

Utopia, Retrotopia, Protopia and the Building of the Civilization of Love.

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Abstract

In our time, the three prevailing visions of the future are three forms of utopia: 1. The futurist and transhumanist utopias, which actively work for the development of technologies aimed at "improving" living conditions, with their negative and unresolved dystopian features; 2. the retrotopian nostalgia for a past that never really existed, a nostalgia that seeks to limit progress in the present, already perceived as dystopian, and to restore a world now lost; 3. the passive and trusting protopia that sees a progressive and positive development that continues from that of the past, without explaining why and how it is possible to continue this progress.

Do we have any alternative to those three visions of the future?

In 1970, Saint Pope Paul VI extended to us the invitation to build of the Civilization of Love. Since then, this exhortation has resonated in the teaching of the Church, which, in its most recent reference, presents the "building of the Civilization of Love" as a priority (Cf. Congregation of Catholic Education from April 2017: Educating to Fraternal Humanism; Building a "Civilization of Love" 50 years from *Populorum Progressio*, n. 29, 2017).

Can we proactively build a civilization? And if yes, how?

Using the philosophical tools provided by the realistic-dynamic metaphysics developed by Tommaso Demaria (the five "levers" of historical reality: religious, moral, educational, social and missionary levers), we propose an interpretation of the working mechanism of historical reality and a concrete way of building the Civilization of Love, embedding the five principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church (common good, universal destination of goods, subsidiarity, participation and solidarity), while improving the fundamental values of society (truth, justice and freedom).

While still shaping our societies,¹ modern ideologies² such Liberalism and Marxism have lost their collective character,³ leaving the Western World without shared visions for the future, and giving place to individualized utopias,⁴ as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman pointed out in his posthumously published book *Retrotopia* (2017):

the prospects of human happiness—tied since More to a *topos* (a fixed place, a polis, a city, a sovereign state—each under a wise and benevolent ruler)—have been unfixed, untied from any particular *topos* and individualized, privatized and personalized.⁵

This individualization of the idea of progress and of life's improvements is refracted in three prevailing visions of the future, which can be considered three forms of utopia:

1. the futurist transhumanist and posthumanist utopia;
2. the retrotopian nostalgia for a past that never really existed as it is imagined;
3. the "fideistic" protopia, which believes in the natural positive progress of mankind.

Let us consider briefly the main characteristics of these three utopias.

Transhumanism and Posthumanism are cultural movements that advocate the evolution of intelligent life beyond the limits of the current human condition, through science and technology.⁶

From the enhancement of the human lifespan, intelligence and well-being promoted in the "Transhumanist Declaration",⁷ to the evolution into a new species of Posthumans,⁸ the wide range of techno-scientific utopias tend unanimously toward an atheistic-materialistic soteriology⁹.

This race toward a technological paradise is driven, at the same time, by the individualistic desire for divinity, the desire "to be Godlike",¹⁰ and by the nationalistic necessity to dominate the

¹ Cf. Cliquet, R., Avramov, D., *Evolution Science and Ethics in the Third Millennium: Challenges and Choices for Humankind* (Springer: Berlin, 2018), 155.

² Ideology is an ambiguous term. In this paper it is considered as the rationalized praxis, namely as the praxis and its objective internal rationality, thus not only a doctrine or a world vision, but the reality of the praxis rationalized and mobilized, which builds the historical reality (cf. Demaria, T., *L'ideoprassi dinontorganica: la costruzione dinamica realistico-oggettiva della nuova realtà storica* (Publigrafica Editrice Vicenza: Vicenza, 2001).

³ Cf. Buijs, G., "Ideologies, the Quest for a Just Society, and Christian Responses", in Sanneh, L. and McClymond, M.J., *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity* (John Wiley & Sons Ltd.: Chichester, 2016): 215.

⁴ "Utopia is thought to imply something naively idealistic (too good to be true) and, as a result, impossible to achieve due to the constraints of the 'real world' or because 'human nature' will get in the way. Ideology is also thought to imply being out of touch with the 'real world' by being blinkered by a set of beliefs that distorts one's understanding of that 'real world'", Sargent, L.T., "Ideology and Utopia", in Freedman, M. and Stears, M. (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2013), 439.

⁵ Bauman, Z., *Retrotopia* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 2017), 4.

⁶ Cf. More, M., "Transhumanism: Towards a Futurist Philosophy," *Extropy* 6 (Summer 1990): 6– 12.

