able to adapt to change. But there are also possibilities for regression. Our species has *progressed* extraordinarily in a very short time through group selection and with very few physical changes, by means of socialization, awareness, intelligence and a great and growing degree of freedom.

*Note. Are we in a regressive stage in the evolution of our species due to a surplus of these factors, and in particular because we have not “rationally” acknowledged and claimed the vital purpose of the species? End of note.*

Taking all of this into account, it would seem paramount to acknowledge and claim the *implicit* primary vital purpose and specify it in the form of a universal principle which would act as a basis for revising current and accepted partial ethics, as well as for establishing the set of group norms which accommodate our present moment and circumstances. In other words, it is critical to translate the implicit vital imperative that exists for different groups within the species from their inception into an *explicit, common and universal principle of ethics*. If these norms and laws are enacted with intelligence, prudence and good will, they will already be in sync with this ethical principle.

This *universal principle of ethics* could be expressed as: **“Is Good/Better than which is Good/Better for the survival of our species.”** We can add or modify as needed to clarify and *moderate* this concept, although I think that pundits will find it quite clear.

Our species is quite different from others if we consider group sociability, intelligence, the ability to act with good judgment and foresight, etc. These capacities, together with other physical and intellectual skills such as our ability to use language, are of the same *functional* nature as the physical and behavioral capacities of other species, e.g. the sociability of ants and bees, a bird’s ability to fly, or the capacity of wolves to hunt in packs. Humankind’s greater intelligence and our ability to act with judgment are good if used properly, but extremely dangerous, given the degree of sophistication, if used to attain group goals that do not enhance the species’ chances for survival, or which may even put it at risk.

It is thus time to use our skills of reasoning to see the basic purpose, and once seen, accept it as true and do our absolute best to try and attain it through intelligence, prudence, awareness and good will, which are the primary skills of our species. We must act as *“living beings with the capacity to reason,”* as defined by the DRAE.

As Ortega would say, reason is useful for life, not life for reason. Let us use reason. I feel it would be

useful here to examine Ortega's philosophy through the lens of our basic idea in order to better understand his thesis of vital reason. His well-known "*I am I and my circumstance*" would perhaps make more sense if the "I" were not an individual "I", but rather the whole of Humankind, which would be the circumstance to overcome, together with the global surroundings. I do not know if Ortega realized that his vital imperative, which he as a philosopher used to refer to the individual, would be *truer* and more complete if applied to the entire human race, to Humankind. He also says, "*Existence is coexistence.*" In order to coexist and live in society, some form of altruism is necessary.

## 7. A Universal Principle of Ethics and Altruism

I believe that a broad concept of altruism is the main element that our species, like other social species, has adopted as a means of achieving the basic goal of survival. We know that satisfied societies with a higher standard of well-being have a greater chance for survival.

Here, our universal principle of ethics could be expressed by the following idea: "***Is Good or Better that which is Good or Better for the survival of the species, and which, when done altruistically, promotes the coexistence and well-being of the***

***group and its individuals.***” In actuality, the second half of the phrase is extraneous because the concept is included in the first half. As I have said before, altruism is the most successful strategy for the survival of the species as it promotes the coexistence and well-being of the group and its individuals.

# **POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS**

## 0. Introduction, a Few Remarks and Other Ideas

In order for us to more clearly perceive the *possible* scope of the basic idea, I will try to use the universal principle of ethics as the basis for several cases of applied ethics, but first I should advise my readers of a certain fact.

The few times that I have spoken with others of these ideas, the person or persons with whom I was speaking have diverted the conversation to one of today's specific *ethical* issues, attempting to apply my *new ethic* to their previously conceived beliefs. We can divide these people into three groups: believers, atheists and agnostics (regardless of whether they are practicing or not).

*Note: According to Cardinal Ratzinger: "Even if I theoretically agreed with agnosticism, in practice I am obliged to choose between the alternative of living as if God did not exist, or living as if He did exist." –El Cristiano en la crisis de Europa (Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures). Joseph Ratzinger. Ediciones Cristiandad 2005, pg. 81. End of note.*

I would therefore request of my readers that *in order to form an opinion on the contents of this section*, they try to set aside the parts of their belief system that explain or determine the existence or lack

thereof of a God who created and sustains us. Believers can continue to believe that God exists and that he pronounced natural law, which he allows to function under his control, intervening only when he wishes to *become apparent* through miracles, and atheist evolutionists can continue to focus on their scientifically proven theories, but they must set aside any idea that is not sufficiently proven and verified. And in particular, they must set aside any antagonistic sentiments they may have towards religion. Agnostics tend to be more neutral.

Returning to the texts cited by Cardinal Ratzinger, I shall try –like the intellectuals of the Enlightenment– (pg. 47) to understand and apply the moral norms of “*Etsi Deus non daretur*,” and at the same time, “*...veluti si Deus daretur*.” I believe that neither the Enlightened nor the Church have been successful in defining a common universal ethic because they are focusing on the individual, rather than on the species, and are actually conceiving of individuals of differing *nature* as directed by their beliefs.

For intellectuals of the Enlightenment and non-believing scientists today, man is simply a living being like any other, *elegant animals*, according to Ortega. They do not accept that we can *be* or have anything that is *supernatural* in nature, and this non-scientific issue becomes their warhorse. In other words, rather than trying to agree on *what to do* based on what is

empirically and scientifically known, they debate about the *what and the how* of who should do it, attempting to arrive at this *what to do* by means of the *nature* of the subject. This nature is not yet known scientifically, which is where they become misled, and this misconception is heightened in this case because the subject is not the individual, but rather the species.

