Paolo Valori on Searching for Truth Everywhere as a Feature of Christian Philosophy

Tymoteusz Mietelski

ABSTRACT   This article presents the views of Paolo Valori (1919–2003), a little known philosopher and Italian Jesuit who was one of the first scholars in Italy to deal with Husserl's thought. Valori belonged to the so-called "second wave" of Italian phenomenology. His critical analysis of Maurice Blondel's views, and his reflections on contemporary philosophy, led him to the conclusion that a dialogue between Christian philosophy and contemporary thought is called for. One aspect of this dialogue may be the opening up of Christian philosophy to the search for truth in the human sciences, and to various tendencies in philosophy and theology. Such an opening can be called "the search for truth everywhere." The article presents the sources of Valori's views and his understanding of interdisciplinary dialogue. This analysis is supplemented by a presentation of his concept of truth, and the text ends with an example of the practical application of this approach within his conception of phenomenological ethics.

KEYWORDS   Christian philosophy; ethics; interdisciplinarity; phenomenology; truth

✍ Tymoteusz Mietelski, Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow, Poland   ✉ tmietelski@gmail.com
ⓘ 0000-0001-5279-4648

Introduction

The Second Vatican Council speaks about "many elements … of truth" (*Lumen Gentium*, 8) present in other religions, churches, and church communities. It is referring to the expression *semina verbi*, which goes back to the times of the Church Fathers. However, Cardinal Ratzinger emphasized that "those patristic texts about the 'sowing of the Word' (and similar concepts and images), which are nowadays taken as evidence for the power of salvation in other religions, did not originally refer to religions at all but to philosophy" (Ratzinger 2004, 82). Thus, it seems justified to talk about the elements of truth present in various philosophical tendencies. If we assume that those elements should be sought, then such an image matches the views of Paolo Valori (1919–2003), an Italian Jesuit, one of the first scholars in Italy to analyse Husserl's thought, and a researcher of the so-called "second wave" of Italian phenomenology. He completed his philosophical studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University, and obtained the *libera docenza* degree (university teaching qualification) at the Sapienza University of Rome. Also, he completed Bachelor's studies in theology. He taught ethics, phenomenology, metaphysics, theoretical philosophy and rational psychology at the Gregorian, Lateran, and Sapienza Universities. His numerous years of research resulted in several dozen publications dealing with Husserl. It is especially worth mentioning his general analysis of the latter's thought (only the second to be conducted in Italy) (Valori 1959a), and his suggestion of applying the latter in the context of research on ethics (Valori 1985).[1]

This article seeks to develop an interpretation of Valori's views on the necessity of undertaking an interdisciplinary dialogue that includes the elements of truth, inasmuch as such a dialogue is thought to be a feature of Christian philosophy. It is divided into three parts: the first considers Valori's understanding of interdisciplinarity, and the second his perception of truth, while the third presents an example of the practical application of Valori's thought in the context of his conception of phenomenological ethics.

Interdisciplinary dialogue according to Valori

The beginning of Valori's philosophical activity is marked by his interest in the thought of the French philosopher Maurice Blondel who, in the context of Christian philosophy of religion, had tried to integrate Neoplatonic thought with contemporary pragmatism. Valori discussed Blondel's concepts in two articles published in *Civiltà Cattolica* (Valori 1949a, 1949b), and his research resulted in a book published a year later (Valori 1950).

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1. First edition 1971.

Valori believes that faced with the dispute between materialist and spiritualist philosophies, the question arises of the role of Christianity and, more broadly, the possibility of a dialogue between philosophy—or, more generally, contemporary science—and Christian thought (Valori 1950, 9). In seeking to address this topic, he outlines the problem of Christian philosophy in history, emphasizing the solutions of the patristic era, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, scholasticism and contemporary discussions. He then discusses Blondel's thought, noting that the issue of Christian philosophy is the "soul, the centre and the inspiration" of the latter's system (Valori 1950, 101). Blondel distinguishes the natural order from the supernatural one, but does not separate them, and he postulates their coexistence. According to Valori, this approach is consistent with a correct reading of the thought of St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and the entire Christian tradition (Valori 1950, 54).