⁷ Cf. Bostrom, N., "A History of Transhumanist Thought", *Journal of Evolution & Technology* 14 (April 2005): 21.

⁸ Cf. Hopkins, P.D., "A Salvation Paradox for Transhumanism: Saving You versus Saving You" in Calvin Mercer, Tracy J. Trothen, Editors. *Religion and Transhumanism: The Unknown Future of Human Enhancement: The Unknown Future of Human Enhancement* (ABC-CLIO: Santa Barbara, 2015) Kindle edition, 73.

⁹ Cf. Waters, B., "Whose Salvation? Which Eschatology? Transhumanism and Christianity as Contending Salvific Religions", in Cole-Turner, R., *Transhumanism and Transcendence: Christian Hope in an Age of Technological Enhancement* (Georgetown University Press: Washington DC, 2011), Kindle edition, 163-76.

¹⁰ Cf. McKenny, G., "Transcendence, Technological Enhancement, and Christian Theology" in Cole-Turner, R., *Transhumanism and Transcendence: Christian Hope in an Age of Technological Enhancement* (Georgetown University Press: Washington DC, 2011) Kindle edition, 183.

world in the fierce competition between the two superpowers the USA and China, namely the necessity “to be Godlike”.¹¹

Indeed, no serious expectation of a bright transhuman / posthuman future for mankind can neglect the virtually unlimited dystopian scenarios evoked both in the collective conscience¹² and in philosophical and theological studies.¹³

Existing dystopian patterns, such as Amazon’s tracking system of its employees¹⁴ or the Chinese Social Credit System,¹⁵ legitimate the fears of a future doomed to disaster.

These fears are coupled with the vanishing of the traditional values, including the social and the democratic, and with the disintegration of the standard of living of the majority of people which is accompanied by the exponential increase in the wealth and the power of just a few.

This makes the road to the future look “uncannily [like] a trail of corruption and degeneration”¹⁶, and the road back to the past a sort of purification from “the damages committed by futures, whenever they turned into a present”¹⁷.

This is the realm of Retrotopia, a nostalgia for a past that we imagine we can return to in order to escape the reality we live in, a reality that scares us because we can’t interpret it well enough to design a desirable future.¹⁸

The lack of a convincing positive vision for the future constitutes no major worry for the founder of the online magazine *Wired*, Kevin Kelly, who coined the term “protopia”, defined as:

a state that is better than today than yesterday, although it might be only a little better. Protopia is much much harder to visualize. Because a protopia contains as many new problems as new benefits, this complex interaction of working and broken is very hard to predict.¹⁹

The “blindness to the future”, namely our current inability to clearly imagine a future, for Kelly is perhaps just a passage, after which we will be able to generate a more distinct vision of a desirable future.

¹¹ Cf. Alderman D., Ray, J., “Best Frenemies Forever: Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies, and China–US Strategic Competition”, *SITC Research Briefs*, Series 9 (October 2017): 4.

¹² For a study of the dystopian fictions refer to Moylan, T., *Scraps Of The Untainted Sky* (Routledge: New York, 2000).

¹³ Cf. Bostrom, N., *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2014): 115-25 and cf. Green, B.P., “Transhumanism and Roman Catholicism: Imagined and Real Tensions”, *Theology and Science* 13 (April 2015): 187-201.

¹⁴ Cf. Tomczak, D.L., Lanzo, L.A., Aguinis, H., “Evidence-based recommendations for employee performance monitoring”, *Business Horizons* 61 (March-April 2017): 251-9.

¹⁵ “Launched in 2014, the social credit system is a nationwide project that aims to assess the trustworthiness of China’s citizens in keeping their promises as well as their compliance with other prescribed legal and moral norms, and professional ethical standards. Objects of the rating include government agencies, business bodies and individuals. The rating results can be used by the authorities for various governance purposes, including controlling access to market and distribution of social welfare.” Asy, C., “Rule by Data and the Quest for Data Justice: Lessons from China’s Social Credit System”, *ICON.S Conference 2018: Identity, Security, Democracy: Challenges for Public Law*, Hong Kong, 25-27 June 2018: 1.

¹⁶ Bauman, *Retrotopia*, 5.