The Church, on the other hand, elevates individuals, endowing them with an immortal soul, and according to classical criteria, it also considers them to be the sole subjects of a potential universal ethic. Regardless, I do not feel that the Church today would dismiss the idea of the primary vital imperative in *Homo sapiens* as a living being, and would likewise admit the human species as a subject of the natural law dictated by a God who is both creator and sustainer.

We needn't turn to God, however, to either accept my idea or to reject it. In order to judge each case according to the *new ethic*, I will apply what I have called the *natural* universal principle of ethics, and I would ask my readers to attempt to follow these same principles, disregarding previous beliefs and prejudices that would complicate or distort this criteria. It would be interesting for the reader to later consider if the resulting judgment after applying the *new ethic* coincides or not with their previously held code of ethics.

I must insist here in *my ineptitude*, and forewarn the reader of a potentially similar circumstance in



their own case, to judge the examples I am going to put forward. I use them as an example of what it could mean to assume this *ethic* as true. If the tenet of these ideas were to be accepted, one of the first steps would be to *designate* who should develop and apply them, both in general and for specific cases, which would undoubtedly present certain difficulties. But *dictating* partial ethics is a separate issue, and a longstanding predicament.

I should also advise that I am simply going to mention and summarize each case, without examining them in detail. Each case is complex and all have been the object of polemic and heated debate. I ask the reader, therefore, to focus on the primary point of interest without going into partial aspects or marginal or local facets related to the moment and the setting. The detailed application of the new ethic to nearly all of these cases would give rise to numerous books and films, both realistic and science fiction, and in fact I put forth this suggestion to possible agents.

I will re-state that the basic purpose is the survival of the species, with the greatest degree of well-being of its individuals as the primary element, applying altruism/love –for its effectiveness and efficiency– in all that is done to achieve the basic purpose.

The applications and ideas I am going to mention, as well as many others, are currently being performed locally, on a group level, and globally as well. Nearly all have existed for some time, and will continue to exist in

one form or another as long as our species exists. We can thus apply the new specific ethic in two ways:

Reactively, i.e. responding to the partial doubts that may exist regarding what is currently being done, and actively, by considering *new* global or partial actions or enhancing current *positive* actions. All of this is focused on achieving the basic purpose of the survival of the species with the greatest possible measure of well-being.

### ***On adaptability***

The most obvious partial goal to achieve as a means of fulfilling the basic purpose is adaptability, i.e. the capacity of the species to survive despite changes in the environment. This is the continuing ambition of all species.

*Note: What I am doing at this moment is an adaptive activity of the species, performed by one of its members. The activity of writing down these ideas is an attempt to improve the adaptability of my species and an endeavor for my readers to work in a positive direction in this sense, or at least to not choose a negative heading. End of note.*

Returning to the issue at hand, it seems that someone should compile a list of risks to which the species is exposed, i.e. a list of detrimental *natural* and

*human* phenomena that could lead to the extinction of all or much of mankind, and at the same time, a list of positive factors that enhance our capacity for survival and well-being.

It would seem that such lists could act as a guideline for applying the new ethical foundation to current activities and future politics and policies. As *an example*, I will suggest four lists of possible phenomena, both positive and negative, to bear in mind for this process of adaptation:

- *Negative natural phenomena:* Massive earthquakes, meteorites, glaciations, global warming, noxious gases... We have extensive knowledge of natural phenomena to date, and the tools exist to formulate such a list. I imagine that this list exists and provisions have been made regarding the best course of action to guarantee the survival of the greatest possible number of people in the event that one of these catastrophes were to occur.

- *Negative human phenomena:* Weapons of mass destruction, pollution, consumerism, overpopulation, and the oft overlooked material and spiritual phenomena of individual and group selfishness and egocentricity, evil, hate, war, and all other *sins* against humanity and nature.

- *Positive natural phenomena:* The Earth's and the Universe's capacity to endure, and the capacity of life to continue to sustain itself and evolve, which can be generally foreseen through time.

- *Positive human phenomena*: Humankind's many material and spiritual capacities, both on an individual and group level, altruism/love, all well-executed virtues and knowledge, a growing sentiment of brotherhood and humanity, good ecology, diversity in race and customs, varying geographical settlements, science and technology, good religion...

These lists are incomplete and poorly organized. Creating a solid, updated and operative set of lists is one of the tasks of humankind and its authorities, both religious and lay. Based on these lists and the viewpoint of each sector, we must determine a set of possible norms to be applied in each case and in partial situations. Taken all together, we are looking at the applied global ethic, using the perennial and new universal ethic, now explicit, and its primary basic vital principles.

These are some of the ideas to bear in mind in addressing the cases described below.

## **1. Review Partial Explicit Norms**

If the basic idea is accurate, the universal principle of ethics has been and is *implicit* in all human beings, and the norms derived therefrom have ruled human behavior through time. These moral norms comprise the constituent ethics of the species and its groups and individuals, and in turn, these constituent ethics –universal, group and individual– may or may not be

or have been suitable for reaching the primary vital purpose, which is the survival of the species. Mankind has either used or failed to use broad altruism as the primary element of our decisions and actions.

