FROM THE UNIVERSAL ONE TRUTH TO A GALAXY OF RELATIVE TRUTHS IN BUSINESS ETHICS EDUCATION

Insights from Marcel Gauchet

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Abstract

This paper questions the role and place of business ethics education in a university business school. Under this purview, it borrows from Marchel Gauchet's view of a university as a place where God's universal one truth is taught. This philosophy enables us to discuss how this universal one truth appears in twenty-first-century secularised universities and business schools. This undertaking allows us to reveal that universities' historical foundations and theological grounds has made business ethics courses unnecessary. Their necessity nowadays appears as a response to society and university secularisation whereby a surrogate moral is developed.

Keywords University; Business Schools; Business Ethics Education

INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, especially owing to various financial, environmental or operational scandals raising ethical questions (Beggs & Dean 2007, Bonini & Boraschi 2010, Marques et al. 2014, McMillan 2004, Rockness & Rockness 2005, Unerman & O'Dwyer 2004), business schools have been urged to teaching business ethics in their curricula (Boyce 2008; Beggs and Dean 2007). Supported by international accrediting bodies, business ethics has made its way into the business school either as a stand-alone course or incorporated in other courses (AASSB International 2004). Despite efforts of incorporating ethics education in business courses, the effectiveness of such endeavours is questioned. Albeit, scholars highlight a need for ethics courses, these supposedly enhancing moral efficacy, meaningfulness and courage (May et al. 2014). This, authors argue, would be especially vivid in religious universities (McCabe et al. 2006). On the other hand, the corporate world, disappointed with graduates, laments ethics courses' ineffectiveness (Sigurjonsson et al. 2015), blaming business schools directly and explicitly for unethical practices (Ghoshal 2005, Gioia 2003) as student ethical attitudes seem to remain unchanged (Jewe 2008).

Alongside business courses' development, philosophical and pedagogical questions have arisen as to what should be taught and how this should be done, as evidenced in the launch of the *Journal of Business Ethics Education* in 2004 (Bowie et al. 2004, Hooker 2004). Although, there is no doubt that business school graduates need to be ethics-savvy and behave themselves ethically, the question of what is ideal and how a university faculty of commerce can make this eventuate remain open questions. Therefore, this paper provokingly interrogates the necessity of having business ethics courses in a university setting. We are thereby not questioning the need for educating ethical professionals but the role and place business ethics courses can have within a university setting. To answer this question, it seems important to us that we well understand the essence of a university and its mission, which should enable us to unveil where business ethics courses can play a role. Pursuant to this, our paper's aim is with no doubt theoretical and consists of moving us out of our professional comfort zone. Our reflection is built upon the works of a prominent continental thinker of education and its constituting of ethical selves – Marcel Gauchet –. Although Marcel Gauchet is a postmodern who contributed to the events occurring in France in May 1968, his philosophy departs from that of his contemporary colleagues, his concern being to devise a genealogy of modernity and understand its discontents. To him, the world is not as it is without reasons, these being to be found in our deepest roots. Partaking in public debates and discourses on education at all levels, he departs from most of his peers who consider

education roots are in modernity and the advent of democracy and can be traced through psychology. Rather, answers to contemporary questions re higher education can be found in universities' Medieval origins (Gauchet et al. 2013, Gauchet et al. 2016). Whence this paper taking Gauchet's work as a theoretical framework to understand business ethics courses' role and place in university business faculties of commerce. Under this purview, the argument is organised as follows:

Sections one and two lay the theoretical framework based on Marcel Gauchet's education research. Firstly, we delve into universities as a place for universal truth, exploring the university's mission, faculties and universal aptitudes towards the Universal One Truth. Secondly, we discuss how universities in the twenty-first century's secularised education, teaching and training as they developed aptitudes to specialising. Section three discusses business schools and ethics education in light in light of the Universal One Truth. Lastly, section four brings business ethics education in the past and present with concluding remarks.

1. UNIVERSITY: A PLACE FOR THE UNIVERSAL ONE TRUTH

When speaking of a university, it is especially important to understand what this word *university* means (Gauchet et al. 2016). Whence returning to this word's etymology is the condition of possibility for asking the right questions and finding the right answers re education. Etymology reminds us that a university was initially a religious institution (1) acknowledging various degrees of knowledge of the Truth revealed by God (2). Given their esoteric nature, these features of God's truth would be landmarked with rites of passage and a special relationship between the learner and his master (3) enabled through the development of faculties and universal aptitudes (4).

1.1. A UNIVERSITY AS A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

Marcel Gauchet's 'master' considered that *"it was important for medieval universities to reflect on the relations of reason and faith; this reflection is the deepest soul of medieval university*" (Reboul 1989, p.49). In Latin languages, the word *universita* means "*the universal*". This *universal* was the meaning inherited from Low Latin and lasted until the twelfth century with the advent of High Latin. Then, *universita* has been subsumed into two, embracing also the notion of truth – *verita* –. Onwards, *universita* was understood *uni-verita*: the Universal One Truth (Gauchet et al. 2016). It proceeds thence that a university can only be the place where this Universal One Truth is sought and taught.