Valori discerns in Blondel's works "the development of an exhaustive, comprehensive, philosophical-theological systematization of human-divine reality; the symbiosis of reason and faith, nature and grace, philosophy and Christianity" (Valori 1949a, 161). He holds that one of the central points of the latter's thought is the postulate that alongside nature there is a supernatural element that is essential to human life. Valori claims that

> those two elements, the natural and the supernatural, are not separate from each other, but harmoniously implanted in each other and, as it were, grow together in the wonderfully complete person of a divinized man (Valori 1949a, 162).

However, as he himself notes, these are the teachings of Catholic doctrine, and so belong to the contents of faith. How should such a thesis be interpreted from the point of view of reason? Is not the postulated supernatural life just something that limits the autonomy of science? Is it not just a useless addition to life? Such legitimate questions, as Valori notes, can be asked by a non-believer (Valori 1949a, 162). Moreover, a believer, too, faces many ambiguities when it comes to supernatural life. Is it separate from nature, somehow mixed with it, or perhaps completely different? Why would God introduce such an order of things? Is it dependent on His will, or is there a desire for some sort of higher life in the very nature of human beings? The issue, then, is the relationship of the natural and supernatural elements, which leads to the question of whether society "will accept the supernatural element of Christianity and try to follow its rightful concept, or … will reject it, or at least deform it, by adapting it to faulty tastes and false principles" (Valori 1949a, 163).

Valori appreciates Blondel's solution to the problem: namely, his postulate of the "existence in our actual nature of an unsatisfied desire for something that is not purely natural, i.e. for something supernatural" (Valori 1950, 231). The reappearance of this forgotten thesis in Christian philosophy has come about, in his opinion, precisely thanks to Blondel. In Valori's opinion, it is this thesis that can be "the ring connecting natural and supernatural knowledge of God, philosophy and theology, reason and faith" (Valori 1950, 231). In this way, there can be a dialogue between Christianity and contemporary thought. According to Valori, "in this thesis … the most profound and enduring meaning of Blondel's work is contained" (Valori 1950, 234).

Valori points out that Blondel, at various universities, encountered attitudes that sought to deny Catholicism and that assumed the exclusion of the supernatural element from the field of interest of science. This encouraged him to seek to explicate revealed truths in a way that would be acceptable to such a milieu. According to Valori, Blondel's dream was "a First Philosophy in which philosophy and theology, reason and faith, culture and Christianity—in a word, the natural and the supernatural—would be united" (Valori 1949a, 167).

In his later years, Valori also sought reference to Christian values in contemporary philosophy (Valori 1959b, 7). In his opinion, it is impossible to deny a certain closeness between contemporary philosophy and Christian thought, and "in today's philosophy, one can find elements showing an authentic return to, or at least research inspired by, the Christian *forma mentis* understood in all its purity and positiveness, in all its content of thought and life" (Valori 1951, 151).

According to Valori, one of the reasons for such a closeness is our awareness of the failure of Enlightenment idealism. This is especially noticeable in various existentialist systems, as "out of the nineteenth-century secularism … no ideal, no hope, no faith came, nor could it come, into the world. Hence the sense of being lost in many souls yearning to find a guide" (Valori 1951, 152). External factors, such as the development of technology, wars, revolutions, or totalitarianisms, also contributed to such a situation, but its roots extend back to causes of a strictly speculative nature. Enlightenment idealism was strongly criticized by philosophers belonging to various tendencies. According to Valori, even if such a polemic is pursued by scholars very far removed from Catholicism, the fact that they manage to identify an error within Enlightenment thinking constitutes a step towards the truth (which he associates with Christianity). He says that

even only in the negative aspect, contemporary philosophy of religion has at least the merit of having simplified the terminology of the problem by freeing it from every kind of impurity and placing before our spirit … an act of choice in which Christianity undoubtedly plays the role of the protagonist (Valori 1951, 153).