There is an ongoing debate as to whether moral norms, or implicit ethics, are purely a product of biological evolution, of cultural evolution, or of both (Ayala: 2006, Wilson: 2012, Ruse: 2007). But this discussion is inherently biased by the entrenched divergence of opinion between believers and non-believers on the possible existence of an external Lawgiver, as well as by a more recent dissension between biologists and philosophers (or materialists and spiritualists) on whether man is more than purely organized matter. Additionally, we find the controversy between believers and atheists on whether in man's *abiding* nature we can find *something* of the likeness of a God creator.

For me, and I believe the same can be said of the majority of non-biased experts, the constituent or implicit ethics that guide the conscience of the individuals of our species are the sum and interaction of both biological and cultural factors, incumbent on the different settings and circumstances of our ancestors (both species and groups), as well as those of each individual. This idea is not determined by whether man is more or less material or spiritual, nor how or by whom he was made. I am referring to the ethical

norms of man as a living being, as a *creature*, as regards that which man holds in common with all other living beings, in whole or in part.

*Partial explicit ethics.* For as long as human beings have socialized, explicit moral norms have existed to guide and direct the behavior of individuals and groups. The sum of these norms comprise what we could call the *explicit global ethic*, or set of articulated moral norms that guide human conduct.

Such norms, when dictated with intelligence and good will, are generally *good*, both for the partial implicit ethics with which they have been dictated and in the light of the universal principle of ethics that has inspired them.

*Note: I should like to point out that my concept of explicit or external ethics may not coincide with some of the uses that have generally been conferred on moral heteronomy. Explicit ethics, when fitting, should be neither imposed nor differ greatly from what is dictated by the moral autonomy of the individual. The concept of implicit ethics is of course similar to what is generally referred to as moral autonomy. At any rate, I believe that the terms “implicit” and “explicit” used to define “internal” and “external” norms are clear enough for the use we are putting them to.*

*There may also be doubts as to whether external norms are of a moral nature, or other:*

*legal, corporate, technical, etc. For our purposes, the vast majority of external norms of any type can influence the goal of survival. They generally regulate activities related to the vital purpose, and should therefore be considered as moral norms. End of note.*

As we can gather from the term *explicit global ethic*, we are dealing with a very broad concept. It includes all group uses and customs and all express concepts of justice, peace, dignity... Every definition of sin and virtue... Commands and precepts of every religion and creed... All of the laws, regulations and statutes of every People, nation, sporting club, organization, homeowners' association, NGO... Professional norms and codes... The moral and ethical values and imperatives prescribed by schools of philosophy... Political and government programs and policies... Corporate codes of ethics and values... The organisms that regulate such corporations... Statements made by opinion leaders and politicians... Norms and values held by the media, educators, promoters of cultural and entertainment...

This leads us to the following point: if we assume the universal principle of ethics to be the cornerstone of a universal ethic, we must apply it to both current and future partial explicit ethics. This would lead to a change in the biocultural ethical norms of individuals

by means of the mechanisms of evolution, and with it, a change in the implicit global ethic of the species. And we would continue in this way, iterative and interactively, until the end of the species, or the end of days.

This rational and conscious application would also be *natural*, as the fruit of a human survival strategy within the evolutionary process of natural laws and norms. It could lead to the regression of some behaviors that have proven to be erroneous due to over-confidence in the exercise of the acquired technical capacity and to the high degree of freedom, or that may have been unbalanced due to a slower evolution of moral norms as compared to technical capabilities, and this imbalance may in turn be due to the predominance of the individual and the group over the species itself.

## **2. Advancing the Idea of Humanity**

Humans are social beings that have *lived together* in increasingly larger groups, from primitive families and clans to what we now know as the *global village*. We can currently speak of numerous groups within our species, both vertical (families, clans, tribes, regions, nations, states, unions) and horizontal or transversal (races, civilizations, religions, ideologies, political parties, associations). Embracing all of these subgroups is the species, the global group of human beings, humanity.



The *rational* idea of humanity as a unit of the species is recent. It began with the latest geographical discoveries and continued to develop with different theories of evolution, and only recently have we begun to have a broader *awareness* of it, midway through the last century with the end of the Second World War and the appearance of mass media: film, television, the Internet. The risk of another world war and the idea that there exists a global interrelation has led to the creation and development of *world* organizations, ecological movements, political parties, manifestos from political and religious leaders and intellectuals, etc.

The communication and acknowledgment of a universal principle of ethics may contribute to reinforcing the idea of brotherhood, fraternal solidarity and of the human race, as well as the *need* and *responsibility* of caring for each other and for our surroundings and our environment.

I believe this idea is easy to transmit and accept because it is in our nature, and can explain the increasing emergence of green and ecological movements, among others. We should also bear in mind the enormous potential for altruism/love that exists in *good* religions, missionaries, civic movements, NGOs and the like, as well as in the power of many good and intelligent leaders who see that not only is this idea a good one, but it is profitable and popular as well.

The idea improves on the efforts that have been made up to now by some believers and non-believers to try to justify and *sell* the idea of fraternal love and *responsibility*. It is not the Church or the civil authorities or philosophers who instruct us to be good by following the vital imperative and the universal code of ethics, but rather ourselves. It is a permanent, internal order which was neither clear nor explicit to us, but which exists inside each of us even before we are born. If we follow it, we will be happy, and if we do not, it goes against our very being, against our human nature – divine for believers.