¹⁷ *Ib.*

¹⁸ Ideological forms of Retrotopia can be found in the prominent traditionalist thinkers Stephen Bannon (USA) and Alexander Dugin (Russia) (cf. Thomas, J.M., *The Rise of the Alt-Right* (The Brookings Institution: Washington, 2018), 210-230), while a kind of retrotopian economics is advocated by the Degrowth movement (cf. Toni, F. “L’equivoco della decrescita”, in *Oltre il PIL: l’equivoco della decrescita*, online article of the *Fondazione per lo sviluppo sostenibile*, accessed 7th December 2018).

¹⁹ Kelly, K. “Protopia”, *The Technium*, 19th May 2011, online article accessed 7th December 2018.

Founded on the sole argument that, in the past, progress worked by small steps, Protopia becomes a hermeneutical key to the present and future world, where in the end there is not much to worry about, because it is enough to continue to walk towards the future with a blind faith in progress.²⁰

These three atheistic-materialistic utopias do not offer a sharable vision of the future that can take the form of a collective ideology, capable of being rationalized into a praxis, or, using the terminology of the philosopher Tommaso Demaria, an ideo-praxis.²¹

Thus Liberalism, the dominant Western ideology in its various forms,²² pursues its race towards the concentration of wealth and power in few hands,²³ while traditional values are crumbling and finally heading towards a dystopian future inhabited by an elite of “gods” and a mass of the “useless”.²⁴

The only existing alternative to Western Liberalism is Chinese Authoritarian Capitalism,²⁵ a form of Marxist ideology, enshrined in the Chinese Communist Party’s Constitution and rationalized in a powerful and consistent praxis.²⁶

Other ideologies, such as tribalism, feminism, environmentalism or political Islam,²⁷ though in some cases they have a certain influence on societies and cultures, are incapable of any serious challenge to the still mainstream modern ideologies – Liberalism and Marxism -, since they lack a systematic rationalization and a consequent praxis.

Is the World doomed to a future where power and wealth will be in the hands of the Liberal and the Chinese elites, the first ruling over a mass of “useless”, and the second tightly controlling the mass of its fellow citizens?

Is there any positive vision for our common future that can be shared and actually realized?

²⁰ In his book *Heavens on Earth: The Scientific Search for the Afterlife, Immortality, and Utopia* (2018), Michael Shermer states that protopian progress best explains “the monumental moral achievements of the last centuries: the mitigation of war, the abolition of slavery, the end of torture and the death penalty, suffrage, liberal democracy, civil rights and freedoms, homosexual marriages and animal rights. These are all examples of protopian progress in the sense that they happened a small step at a time.” (197).

²¹ Tommaso Demaria SDB (1908-1996), prolonging the Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysical categories, developed a realistic-dynamic metaphysical philosophy that offers a synthetic vision of reality. For a presentation in English of Demaria’s philosophical approach see Mantovani, M. “Discovering Tommaso Demaria. An Ecclesiological and ‘Dyn-ont-organic’ Perspective”, *Divyadaan* 20/3 (2009): 401-420.

²² For a presentation of different types of Liberalism refer, for example, to Fawcett, E., *Liberalism. The Life of an Idea* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2018).

²³ Cf. La Pira, G., *Premesse alla politica* (Libreria Editrice Fiorentina: Firenze, 2004), 93.

²⁴ Cf. Chace, C., *The Economic Singularity: Artificial Intelligence and the Death of Capitalism* (Three Cs: Antioch IL, 2016), 124-7. See also Stubbs, A., “Automation, Artificial Intelligence, and the God/Useless Divide”, *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 16 (2017): 700-16.

²⁵ Cf. Witt, M.A., Redding, G., “China: Authoritarian Capitalism”, in Witt, M.A and Redding, G. (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Asian Business Systems* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2014): 11-32.

²⁶ Cf. Klimeš, O, Marinelli, M., “Introduction: Ideology, Propaganda, and Political Discourse in the Xi Jinping Era”, *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 23 (2018): 313-22. See also Xi, J., “Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era”, Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, October 18, 2017, [accessed on line the 9th December 2018](#).

²⁷ Cf. Buijs, “Ideologies”, 201.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church, in an explicit and skillful manner, has taken note of the importance of interpreting historical reality, and has been promoting a constructive vision of the future of the World.²⁸

This vision is epitomized in the invitation that Saint Paul VI extended to us in 1970 to "build a civilization of love",²⁹ an invitation that resonates more and more from the speeches of the popes to the magisterial documents,³⁰ the most recent presenting the building of a civilization of love as a priority.³¹

In this theological vision, the civilization, namely the "complex of moral, civil and economic conditions that allow human life to have a better chance of existence, a reasonable fullness, a happy eternal destiny",³² is a civilization explicitly oriented to mankind's final end and where "love must be present in and permeate every social relationship."³³

How to implement such a vision in actual societies?