Another reason for referring to Christian values is the perception of man as a contingent being constituted in such a way as to be irreducible to identification with the Absolute. The result is an opening up to transcendence, and possible abandonment of the subjectivism characteristic of existentialism. At the same time, as Valori argues, the recognition of the contingency of being does not yet imply an opening up to the Absolute—something which is noticeable, for example, in the thought of Sartre or Heidegger. Still, the very recognition of such contingency is a step towards the truth, and this is because affirming the contingency of being leads to a recognition of its personal nature, in the axiological and the ontological sense. According to Valori, this is the most visible positive effect of the decline of idealism (Valori 1951, 153–5).

Valori notes that a return to Christian values can be observed in increasingly wider spheres of culture. The reasons for this are to be found not just on a psychological level, but also a rational one. In Valori's opinion, it is difficult to precisely define this phenomenon, as it is still unclear and unstable. However, he believes that in order to maintain an effective dialogue with contemporary philosophy, Christian thought must abandon the "anti-logical prejudices" that "misrepresent and weaken its efforts, make it ridiculous in the face of its opponents and discredit it in the face of its friends" (Valori 1951, 159).

In the context described above, Valori came to the conclusion that it was possible and necessary to translate the truths of Christianity into the language of the contemporary populace. This is what Blondel had done, as he wanted to explain "in contemporary philosophical terms the comprehensive human-Christian experience that constitutes the spiritual heritage of each Christian and the greatest treasure of humanity" (Valori 1950, 232). According to Valori, this is the task of Christian philosophy, since "humanity will find balance only in the happy union of philosophy and Christianity; the natural and the supernatural; reason and faith" (Valori 1949a, 167). Valori's opinion on the need for dialogue within philosophy, its tendencies, and its various fields, but also for interdisciplinary dialogue, thus becomes crystallized in his critical analysis of Blondel's views and of contemporary philosophy. I propose to characterize this issue as being a problem of the starting point and point of arrival of philosophical reflection.

As regards the starting point, it can be seen that Valori believes that

> the formulation of the problem of Christian philosophy … is so closely con-
> nected with the solution of the problem itself that, if one is not careful, there
> is a risk that, by a too hasty and inaccurate enunciation, one will prejudge the
> outcome of the research at the outset, thus falling into a typical error which,
> in logic, is called *error falsae suppositionis* (Valori 1950, 11).

In order to avoid the error of false suppositions, it is necessary to frame the problem from a panoramic perspective (*vue cavaliere*), so that it is complete and exhaustive (Valori 1950, 11). Therefore, the starting point of philosophical reflection must take into account the most accurate description of reality. Later, Valori concludes that such a faithful description of reality at a philosophical level is achievable through the use of the phenomenological method.

As for the point of arrival, it is apparent that Valori believes that only

> philosophy which … recognizes its incompleteness and, without crossing its
> borders, shows us new and wider horizons which, in fact, only Christianity can
> open up to us, can rightly … be called *Christian philosophy* (Valori 1950, 231).

It is therefore a matter of recognizing the limits of philosophy and its openness to theological reflection.

This attitude of openness and dialogue is what I call "searching for truth everywhere." I say "everywhere," because philosophical reflection, after first taking into account the achievements of various scientific disciplines, finds its model of faithful description of reality in phenomenology, and yet must also be complemented by metaphysical justification, as well as being capable of being supplemented by references to theology.

Valori's conception of truth

To better understand Valori's views, and especially those concerning the necessity for dialogue in searching for truth, it is worth considering how he understood the concept of truth itself. He adopts Husserl's approach to the perception of truth, which is related to the concept of obviousness. The latter is based on his principle of all principles, according to which

> every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition that
> everything originarily … offered to us in intuition is to be accepted simply

as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there (Husserl 1983, 44).