### **3. A World Authority**

This is an old idea developed quite thoroughly in the 1860 edition of Krause's *Das Urbild der Menschheit*, with an introduction and comments by Sanz del Rio (Krause-Sanz del Rio: 2002). I have also seen it in documents written by our two most recent Popes, and it seems that there are various groups of diverse tendencies that support this idea as well. On the other hand, however, we find detractors who fear an excessive dirigisme, as well as possible errors, abuse and partisan bias, also on a *global scale*.

So we must ask ourselves, in the light of a *new* ethic, is a World Authority a positive or a negative concept?

In principle, it should be positive, and this is of course the first idea that would occur to anyone: if the human species has the primary obligation to try to survive, it seems that once we are *rationally* aware of this imperative, there must be someone who will *rationally* take on the responsibility of overseeing this process. Without global oversight, the process will continue to be managed on a group level by increasingly powerful yet partial entities (nations, blocs, alliances) in pursuit of their own ends, which may or may not coincide with the global purpose. And if these partial entities or groups follow the patterns of natural selection and fight amongst themselves, they may end up destroying the entire species, or at the very least make individuals miserable, both from the winning and the losing side.

While there are currently no *global* conflicts or struggles, we are witnessing partial wars which do not seem good for the survival of the species, as these situations consume both energy and resources. In former (and not-so-former) times, war was a suitable means for controlling the population of a territory and for improving the species through technical progress and natural selection. It would seem, however, that what we are attempting to do now –at least I am– is to substitute some of the *negative* group norms for *positive* norms based on a consideration of the species as a whole as both actor and beneficiary of our survival, with the minimum cost and the greatest well-being possible.

Many ideas exist regarding the structure, functions and responsibilities of this possible Global Authority, and it could be a quite interesting task to consider these notions in the light of the new ethic, so we have a pending task to tackle. One easy way would be to transform the United Nations. It would be good to include the participation of the wisest and most *saintly* individuals, both lay and religious, in this task.

I feel, though, that the first complexity lies in the task of actually proposing this concept and beginning to discuss it in earnest. It is my thought that this moment will arrive of its own accord as we further develop the concepts of brotherly Humanity, of caring for each other and for the environment, and in general of all that serves to sustain the species in one way or another. It will come about even if the basic idea is never specified and man acts purely out of the sense of responsibility preached by Hans Jonas and held as truth by many groups and individuals, as well as out of the fraternity and love encouraged by *good* religions and groups. It will come about when it can politically profit those who propose the concept and wish to exercise their power or influence as members of this Global Authority.

Or it may be forced into existence in the event of a major *natural* disaster or global catastrophe: a crack in the earth's crust, a giant meteorite, massive climate change, floods, thaws, torrential rains, methane ice... or

man-made cataclysms brought about by an improper use of the means and resources within our reach.

The bottom line is that a *good* World Authority can be beneficial for the primary vital purpose, and simply assuming the purpose *should* aid in its creation or transformation.

## 4. The Model of a World Society

Another significant ethical issue to resolve is the type of world society we wish to create and maintain – if possible, effective and efficient and sustainable in the long term in order to fulfill the dual purpose of the survival of the species and the greatest degree of individual and global well-being.

This is an oft-interpreted idea as well, although I have never seen it explained in depth with this dual purpose. Of what I have read, the model that perhaps most closely resembles this idea is the society described in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, which is now technically plausible, but possibly not desirable, at least not from the viewpoint of today's world. *Island*, also by Huxley, and *Utopia*, by Thomas More, posit models which may seem more advantageous, but they describe smaller societies. Robert H. Benson's model in *Lord of the World* seems equally undesirable.

I feel that the previous paragraph will serve as a model of the issue we are dealing with. It is of colossal

importance, as we are referring to every single activity the world over. I shall try and summarize.

- Our species exists today according to a model that has been established through *group* actions and ethics. I will not describe it here because it is well known. But we should examine whether this is the best possible model for fulfilling our basic purpose, and analyze, in any case, in which direction we should be focusing our efforts, both on a global level and as regards the actions of all groups and individuals. Nearly everything we do, or fail to do, influences both the current and future model of a society, in particular the actions of great nations, political trends, religions, multinational companies, opinion groups and so forth, as well as what each individual does or fails to do.

- We can apply many different models, but I should like to remind the reader that our current model is looking *primarily* to cover partial group goals and the well-being of *its* leaders, *its* citizens and *its* sympathizers. With our basic ideas, our purposes are global, and they may or may not coincide with the group purpose. What we must do is judge the current model through the lens of the new ethic and try to channel it in the best possible direction at all times, knowing that as individuals we are group oriented, and that we *need* to live in groups among our peers.

- This task of *ethically* judging and advising in these issues is a difficult one, and should be undertaken

by one of the organisms of the World Authority, both for issues of great magnitude and possibly for smaller, common questions. In any case, I think that we can see, or at least intuit, the importance of the new ethic in this model of a developing world society. It can be developed expressly, conscientiously and with a universal purpose in mind, or it can be business as usual.