The philosopher Tommaso Demaria rightly points out that preaching Christian values has not brought much change to our society, because a secular society does not accept religious or personalistic values, since they do not fit in its founding culture, whose nature is not ethic-religious or personalistic, but ideological; this implies that, to build a civilization, one must act not at the ethic-religious level, but at the ontological level.³⁴

Our theological approach tells us that both the physical laws of nature and the metaphysical laws of the historical reality³⁵ are aimed at the recapitulation in Christ of all things at the end of

²⁸ Numerous and extremely important are the conciliar and post-conciliar documents devoted to this important service to the world carried out by the Church in the light of faith: from the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), on the Church in the contemporary world; to the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* of Saint Paul VI (1967), on the Christian vision of development; to the encyclical *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis (2015), on the environment and sustainable development; to the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis (2013) on the proclamation of the Gospel in the present world, where there is an analysis of the economic and social situation of today's world.

²⁹ Paul VI, *Magisterial writings*, VIII/1970, 506.

³⁰ In Vatican Internet Site, the search for the exact phrase "civilization of love" gives 1330 matches (accessed the 7th December 2018).

³¹ "To give a soul to our ever-changing global world, the Congregation for Catholic Education gives new impetus to the priority of building a 'civilization of love' and urges all those who, by profession and vocation, are engaged in educational processes, at all levels, to live their experience with dedication and wisdom, in the name of the above-mentioned principles and values (29)." *Educating to Fraternal Humanism; Building a "Civilization of Love" 50 years from Populorum Progressio*, Congregation of Catholic Education, April 2017, accessed online the 9th December 2018.

³² *Saint Paul VI, General Audience 31 Dec 1975, (Italian)* accessed online the 9th December 2018.

³³ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, n° 581, accessed online the 9th December 2018.

³⁴ Cf. Demaria, T., *Un tema complesso sullo sfondo dell'ideologia come strumento ideologico* (NPC Edizioni: Verona, 1984), (Italian), 47. Demaria explains how religion, values and culture interact in the various Western historical macro-eras: up to what he calls the "humanist interlude", the Renaissance, religion formed values and culture. When God was replaced by man and the dynamism impressed on society by the Industrial Revolution, the paradigm was overturned; now the culture gives values and religions (cf. Demaria, T., *Per una nuova cultura* (NPC Edizioni: Verona, 1982), 125-40.

³⁵ For Demaria "historical reality" is the "*synthesis of all synthesis*: it is not homogeneous or physically coherent, but is the 'whole' historical being. Demaria calls it EDUC ([Ente Dinamico Universale Concreto] - Dynamic Universal Concrete Being): being that is already and still is not, that is never the same, that embraces all history, all space and all time of humanity. This is the being that gives the original 'imprinting' to all the other beings; the being in relationship with which all the other beings must synthesise themselves incessantly; this is the being synthesised continuously by means of all other dynamic beings. It is also characterized by all grades of freedom of the human person: values, goals, attitudes towards God, man and creation. Without human freedom and its intentionality, dynamic being and historical reality

times,³⁶ and, as we investigate the physical laws of the universe through science, we are called to investigate and study the metaphysical laws of historical reality to participate more consciously in God's work of recapitulation.³⁷

In a central theological writing, *Cristo Forma*,³⁸ Demaria studies the ontological root—so to speak—of historical reality, interpreting it with the hermeneutical key of Christ as a form, understood according to hylomorphism, the doctrine that physical objects result from the combination of matter and form. According to Demaria, Christ is simultaneously a form of four things:

1. the historical and redeemed man, who is matter,
2. the Mystical Body,
3. the historical reality, and
4. the Total Cosmic Christ.

Demaria shows that, starting with the operation of the Christ-form, the redemption of humanity, which *in actu primo* has already happened on the Cross, *in actu secundo* is realized to the extent that Christ is accepted as form, to the extent that one enters into synthesis with him, as form; and therefore to the extent that the ontological synthesis between Christ-form and man-matter is carried out.³⁹

This ontological synthesis, which in Sacred Scripture is Pauline “Christification” (Gal 2, 20), is also the Christian religious salvific synthesis, implying a dominion of form over matter so that form can actualize matter, and where religion, on the part of man, is the need of the Absolute-Who-Saves, and on the part of God, is the offering of salvation.⁴⁰

The mechanism of salvific synthesis is conceived so that Christ/religious-form can dominate man-matter/ historical reality as a religious reality (not as religion, which is an existential cultural form, but as a religious reality considered in its ontological essence).