Valori believes that we should not negate the value of speculative and logico-deductive thought, but should acknowledge that "the ultimate cornerstone of each systematic construction … must be the maximum compliance with the data gained in experience" (Valori 1974, 403). What can be the object of intuition? Valori cites Eugen Fink, who argued that "an object, in the sense of a phenomenological research principle, can be anything that appears in itself, whether it is a real or ideal being, a horizon, a sense, or a semantic reference, or nothingness" (Fink 1933, 330). Thus, Valori believes that "the *Selbstgegebenheit* of the object becomes the final word of Husserl's methodology and, at the same time, indicates its absolute principle" (Valori 1959a, 97).

It is legitimate to speak of obviousness when "it is possible to establish a correspondence between the sense of the object grasped in the act and the sense of the object grasped in experience" (Valori 1959a, 111). According to Valori, Husserl's concept of obviousness "points to a feature of cognitive intention when it is perceived as perfectly adapted to the data" (Valori 1959a, 113). The reference to obviousness is thus more original than each finding: it is the source of each validation, and the essence of obviousness is constituted by the self-representation of the object of cognition. Valori says that where the concept of obviousness is concerned, important leitmotifs of phenomenology converge. First of all, however, it turns out that not only the scientific world is real, but also the world *experienced* by a person: i.e. the world in its social, aesthetic, religious and ethical dimensions. It is the world that exists, and the world on which man must all the time rely (Valori 1959a, 113–9).

We can speak about obviousness when the data of an experience fulfils the meaning of the cognitive act. The objective correlate is truth: that is, the correspondence of *the data* and the meaning present in the *Erlebnis*. Therefore, according to Valori, obviousness always connotes truth, but not always with the same degree of adequacy, understanding and originality. He provides the following definition:

obviousness is the presence of essence for consciousness according to various degrees, all of which are important, though within their limits, while the ultimate truth remains an ideal *in infinitum* which can be sensed but never expressed in a closed, analytic-definitive judgment (Valori 1959a, 124).

The connection between the concept of obviousness and the concept of truth adopted by Husserl is confirmed by what the latter writes: "the Eidos, True-Being, is correlatively equivalent to the Eidos, Adequately-Given and To-Be-Evidentially Positable" (Husserl 1983, 343). According to Valori, Husserl assumed the classical-realistic understanding of truth, and he acknowledged its similarity to "a talk, meeting, dialogue ... between two sides of a noetic relation" (Valori 1959a, 124).

As a consequence, on Husserl's view an error will appear as a lack of obviousness, a lack of insight, or an incomplete insight—in other words, as partial truth. Some scholars have questioned Husserl's solutions as necessarily leading to scepticism (Valori 1959a, 126). However, Valori believes that such a thesis is unwarranted, in that just as the concept of truth implies the concept of insight, the concept of error implies the concept of erroneous insight, which can be *revised*, and this is done not by reasoning but by another act of insight (as with other acts of consciousness). Valori believes that in phenomenology the problem of truth shifts towards *veritas ontologica* instead of *veritas logica*. This means that both truth and error are founded on the view expressed in a sentence, but this is a consequence of ontological openness. For example, if someone says that they see a man at the point where a tree is located, this is certainly a function of their mode of expressing their judgment (I see a man—I see something that resembles a man), but it is primarily due to an erroneous insight concerning the tree. Nevertheless, according to Valori it is not a matter of recognizing error only as a partial truth that must be replaced with a fuller truth (as in Spinoza's or Hegel's rationalism), or as a defect of free will (as in Descartes' voluntarism). Rather, phenomenology locates the error in a "bipolar stream of intentional life in which the subject illegitimately ratifies an imperfectly received insight concerning the object" (Valori 1959a, 127).

Valori's understanding of the concept of truth, as described above, makes it possible to formulate a thesis asserting the necessity of searching for truth everywhere. Such a search is justified, because the truth about reality is reached through an ever more accurate description of it and an ever more faithful grasp of it, while the truth itself remains an ideal which one can either approach or depart from.