- I offer here an example of a possible model, quite similar to our current model, which would be *easy* to follow: a decentralized model divided into culturally similar groups and *regions* of a size that could be easily managed by the group authorities with the technologies on hand at a given moment. This model would include a single intermediate level between *regions* and the World Authority, and these regions would have the greatest degree of autonomy possible within the precepts of a new *Human Constitution*. This would allow us to maintain the diversity of group manners and customs, religion, culture, etc., under a single world flag, with a possible common world language in addition to the language of each culture, a global army that would deploy with effectiveness and efficiency, and so on. The intermediate level would be basic in structure, and it would have a geographical or technical name.

What is important is that the Human Constitution would conform to the new universal ethic, and the World Authority would also be *good* for overseeing and enforcing it globally.

## 5. Population. Density and Quality of Life

I will remind the reader that the basic purpose of the species, of humankind, is to survive for as long as possible with the greatest degree of well-being and the least amount of suffering for its individuals, both now and in the future.

With the vast amount of knowledge we currently possess, it would seem that our earth should have the capacity to feed more inhabitants than were foreseen in the times of Malthus, yet it is clear that a countless number of people are living poorly. We also have the ecological problem, which will worsen as the population grows and we demand a consistently higher *quality of living*, which is justified in many cases, but not so in others. But the whole global demand is high and growing.

It seems clear that our existing resources and systems are unable to ecologically satisfy the total demand of goods and services, either currently or in the medium term. It is plain to see, therefore, that in addition to action to save our resources through heightened science and technology in production and improvements in distribution, we must try to reduce or re-adapt demand.

Demand can be reduced in one of two ways: a lower demand from existing consumers, or fewer consumers.



Many existing consumers could demand less, but it is unlikely that they will do so of their own accord. Many others cannot demand less, and actually *need* more to subsist with dignity. And still others can subsist with what they have, yet demand more and more as long as there are others who have more than they do.

The distribution of available goods is an age-old problem, which seen through the lens of the new ethic has different solutions depending on whether we are simply trying to achieve the first goal as a priority, or if we are looking to fulfill it more through altruism/love. I think the difficulty is manifest, as is the importance of the new ethic for establishing the criteria for distribution to existing groups and individuals. Once these criteria have been established, if they are good and goodwill and political authority exist, it would not seem difficult to apply them using our current and foreseeable technical and social engineering means.

The other issue is to address the problem from the angle of the number of consumers involved in global demand. The solution seems to be similar to alternatives adopted by companies: *reduce the workforce* with the least possible disruption to the existing staff and to the company itself. If done properly, it can yield benefits for both. Done poorly, it may be easier but less efficient and more disruptive. This can be extrapolated to describe what has happened in the world in the case of *reducible* problems: war, epidemics, famine, natural disasters...

But as it is generally considered positive from both an economic and a moral standpoint to increase the population, and thereby the overall demand, group techniques and policies are focused more on this path and less on preventing and avoiding negative global consequences.

I think that if we were to focus on the problem from the standpoint of our *new* goals, applying the *new* ethic, we could reap an abundance of benefits in just a few generations. For instance: to follow the criteria of *responsible* family and group parenting and organize migrations before the evolutionary problem gets out of hand and imposes its unrelenting laws. This should be quite easy to manage with the means of technology and communications available today and without additional suffering, adapting where possible to the beliefs and cultures of each group.

If we look in the other direction, however, and focus *primarily* on survival, we may feel that in the event of a natural disaster or man-made catastrophe, the greater the population and the more it is spread out in different and inhospitable habitats, the more likely it is that someone will survive. This is another point to assess, but it seems that this option would produce greater shortages and confrontations, and greater suffering in general for poor and marginal populations, which would abound. There are mixed solutions to be considered.

We might also think that the primary purpose of the species is to multiply the number of individuals, as all species seem to try, but reproduction, like evolution, is *merely* a means for survival. There are actually species that halt their reproduction when they see that there will not be enough food to feed all of the members. Even God's commandment in Genesis of "*be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth,*" has its limits when the earth becomes so populated that it is impossible to care for all and survival is jeopardized.

## **6. Sexuality, the Family and Procreation**

It is not my intention to try and establish the criteria to apply in each of these complex issues, but rather to stress the importance that the new ethic may have when commenting and acting on them.

We acknowledge the different types of family in social species, from the most basic comprising two individuals to the substantially large families of hymenoptera; from the briefest and most rudimentary relations of certain oviparous animals to the long and complex relationships of hominids, man in particular. It seems that the family is a success strategy for procreation and for the survival of the group and the species.

In many species, including mankind, monogamy has proved to be an effective model for procreation,

particularly efficient for the well-being of the couple and of their offspring. We would therefore do well to give pause before trying to alter this model.

This monogamous and steadfast family model indeed holds many virtues, including providing a directed outlet for our sexual instincts. Fidelity affords cohesion in a larger and more lasting family group, facilitating mutual support and the care and upbringing of children, as well as their well-being. Enduring, united families have shown to be the most successful in forming more complex groups, such as clans, tribes and nations. Sexual promiscuity can lead to distortions in this model, and we should rethink this issue.

One important factor to bear in mind is decreased infant mortality and a longer life expectancy, which taken with the previous point, seems to advocate for a lower fertility rate. This can be an argument, tacit or express, for those who support separation of sexuality and family, abortion, etc.