Here, we need to define “religious form”. Generally speaking, a religious form is a form that actualizes the human-divine or divine-human synthesis, which is precisely the religious ontological

would not exist, even in any category whatsoever. Historical reality, according to Demaria, is not only a super-personal being but it is also an active organism (even if it is not a person or a substance), governed from a vital principle and a vital superpersonal logic. This vital logic is not an emanation of the synthetic being and of the components that it orders; instead, it is pure rationality that transcends its components and creates a new synthetic being. This vital superpersonal logic participates and ‘re-forms’ its components [inclusive persons] according to its principle.” Mantovani, M., “Metaphysics and History. The perspective of Tommaso Demaria”, paper presented at the III International Congress of Metaphysics (July 6-9 2006), Fondazione Identè per lo Studio e la Ricerca, Rome.

³⁶ As it is said in Ephesians 1: 10: “as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite [sum up] all things in him [Christ as head of the Mystical Body], things in heaven and things on earth”, RSVCE Bible.

³⁷ Without prejudice to the mystery of Grace, which operates the human-divine synthesis, elevating human nature so that it may participate in the Lords’ impenetrable divine nature, we know that, for us human beings this operation of divinization takes place in historical reality, whose metaphysical laws, like its physical laws, are created by the Lord.

³⁸ Demaria, T., *Scritti teologici inediti* (LAS – Roma: Roma, 2017), 69-124.

³⁹ “La materia di Cristo-forma è l’umanità intera da redimere, da salvare, non solo *in actu primo* (il che è già fatto), ma anche *in actu secundo*. Ora, *in actu secundo* Cristo-forma redime, salva, nella misura che viene accettato come forma: nella misura che si entra in sintesi con esso, come forma; nella misura pertanto che *si attua la sintesi ontologica tra Cristo-forma e uomo materia*” *Ib.* 109.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Ib.* 43.

synthesis expressed existentially and phenomenally in beliefs (dogmas), cults (liturgies), and traditions (precepts).

Says Demaria: Christ as a form must dominate the person historicized as such, if he wants to make a new creature, and with it must dominate all of historical reality... the domination of the form in fact is ontological-essential and not only moral or ritual-religious!⁴¹

In other words, the mechanism of redemption can be interpreted as one in which the actualization of the historical man, the Mystical Body and the whole of humanity (and therefore society and civilization) is produced by Christ as the religious form. This mechanism was designed by the Creator so that the salvific form would be that of Christianity, precisely the Christ form.

But the mechanism works equally even if man chooses another religious form, i.e. an absolute-that-saves who is different from Christ, and not just another saviour, but also an ideology or an idol such as money or football, etc.

Given the mechanism, it is the absolute-that-saves which actualizes both the historical man and the historical reality, and the result, the actualization of the historical man and the historical reality, will be different according to which absolute-that-saves is chosen. And the mechanism through which the absolute-that-saves, whatever it may be, dominates from above and from within the historical man and the historical reality and actualizes them according to his or its own form. Whether the absolute is Christ or a non-Christ religious form, the mechanism is the same.⁴²

Demaria identifies four fundamental aspects of any religious form that dominates and implements the matter of man and society and through which the human-divine (or human-not-divine) synthesis is realized (elsewhere Demaria calls them the four analytical dynamic transcendentals).⁴³ They are:

1. the moral form,
2. the educational form,
3. the social form, and
4. the missionary form.

Let's define each of them:

1. Moral Form. Christ (or another absolute-that-saves) is the norm of the Christian (or non-Christian) life: what builds Christ and his Mystical Body (or what builds man and society according to that absolute-that-saves) is good.
2. Educational Form. It consists in enabling man and society to live and act according to the chosen religious and moral form.
3. Social Form. It causes society, as a human coexistence, to be organized in congenial structures (democracy, dictatorship, communitarianism, free market, etc.). that are functional to the prevailing absolute-that-saves.
4. Missionary Form. It is what mobilizes the religious construction (Christian or non-Christian) of historical man and historical reality.⁴⁴

⁴¹ "Cristo infatti, come *forma*, deve dominare la *persona storicizzata* come tale, se vuole fare una *nuova creatura*, e con essa deve dominare tutta la realtà storica, *et quidem*, ontologicamente. Il *dominio della forma* infatti è *ontologico-essenziale* e non soltanto morale, o rituale-religioso!" *Ib.* 112.