The practical application of Valori's approach in the context of his conception of phenomenological ethics

Valori's approach to the study of reality reaches maturity in his conception of phenomenological ethics (Mietelski 2021). The very idea of applying the phenomenological method to the study of morality was hardly original.

Husserl had conducted such analyses, too, although during his lifetime he mainly did so in unpublished manuscripts. Meanwhile, Max Scheler is considered the father of the classical conception of phenomenological ethics. So what, then, is unique about Valori's approach? Not so much the perception of the phenomenological method itself, since he clearly admits to employing the same method as Husserl and Scheler did. What is original in Valori's approach is the suggestion of applying the phenomenological method in the broader context of analysing the experience of morality. This is related to searching for truth in various scientific disciplines, in different philosophical tendencies, and in theological reflection. Such an analysis is carried out by Valori in four stages.

The first step in the study of morality is to determine the background of the analysis with the help of those sciences that Valori refers to, in Italian, as *scienze umane*—by which he means, as he himself remarks, those known as *Geisteswissenschaften* in German culture. These include such fields as sociology, empirical psychology, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, linguistic analysis, cultural anthropology, semantics, ethnology, historiography, political economy, political science and religious studies (Valori 1977b, 70; 1978a, 354). This approach is understandable, given that Valori defines a moral act as "a free and conscious act of a man, aiming at moral value or lack thereof, that is … to fulfil or not to fulfil one's own or another person's dignity" (Valori 1977b, 73; 1979, 50). With this understanding of moral action, in order to judge some particular episode of behaviour or other it is necessary to understand it from both external and internal standpoints. This can be done via the social sciences on an external and objective level, and via the psychological sciences on an internal and subjective one (Valori 1977b, 75–6). As he puts it: "human sciences are thus not only useful but even necessary for ethics: by changing our view of anthropology, they cannot fail to influence our axiology as well" (Valori 1985, 251).

Thus, the starting point consists in determining the background to the analysis using the various human sciences. In other words, it is possible to find elements of truth about moral action with the help of these. Nevertheless, they do not cover the whole of moral experience, but only its empirico-sensory aspect. They cannot solve conflicts of value; they do not capture the drama of moral choices; they do not explain the phenomena of moral life; they do not address the future; rather, they serve to shed light on acts that have already been performed (Valori 1977b, 77).

Therefore, it is necessary to proceed to the second stage: i.e. the analysis of moral experience using the phenomenological method. This begins by defining the concept of experience as direct and receptive contact with

reality. It involves the extending of the concept of experience characteristic of phenomenology. This next phase includes the analysis of the phenomena of moral life. The basic phenomenon involves value judgments: i.e. judgments related to inner experience, in that judgments related to outer experience—although they appear to be universal—would not be able to refer to values if they were not related to consciousness first (Valori 1985, 127). The analysis of value judgments, as well as other phenomena of moral life, such as acts of preference and choice, regret and duty, leads Valori to acknowledge the existence of a specifically moral kind of experience, characterized by the perception of the value of "a specific human being as a person, in and for himself ... acting or not acting according to his unique and inalienable dignity, according to greater or lesser faithfulness to the authentic meaning of his life" (Valori 1985, 161). Thus, it is not just about the communal dimension (legal-social experience), the relationship with the deity (religious experience), human activity (aesthetic experience), or about the person in respect of the empirical conditions (psychological, social, biological, economic) they are subject to. The moral phenomenon appears as irreducible to other types of phenomena, and moral value emerges "from all its empirical conditions (biological, sociological, psychoanalytic, historical, etc.) and signifies the value of human action when it is truly consistent with the dignity of the person" (Valori 1977a, 82).

The distinguishing of moral experience makes it possible to affirm the existence of a specific type of value: moral value. Valori suggests a definition of the latter, describing it as "the excellence or quality inherent in a human act (internal or external) when it appears authentically human, consistent with the dignity of a person, and corresponding to the most profound meaning of their existence" (Valori 1985, 179; 1988a, 3). Thus, good behaviour can be defined as "behaviour which makes *a human being* feel valued, whereby the *human being* is understood here not as an abstract ... but as a real, specific, individual person existing in the intersubjectivity of people" (Valori 1985, 180).