There exists a significant risk in changing functioning systems for others that have not been conceived of from the standpoint of a universal ethic, or which have been *poorly conceived*. There also exists another considerable risk that individual and group hedonism may lead to irreversible changes in customs that eventually become *negative and dissociative* permanent goals.

There are great differences in this area if we look at groups with different standards of living, fertility

trends, cultures, religions, etc., and these escalating imbalances will lead to increased problems if we do not act together with a global vision, even though it is recommendable for different groups to have different ethics and methods.

Without going into further detail, I feel that the new ethic and its accompanying principles of *natural* survival and altruism can help us to rethink these issues and to try to arrive at positive, effective and effectual agreements between scientists and politicians, and believers and non-believers.

## 7. Human Ecology

As I was writing this section I recalled my younger years, and I have before me my old copy of Hawley's *Human Ecology*, the textbook we used in first-year Sociology circa 1963. At that time it was a rather new concept. The prologue by F. Murillo began: "*The word ecology may mean very little to students of the humanities, and they will most certainly need to consult a dictionary.*" (Hawley: 1962).

I mention this to help us understand the reasons why there is still much to be discovered and assimilated regarding mankind's group behavior as part of the biosphere and as a global species, which is our present thesis.

From what I have read lately, I feel there is still a certain degree of confusion. And as we can see in many

other cases, the problem seems to be an ambiguous goal or purpose. There may actually be several. I can right now think of at least three *ecological* goals:

(1) Conservation of *nature*: the earth, fields, forest, water, animals. All flora and fauna. The atmosphere, minerals, and so on, organized by areas of the earth or by groups of users, or even by the species and the earth as a whole.

(2) Mankind, as users and beneficiaries of nature, so they can eat and clothe themselves, and live comfortably. Both current and future generations.

(3) The survival of the human species: our purpose, with our ethic of altruism/love towards mankind and towards our circumstances.

This third goal encapsulates the other two, although it undoubtedly adds nuances that become apparent if we think a bit. As our most recent Popes (Francis: 2015) and *good* ecologists have pointed out, caring for nature means caring for Man as well, so mankind is both actively responsible for and a beneficiary of the natural environment and themselves. But, I would add, we must heed our basic purpose.

It seems that we should therefore establish a universal set of priorities based on the survival of the species that would lead to the creation of a set of human *ecological* norms. Such norms, being human, should

be natural, conservationist, global, and mandatory, unlike our current norms which are very *approximate* and variable, depending on the extent to which a nation has developed and the political power of states and groups.

## 8. Genetic and Environmental Engineering

It seems that by living, all species influence and modify their environment, and some have even developed specific *engineering methods* that allow them to use other plant and animal species to their benefit. A very well-known example is that of farmer ants.

Our own species, comprised for centuries of *family* agricultural and farming units, is now capable of modifying living organisms to extremes unimaginable until very recently. Every day new techniques with increasing possibilities are discovered, and we are able to act upon our own species.

These capacities lead to ethical dilemmas regarding many of their potential applications, both in *defensive engineering* for the prevention and cure of health conditions, and in *proactive* engineering, as well as in some of the research methods and practical uses related to both.

The possibilities of these techniques to modify and influence other living beings as well as members

of our own species makes it imperative to establish a set of common, universal ethical norms, which should likewise be based on the primary purpose of the survival and well-being of the species, with adaptability as a significant partial goal.

I feel that where we can most clearly see the need for and urgency of applying the basic principles is in the field of genetic and environmental engineering, both for responding to the questions mentioned here and for addressing the issues that continually present themselves as these sciences and techniques advance and our need grows.

These aspects of engineering may also be some of the primary tools we can use to *proactively* attempt to achieve our basic purpose. In fact, they are already serving this purpose, provided they are used in a *Good* way. We should assess current applications and projects in the light of these goals.

There are presently scientists who say that we will never be able to *manufacture* humans in a laboratory, but there are apparently many other possibilities for adapting certain groups of humans to possible shifts in the environment, or to inhabit other planets or space stations.

We will find many theses regarding these possibilities, and we should consider them as vehicles for achieving the primary purpose of survival and well-being. And still remain human.



## 9. Social Engineering

This expression has been used of late to refer to bad practice in the use of online media, where users are manipulated into purchasing products or engaging in undesirable activity for the benefit of the *engineers*.

Logically, I am not referring to this type of social engineering; rather, I use the term as defined by Popper, which includes “...*social activities, private as well as public, which, in order to realize some aim or end, consciously utilize all available technological knowledge.*” (Popper: 2008, 79).

I ask of the reader, therefore, to ignore any negative connotations this expression may have acquired due to improper use in referring to dictatorial regimes, misuse of advertising, manipulation of the masses for undesirable ends, etc. I take social engineering to mean any activity aimed at influencing and modifying the behavior of individuals and groups with the purpose of producing the effects, whether positive or negative, desired by those performing these acts of engineering.

As Popper states, piecemeal social engineering assumes that the ends lie “beyond the province of technology,” and here I must agree, but I would also add that the method does indeed lie within the field of technology and social engineering.

In order to clarify my ideas on these concepts, it is my view that social engineering is present in education,

advertising, television programming, the slant given to the news published in the papers, political statements, religious liturgy and preaching, film, literature, the arts... All of these activities are socially engineered to a greater or lesser extent depending on their ends and on the number of individuals or groups they are able to influence.