⁴² *Ib.*

⁴³ Cf. Demaria, T., *Realismo dinamico. Il problema metafisico della realtà storica come superorganismo dinamico* (Publigráfica Editrice Vicenza: Vicenza, 2000), 179-194.

⁴⁴ Cf. Demaria, *Scritti teologici*, 113-5.

In short, according to Demaria, the functioning of historical reality is governed by mechanisms, metaphysical laws that, by analogy to the physical laws created to allow life in the universe, are designed to allow the Christification of humanity through the Christian religious form and its underlying moral form, educational form, social form and missionary form.

And, according to Demaria, this Christification happens only if Christ is welcomed as the Absolute-Who-Saves, knowingly or not (there remains the mystery of the salvation of non-Christians who are mysteriously united to Christ (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 14)).

Still, according to Demaria, the mechanism works not just for Christ as the Absolute-Who-Saves, but also with any other absolute-that-saves that is chosen by the individual and the community, whether it is another god or an ideology.⁴⁵

Indeed, Demaria more specifically articulates the absolute-that-saves in three absolutes:

1. the ontological-dynamic metaphysical absolute;
2. the ontological-dynamic religious absolute; and
3. the ontological-dynamic ideo-praxis absolute.⁴⁶

And each of these absolutes is in relation with five respective dynamic transcendentals, which are the five forms that we have already considered: religious, moral, educational, social and missionary.

This means that each absolute-that-saves (true or false as it may be) is, at the metaphysical level, a god (true or false); at the religious level, a religion (Christian or not); and at the ideo-praxis level, an ideo-praxis (Christian or not).

It is clearly evident that there is the possibility that a person can accept Christ as his personal form (metaphysical absolute), letting himself be sanctified as inserted into the Mystical Body (religious absolute), while living in a civilization that has chosen a materialistic ideo-praxis absolute, which produces atheism and secularism.⁴⁷

The ideal would be to live the harmony of the relationship with Christ, the Absolute-Who-Saves, on a personal level - my choice of the metaphysical absolute - , at the religious level - as a living member of the Mystical Body - , and at the ideo-praxis level - namely in a Christian society-.

Then, to construct the civilization of love, we must focus on the level of the ideo-praxis absolute and ensure that it is in harmony with the metaphysical and religious absolutes.

To build the civilization of love, the one Absolute-Who-Saves—Christ—must become the form not only of the single person inserted in the Mystical Body, but also of civilization.

The atheistic-materialistic world has relegated the metaphysical and religious absolutes to the individual sphere, creating an asymmetry in the total metaphysical mechanism, which was conceived-created by God to be a harmoniously functioning mechanism with various "levels" that feed and reinforce each other in a formidable system of coherence and solidarity that animate and propel every field.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Cf. *ib.* 113.

⁴⁶ Demaria, T., *Confronto sinottico delle tre ideologie. I trascendentali dinamici*, Atti del corso di studio Mid di Roma – Centro Nazareth, 26-30 dicembre 1986, Roma 1986 (Quaderno poligrafato), Premessa § 3.

⁴⁷ Demaria states that, in the context of the liberal-capitalist laicist ideology, the place of God as the primary ideological Absolute is assumed by matter, through the mediation of the industrial revolution, of technology, of money as a supreme good, of profit as supreme aspiration and economic power. If this is so, it is logical that materialism produces atheism and atheistic materialism will have as its practical effect secularism., *ib.* § II-4.

⁴⁸ Cf. *ib.* Premessa § 10.

To rediscover the dynamic harmony of the various levels—metaphysical, religious and of the ideo-praxis—and to build the civilization of love, we must introduce an ideo-praxis of love, that is, a rationalized ideology that is consistent with the metaphysical and the religious absolutes, an ideo-praxis that is embodied in society by religious, moral, educational, social and missionary levers.⁴⁹

In practice, what does this mean?