Valori is aware of the fact that phenomenological ethics has certain limitations, and that its greatest weakness is that while, from a cognitive point of view, moral experience and the value of a person can be known through phenomenology, their ultimate reason cannot be explained without ontology. In other words, phenomenological analysis reveals the existence of a person's dignity, but it does not explain its ontological roots. Therefore, it can be said that phenomenological analysis allows us to reach the elements of truth about morality, but it is not the full truth. Thus, it is necessary to move on to the third stage of the analysis: i.e. to ontology—which,

however, does not invalidate phenomenological analyses. For the philosopher involved in this, a moral fact will show up as having priority within the epistemological order, but an authentic experience of this fact will lead to the discovery of metaphysical truths that have priority within the ontological order. The phenomenological moment and the metaphysical moment are different, but inseparable, from each other. They are two moments of one philosophical process. It is phenomenological analysis that allows for the subsequent introduction of the concepts of norm, purpose, law, value, nature, good, and love into the philosophical system. Phenomenological analysis, Valori believes, can enrich, explain, and justify metaphysics.

The search for the ontological basis of the results obtained in phenomenological analysis consists in an examination of solutions that are imperfect or erroneous, in order to proceed to a positive explanation of some moral fact or other (Valori 1979, 59). For Valori, every contemporary ethical system is tantamount to a metaphysics, because by engaging in a form of absolutization it hypostasizes given elements of reality, putting them "in place of the *old* God" (Valori 1984, 23). Hence, the first moment of ontological analysis will be a consideration of those contemporary ethical systems that presuppose the existence of moral value and its transcendence relative to empirical fact while also assuming it to be founded on an ontological system of a kind he would judge inappropriate (Valori 1988a, 23). So why, we may once more ask, is this so important? Because even wrong solutions can contain elements of truth, and these still need to be identified.

After examining faulty solutions, the second moment of ontological analysis, in Valori's conception, will be the furnishing of an answer to the question of what characterizes a phenomenological ethics founded on ontology. He lists various features, but the following are those significant for present purposes: from the methodological point of view, it will take into account the contribution of the human sciences, placing their results in the context of a moral ideal; it will be founded on moral experience; it will be inspired by Christianity, but not in order to imitate it—rather, to enhance this inspiration; and it will take into account current ethical discussions, yet not in order to follow other solutions—instead, to discern whether there are any valuable elements in them that make it possible to better capture the moral ideal (Valori 1985, 240).

According to Valori's understanding, viewed in philosophical terms the analysis of moral experience ends in ontology. On the one hand, ontological discourse does not exempt us from prior scientific and phenomenological analysis of moral value and facts, along with their practical content such as laws, norms, customs, powers and duties (Valori 1984, 27; 1988b, 15).

On the other, it can be continued in theology. Moral theology likewise does not nullify the results of analyses issuing from human science and philosophy—nor is it a mere gap-filler. Valori maintains that the Christian is not exempt from the obligation to seek the right path through scientific and philosophical reflection, as well. Rather, we are dealing here with moral theology framed as a process of critical reflection on the life of the Christian (Valori 1977b, 82–5; 1988a, 19).

Valori believes that our philosophical opening up to the Absolute will remain incomplete if not fulfilled through a real, existential, supernatural and supra-rational encounter with God. This is a qualitative leap made by faith that transcends science and philosophy. He argues that in order to accept Revelation there is no need to pass through any antecedent levels of moral reflection, but also that the response of faith does not obviate the necessity of searching for truth everywhere—by means of scientific, phenomenological and ontological analysis (Valori 1977b, 77–81; 1988a, 20).