For our purposes, these activities can be seen from two perspectives:

(1) From time immemorial, and depending on the existing cultures and means of the moment for different groups of people, these activities generally pursue the goals of those who perform them; these goals may or may not be realized. And such activities may have been positive or negative for the implicit and permanent goal of the survival of the species, whether or not the actors were actually aware of this: *engineers*, leaders and *target* groups.

Now, gradually and explicitly, the agents of piecemeal social engineering must consider the primary purposes of the survival of the species and global well-being when planning and carrying out these actions, either before or concurrently with their own designs. Naturally, and based on the universal ethic, it seems positive that there should exist *ethical codes* adapted to the different types of social engineering that prevail at the moment, giving the greatest coverage possible, particularly to the most

influential types of engineering: the major religions, the UN, important nations and blocs of nations... which would in turn transmit the message to the smaller groups and organizations within their area of influence.

(2) As *proactive* means to achieve the basic purposes. The idea is clear. To the extent that someone capable of engaging in social engineering is able to assume the primary purpose, they can help to achieve that purpose in at least three ways:

a) As exclusive goals of all or some of their actions: laws, communication, preaching, etc.;

b) As a complementary goal of other partial goals: the conservation of the natural world, the pursuit of peace, and other social aims;

c) By avoiding *negative* results for the basic purpose while carrying out the actions aimed at achieving their own partial goals. For instance: to not create aversion, hate or division while preaching religion, or when looking to bring together and rule a group, nation or race.

In general, all actions that in one way or another fall within the category we have referred to as social engineering are essential, both as a *reactive* field of application of the new ethic and for their global *proactive* application. These applications should occur gradually, not in the Utopian sense referred to by Popper, and as a means, not an end.

## 10. Educational Policies

Here I am referring not to the *technical* content, which should be tailored to reflect changes in the economy and society, customs, and demand of goods and services, but rather to educational policies as originators of morality and opinion. We are not merely creating the educational subject of theoretical and applied *universal ethics*, but also revising the content of all school subjects to bring them into line with the principles of this common universal ethic based on survival and altruism/love. Naturally, we should also keep these goals in mind in the course of all educational activities and in the learning environment, in line with the existing norms and values of each culture and era, provided they are not contrary to the basic principles.

## 11. Economic and Social Policies

Economic and social policies are likewise important aspects that affect the ideas and actions of politicians, religions and opinion groups. The Global Authority and the individuals, societies, nations and groups that explicitly assume these basic ideas should revise their economic and social policies in the light of these goals. Many partial policies already consider the basic aims, whether in whole or in part, and whether or not they are aware of it, but others do not.

Regardless, I feel that the explicit acceptance and application of these goals can be done gradually: by countries, products and services, raw materials, production and distribution methods, financial systems, etc. The specification and application of these ideas can be done effectively and efficiently, and can be both economically and politically profitable for those who apply them if done with discernment, love and good judgment.

## **12. Caring for the Marginalized**

I use the word marginalized to refer to individuals and groups that are excluded from current ethical norms or from receiving the benefits of various environments. Within the family we could be referring to a drug-addicted child or a family member who has been long unemployed. In a city, we have the poor and neglected, the homeless, etc. In a state, we refer to members of radical movements, advocates of hate, the unemployed. On a global level, the marginalized are the poorest groups or nations, those that generate conflict, hate and violence, etc.

If the current structures of the United Nations and other large blocs of countries were to assume the basic precepts, I feel we could advance quite a bit towards solving some of the problems that currently exist among marginalized groups and nations by working directly with them and with their environment. The

same could be said of smaller areas, such as cities or specific marginalized groups.

Accepting the goal of the survival of the species and altruism/love as a vehicle can justify and encourage actions which are currently not carried out by following more subjective, relativistic or conceivable group ethics.

I have mentioned in my previous writings that altruism/love is not related to weakness or negligence. *Before* we can have rights, we have a series of obligations to fulfill, and *loving* –altruism– should be reciprocal as far as each person is able.

### **13. Religions and Other Creators of Specific Ethics**

It is also clear that religions, movements and doctrines that beget moral norms are of utmost importance.

In general, good religions and Humanists preach a code of ethics that is in line with the basic ideas, as should be expected, and this code is practiced as each group or individual sees fit.

The clearest example is to be found in the religions based on the Good Book, where in the Book of Genesis God commands all living beings to survive by *being fruitful and multiplying*. And he commands man to care for the creatures of the earth and to be altruistic. It is the basic idea and the goal of survival, which

was practiced before Jesus in groups, families, tribes, kingdoms and by the chosen people. And there were good people and bad people.

Jesus upholds the basic precept and the partial norms that seem good to him, but he also establishes humankind as the subject, so there are no longer “good” and “bad” people. We are all good, or are at least capable of being so. And he confirms a second precept, which is the path we should follow if we are to continue to grow and survive: transforming group altruism into universal brotherly love. This anticipates science, which recently and still not fully, is realizing that altruism/love is an effective and efficient method to try to attain our goals of survival and progress, which are likewise the goals of the *scientific* evolutionary process.

It is possible that the Catholic Church might have to adapt some of their contingent aspects and customs, but the Church is used to this. And from what I have read over the past few years, our most recent Popes have actively *sought out* scientific truths and common ethical norms.

Humanistic and scientific movements, including believers, agnostics and atheists, should also modify some of the details of their theories, maintaining the doctrines that are considered to be true in each of their specialties and recognizing that we are a species that still has much to learn, in particular as concerns the spirit and moral behavior.