It means, that the individual, the Mystical Body and society, must:

1. first, foster a general awareness of the real possibility, even the necessity of building the civilization of love, of course, with the support of grace, by using the religious, moral, educational, social and missionary levers;
2. embody in the structures of society the principles of the Church's Social Doctrine, that are founded on love,⁵⁰ namely common good, universal destination of goods, subsidiarity, participation and solidarity,⁵¹ while promoting the fundamental values of society, truth, justice and freedom.⁵²

How? By refracting the synthetic religious lever into the four analytic levers:⁵³

1. by using the moral lever, designating as good what builds the civilization of love and stigmatizing what destroys it and embodying these principles in our communities (e.g. Deedmob, an online platform for volunteering), legislation and political and administrative organizations (e.g. the management of a park by the citizens of the district);

⁴⁹ Demaria calls the dynamic transcendentals also the “secret levers that dominate the world”, in the sense that is through them is given the form of a civilization (cf. *Ib.* Premessa § 6).

⁵⁰ “The first foundation of Catholic social teaching is Jesus' commandment to love: Love God above all things and love your neighbor as you love yourself. This is the foundation for all Christian morals, and therefore of the Church's social doctrine that is part of morals. Jesus said that the dual commandment of love is not only the first and most important of all commandments, but also a summary or compendium of all God's laws and the message of the prophets.” Williams, T., “The Foundations of the Church's Social Doctrine”, [accessed online the 10th December 2018](#).

⁵¹ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, n° 160-196, [accessed online the 9th December 2018](#).

⁵² *Ib.* n° 197-203, [accessed online the 9th December 2018](#).

⁵³ In fact, these levers are specific and yet interrelated and dynamic because every act is at the same time a religious, moral, educational, social, and missionary act, as Demaria asserts: First of all, the dynamic transcendentals are reversible to each other. In fact, as the transcendentals of the being as such, *formaliter distinguuntur, realiter identificantur seu convertuntur*. They formally distinguish themselves but identify themselves, convert, namely they reciprocate one another, they are ‘reversible’ in their objective reality. It follows that in its concrete reality, each individual transcendental translates itself into the reality of others, so that they can mutually exchange and be equivalent. The analytical dynamic transcendental of education, for example, will be such, to the extent that it is also a moral analytical dynamic transcendental, or a missionary one, and vice versa. It is the law of reversibility, which arises first and is presupposed by the others [“I TD sono innanzitutto reversibili fra loro. Essi infatti, come già i trascendentali dell'ente come tale, *formaliter distinguuntur, realiter identificantur seu convertuntur*. Si distinguono formalmente ma si identificano, si convertono, ossia *si reciprocano*, sono «reversibili», nella loro realtà oggettiva. Ne segue che nella sua realtà concreta, ogni singolo trascendentale si traduce nella realtà degli altri, si da potersi vicendevolmente scambiare e da equivalersi. Il TD analitico dell'educatività ad esempio sarà tale, nella misura che è anche TD analitico morale, o missionario, e viceversa. E' la *legge della reversibilità*, che si pone per prima e viene presupposta dalle altre.”] Demaria, T., *Metafisica della realtà storica* (Costruire: Bologna, 1975), 148-9. In the same sense: Since transcendental dynamics of religiosity, educativeness, morality, sociality and missionary reciprocate one another, they can neither exist nor be realized separately. They are concretely in solidarity with each other, conditioning each other and favoring their mutual implementation [“Per il fatto che i trascendentali dinamici della religiosità, educatività, moralità, socialità e missionarietà, si reciprocano, essi non possono né esistere né realizzarsi separatamente. Sono concretamente solidali fra loro, condizionandosi reciprocamente e favorendo la loro mutua attuazione.”] Demaria, T., *Sintesi sociale Cristiana* (Costruire: Bologna, 1975), 390.

2. by employing the educational lever, preparing the people, especially the young, to create and nurture the civilization of love, by teaching them—at schools and universities, and through other educational programs—the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church and how to implement them in social reality and by developing scientific research (e.g., the ontology of the company) etc.;
3. by using the social lever, through political and economic lobbying on social media, platforms, television series, and in video games etc.;
4. by employing the missionary lever, spreading the message of the civilization of love everywhere, with conferences, demonstrations, awareness movements etc.

The ideo-praxis that shapes our Western societies, the liberal-capitalist ideo-praxis, has led to the transformation of society according to its form, using the five levers of the historical reality, while running inevitably towards its ultimate end, which can be defined as a surrogate paradise in a trans-human land.