Therefore, ethical analysis lies at the intersection of various points of view: the human sciences, the axiology of lived experience, moral ontology, and, as a final horizon, faith, together with its own form of reflective rethinking—i.e. theology, which may be regarded as constituting the fourth step of his analysis. Interdisciplinarity, which unites scientific, phenomenological, ontological and theological approaches to analysis, and which enables the search for truth everywhere, is "the meaning of an integral humanism, which cannot fail to converge, to some degree, with Christian humanism" (Valori 1978b, 22).

At this point it is worth quoting the following assessment, according to which

> Valori was undoubtedly a forerunner of the use of the phenomenological method in contemporary bioethics. From the 1980s onwards, he subjected important current bioethical issues to phenomenological analysis in his extremely interesting classes with students and in various publications (Duchliński et al. 2016, 174).

Unfortunately, bioethical topics are not extensively addressed in Valori's publications themselves, and no other material—such as that relating to university classes—has survived in the archives of the Jesuits. Nevertheless, it appears that his conception can be applied to bioethical issues.

It is also interesting to consider in this context new scientific disciplines, such as neuroscience, neuroethics and cognitive science. Valori did not talk explicitly about incorporating the findings of these into the analysis

of moral experience. This is to be expected, given that he was writing in the twentieth century when these disciplines had not yet been definitively established. The development of neuroscience and related fields is, however, undoubtedly a challenge for today's philosophy and, in particular, ethics. Certainly, it can be assumed that Valori would have incorporated the results of neuroscience and cognitive science into the first stage of his analysis of moral experience.

Conclusion

What conclusions, then, can be drawn from these considerations? First, we have found that Valori's opinion concerning the necessity of dialogue within philosophy (and across its various currents and constituent domains), but also of interdisciplinary dialogue, is crystallized in his critical analysis of Blondel's views. This attitude of openness and dialogue is what I call "searching for truth everywhere." I use the term "everywhere" because philosophical reflection, preceded by a consideration of the results of various scientific disciplines, finds its model of faithful description of reality in phenomenology, and yet must be complemented by metaphysical justification, while also being open to being supplemented by references to theology.

Second, Valori regarded phenomenology as furnishing a certain model of philosophy: one which he understood primarily as a method of philosophizing that would allow one to accurately and faithfully capture and describe reality, and to take into account the numerous factors that define it. In order to be able to take into account the results of various scientific disciplines, Valori modifies the requirement of presuppositionlessness typical of phenomenology: the absence of presuppositions appears as an absence of certain assumptions. For Valori, presuppositionlessness is, specifically, the absence from the epistemological order of the presuppositions of classical metaphysics—reflecting the realization that starting out from the establishing of a system will only close off possibilities of dialogue.

Third, presuppositionlessness, on such an approach, itself furnishes a way to engage discursively with other views, and this means that from the outset the background to phenomenological analysis will include the results of the human sciences. The analysis should then be complemented by ontological justifications, taking into account the fallacies of various metaphysical systems (i.e. rationalism, especially Kant's, which we see continued in idealism; collectivism, especially Marxism; and existentialism). A final step may also then be the inclusion of the theses of theology into the analysis. This additional procedural recommendation from Valori can

be construed as a modification of the commitment to presuppositionless-ness, shifting it towards interdisciplinarity.

Finally, Valori's approach can be said to represent an original modification within the phenomenological method, resulting from an attitude of openness to dialogue. His conception of phenomenological ethics can be seen as part of a broader perspective furnished by his views: namely, that of searching for elements of truth in various sciences (including new disciplines such as neuroscience or cognitive science), philosophical currents, metaphysical systems and theological theses. This can be seen as a taking up of the tasks assigned to Christian philosophy by Valori himself.

Summarizing the above considerations, it can be said that the reason why Valori used the phenomenological method was his conviction that it allows for a faithful grasp of reality that will bring one closer to the truth. This goal guided him throughout all of his philosophical activities. Maintaining a due sense of proportion, one can say of him what one historian of philosophy wrote of Aristotle: that "he tried to find the *particulam veri* in each person and create a synthesis" (Tatarkiewicz 1988, 107).

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