## 14. Nationalisms and Other Idiosyncrasies

The basic idea, by definition, stands in opposition to anything that draws mankind apart as a species – everything that stands in the way of universal brotherhood, anything that creates conflict and hate. If we must separate from each other, it should be as brothers that support the other, not as enemies that hate each other, and we must avoid collateral damage.

The basic ideas do not stand in opposition to differences. In fact, I feel that the existence of many different cultures and types of people is beneficial for greater adaptation and individual well-being, and because in the event of a natural disaster, epidemic or other act of force majeure, there is a greater probability that other groups not affected by the pandemic, or that live in areas not hit by earthquakes, tidal waves, noxious gases or heavy freezes would survive.

Notwithstanding, if we live with a global and universal awareness we will eventually reach a more efficient and rational model than the one we know today, one that creates much less suffering. The world seems already to be moving in that direction, but it would also seem that any partial attempt to force or accelerate this change with a view to obtaining personal or group benefit would be detrimental due to the moral, or even physical violence that might accompany such



an undertaking, as well as to the social and economic inefficiencies it would produce and the physical and moral damage it would do to the affected groups and individuals.

At some point I thought about the possibility of trying to fulfill the vital imperative from a group perspective, through a given race, continent, large nation or coalition. Attempts have been made, although perhaps the actors were not fully aware of the situation. I think that if we consider the possibility from today's standpoint, the process would be both difficult and painful, as tends to be the case when one group tries to control another. I think we must take into consideration all currently existing individuals and groups, and their successors. In short, all of Humanity.

## **15. Crimes and Misdemeanors Against Humanity**

There are currently a number of crimes that are classified as crimes against humanity. They are serious crimes committed against individuals or groups, and they are considered to be "against humanity" when they are committed by states or political organizations against civilians, as part of a systematic plan. All are deplorable, without doubt, but in principle do not affect the survival of the species any more than other similar crimes.

I think that the new ethic must establish a list of crimes and offenses *against humanity* that would punish acts that go against the new ethic, i.e. acts against the survival of the species and against altruism, even if they are less serious and are punished with a mere reprimand, or by inclusion in a list of law-breakers. The idea is to raise awareness of bad practices. This list of crimes and offenses should be compiled by the local authorities in each culture, with the guidance and supervision of world legislators in such a case. I imagine, in fact, that deliberately starting a forest fire or poisoning a river are offenses that could be considered as part of this list of offenses against humanity, or *universal* offenses.

In addition to reprimanding and punishing hateful and immoral acts, a graded list of *universally evil* individuals and groups could be compiled; a sort of ranking, if you will.

## **16. Universal Virtues and Values**

On the other end of the spectrum, a list of universal human virtues and values could be created with the aim of encouraging and promoting such qualities, compiling a second ranking of those groups and individuals who *do good* and rewarding those who act with moral righteousness, including both single acts and ongoing ethical conduct. Account could be taken of individuals from childhood, and continue throughout their lives.

The subjects we would designate as “good”, or reward for their actions, could be individuals or groups of different size and nature, from groups of homeowners to entire cities or nations.

There currently exist awards and ratings for different virtues, from citizenship awards at elementary schools to the title of exemplary citizen, the key to the city, man of the year, awards from different academies and organizations and so on. These should be reviewed to ensure that none stands in opposition to the new ethic, and we should confirm, encourage and create more which favor our basic purpose. One virtue that should be rewarded, and which is not considered nowadays, could be individual and group austerity – temperance. Waste, in particular if it is publicly known, not only sets a poor example but corrupts our coexistence.

Included in the various lists of social virtues and values I have consulted, love, solidarity, responsibility and honesty invariably appear. I am sure it would not be too difficult a task to create and advocate a universal scale of values, rewarding those who encourage such values: educators, filmmakers, television broadcasters... and reprimanding those who promote otherwise.

*Note for the majority of the ideas expressed above: Some readers may feel that these ideas limit our freedom and aim to govern and manipulate our conscience. Indeed, that is the case, because if we do*

*not encourage legitimately established universal values and condemn universally reprehensible acts, we will find that bad conduct is exalted and virtues devalued depending on the partial interests of groups and individuals, as we see now.*

*Notwithstanding, these are merely examples and ideas to give shape to what the acceptance and application of a universal ethical foundation could represent.*

## **17. Individual Ethics**

As we are aware, each individual has his own unwritten personal ethic, which includes the unvarying universal principle of ethics, together with the ethics inherited from his kin and those which each of us has acquired over our lifetime through our relationship with our environment. We should also consider the explicit ethics (mandates, laws, uses and customs etc...) of the groups to which each individual pertains.

I think that at this moment there are plenty of people who have the awareness, to varying degrees, of belonging to humanity, and many exercise human brotherhood with the rest of the species in one way or another, whether or not they are aware of doing so. As this feeling of humanity grows and develops, the universal ethic that is implicit in each one of us will become more well-founded, and will become stronger with each universal act of *good*.

Here end my examples. When we become fully aware of this *new* ethic and it is accepted and put it into practice, we will find that this ethic acts in *circular causality* with the *implicit* ethic. The surviving members of Humankind will continue roving down the path towards what is Best, which is what we all – believers and non-believers– have been searching for a very long time.



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