This inevitable progression cannot be stopped or reoriented, since every ideo-praxis tends to build itself, to reproduce itself, this implying that the only way to change the historical reality and build a different civilization is to replace the existing ideo-praxis with another one, in our case the ideo-praxis of love.⁵⁴

Simply trying to impose moral values on the atheistic-materialistic ideology is bound to fail. At most it may slow down some developments of the ideo-praxis, but the atheistic-materialistic ideo-praxis will increasingly and inevitably turn with strength and dynamism towards its ultimate goal: a dystopian transhumanism, because the absolute-that-saves is matter, with its techno-science.

The right path to take is to replace the present liberal-capitalist ideo-praxis with the Christian ideo-praxis, building the civilization of love in harmony with God as the metaphysical Absolute and

⁵⁴ Since Demaria defines historical reality as a dynamic Superorganism, the self-construction of this organism is worked by what dominates it from above and from within, namely the ideo-praxis. In this sense: 'Self-construction', let's say; and not 'construction'. It is not a matter of pedantry, nor of a pseudometaphysical fantasy. It is the term that corresponds, at the ontological-metaphysical level, to the true reality and to the authentic function of the superorganic-dynamic activist cycle (and also, with the due proportions, to the simple organic-dynamic activism cycle). Self-construction is also part of the nature of the dynamic organism. Precisely because 'dynamic' it must be built continuously. And because 'organism' must be built not from the outside, but from within. It must 'self-build'. But it is not possible any self-construction by the organism as an agent subject without having its own action. This is why the dynamic organism, and even more so the dynamic Superorganism, must self-build through its own practice. This will therefore be the immanent function of the praxis itself: the self-construction of the dynamic organism. In more concrete terms, the function of praxis is that of the self-building dynamic organism itself. It is his self-constructive activism. And the intrinsic, essential and specific end of the dynamic organism in an ontological function will be to construct itself. It will be its own self-construction. [“« Autocostruzione», diciamo; e non «costruzione». Non si tratta di pedanteria, né di una fantasia pseudometafisica. E' il termine che corrisponde, a livello ontologico-metafisico, alla realtà vera e all'autentica funzione del ciclo attivistico superorganico-dinamico (e anche, con le dovute proporzioni, al semplice ciclo attivistico organico-dinamico). Anche l'autocostruzione fa parte della natura dell'organismo dinamico. Appunto perché «dinamico» esso dev'esser costruito di continuo. E perché «organismo» deve venir costruito non già dal di fuori, ma dal di dentro. Deve «autocostruirsi». Ma non è possibile alcuna sua autocostruzione da parte dell'organismo come soggetto agente senza disporre di un'azione propria. È per questo che l'organismo dinamico, e a maggior ragione il SD, deve autocostruirsi mediante la propria prassi. Tale pertanto sarà la funzione immanente alla prassi stessa: l'autocostruzione dell'organismo dinamico. In termini più concreti, la funzione della prassi è quella stessa dell'organismo dinamico che si autocostruisce. È il suo attivismo autocostruttivo. E il fine intrinseco, essenziale e specifico dell'organismo dinamico in funzione ontologica, sarà quello di costruire se stesso. Sarà la propria autocostruzione.”] Demaria, T. *La realtà storica come Superorganismo dinamico* (Costruire: Bologna, 1975), 228.

the Mystical Body as the religious Absolute, and thus stimulating a virtuous circle, a formidable synergy, that will not only prevent our annihilation by nuclear war, by the hand of an unpredictable artificial intelligence or by the creation of a post-human race, but also build a civilization open to our salvation by Christ in all its dimensions, instilling in each person not only the knowledge and desire we need to improve our material life, but also the knowledge and the desire we need to attain true salvation.

In fact, we are already building the civilization of love, in all countries and civilizations, since we are created by love to love.

For this reason, the first step in building a civilization of love is promoting greater awareness of the many people and institutions that are already building it, for example by assessing the implementation of the five principles and the three fundamental values of society of the Social Doctrine of the Church through a quality testing system,⁵⁵ and by building “coalitions’ that are not only military and economic, but cultural, educational, philosophical and religious. Coalitions that can make clear that, behind many conflicts, there is often in play the power of economic groups. Coalitions capable of defending people from being exploited for improper ends. Let us arm our people with the culture of dialogue and encounter”, as stated by Pope Francis in his address for the conferral of the Charlemagne Prize.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ An existing example is B Corps which certifies a company’s social and environmental performance. See the official site: <https://bcorporation.net/> .

⁵⁶ Pope Francis, Conferral of the Charlemagne Prize Address of His Holiness Pope Francis, 6 May 2016.