In the twelfth century, the only universal truth considered was that of God expressed through Jesus' teaching. Given the impossibility of knowing God in person – whence the need for a clergy operating as savvy intermediaries – a place exclusively dedicated to this teaching was necessary (Gauchet 1999). Pursuant to this, higher education institutions were formed by monks in Oxford (1096), Cambridge (1209), Parma (1117) or Sienna (1246) in Italy and most European capital cities. Albeit, the notion of *universita* was claimed where this *Universal One Truth* would be taught with the launch of the Paris University (Manitius 1931, Sorbon (de) 1271). A university was in its roots a religious place educating future devotees, mostly monks but also any person willing to serve the Lord in the best possible manner.

Universities' establishing by religious missions has continued until the nineteenth century (Brubacher & Rudy 2004): Harvard's Jesuit mission in 1636 in the earliest print announced as an aim to educate young people to know God and Jesus Christ. Likewise, Yale's Chancellor in 1754 stated that "colleges are Societies of Ministers, for training up persons for the work of the Ministry" (p.6). And until the 19th century the "clergy were the leading force in the founding of the colonial colleges and in the formulation of the original purposes of this institution" (p.8). But also Notre Dame University was founded by Christian religious communities to be places where "education fit with the aims of religion" (Bradley & Kauanui 2003). Gauchet (1999) reasons that all this must also be connected to Greek etymology: *Catholica* meaning *universal*. This pleonasm has reinforced the idea that a university has been set as the place where the Universal One Truth is taught.

1.2. A UNIVERSITY FOR RELIGIOUS TEACHING AND DEGREES

As attendance progresses, universities delivered certificates to their novices, validating their teaching. Those certificates fell within five categories, each of them representing a degree of personal development and command of the Universal One Truth (Gauchet 1999, Gauchet et al. 2013, Gauchet et al. 2016).

The first degree was the *Baccalaureate*, the admission certificate meaning that the candidate would be accepted as a *novice* capable of learning this Universal One Truth (Mergnac & Raenaudin 2009, Rashdall 1895). The term's etymology itself is very insightful: *baccalaureates* is the possible merger of *bacchalariatus* (lower rank in the Chanoine monk order) and *baccalaureus* (accreditation). Progressively, as the suffix changed, the word became *baccalarius* (*Baccalauréat* holder, then *bachelor*). Once admitted, the *bachelor* was supposed to listen to his masters for at least three years and absorb the truth delivered in each field of study. Once the *bachelor*'s learning of this Universal One Truth was considered

complete through silent listening, he could be granted a certificate called *Licensia* (Licence, Bachelor's degree).

The *Licensia* was recognised as a personal permission granted by religious authorities to question what had been learnt prior. This authorisation was the second degree of universal truth command by young people, this degree allowing the young man to really follow the master's step and fully embrace his teaching. At the post-*Licence* level, the master and the disciple chose each other: the young person wanted to be taught by that particular master whose views were especially important and meaningful to him. In return, the master would choose his own disciples in accordance with his belief in their capability of learning under his patronage and their fidelity to his person. Ultimately "*the perfection of the relationship is reached when the choice of a master by the disciple is mirrored by the choice of a disciple by the master, who elects him in the capacity of his designated heir"* (Gauchet et al. 2013, p.88). Being selected by the master would be an honour reserved only to a group of happy few. It does seem that this is the origin of Honours' degrees delivered by Anglo-Saxon universities (Malkin 1836).

The honoured bachelor would learn from the master until this latter considered that his disciple's education was complete. Only then would he consider his command of this Universal One Truth sufficient in order for him to become his assistant and second him in his *Magisterium* (master's degree, teaching/preaching) to novices (Gauchet et al., 2013, p.89). This mastery was what allowed the new second master to start teaching under the condition he would also contribute to developing knowledge of this Universal One Truth (Rashdall 1895).

After having proven the mastery of his subject through the educating of novices and bachelors, he could envisage choosing his own disciples, following the master's steps. Yet, he could opt for mundane activities or a monastic life through ordination. If so, the newly monk would be in a capacity of being selected by younger men considering him wise enough to be their own master (Gauchet et al. 2013, p.95). It was then only at the time he was selected as such that he could be considered wise enough to be admitted by other masters *qua* a peer. This wisdom would make him a *doctus* master, *viz.* a Doctor. Admitted within the cenacle as a doctor, he was allowed to produce his own view of the subject of his teaching and would be acknowledged by his peer for this (Lefebvre 1949).

After a certain amount of years on this doctorial position, the wise *Brother* could join the *Senate* where he would profess the Universal One Truth, being thereby admitted *qua* a *Professor* (Dauvillier 1959). Comparing Islamic and Christian teaching, Gauchet (1999)

elicits the idea that *professor* and *prophet* have the same etymology. The professor being a prophet at the same time; *professing* and *prophesising* appear as two facets of the same activity: teaching the Universal One Truth to novices. The professor-prophet's view of good and evil was central to any of his teaching, his disciples being systematically confronted with what we could nowadays call *ethical dilemmas* for which he always had a clear, working response inspired by the Holy Scriptures. Ultimately, bachelors, honoured bachelors and masters would share their mentor's ethical perceptions and behave themselves consistently with those.

1.3. A RITE OF PASSAGE TOWARDS THE UNIVERSAL ONE TRUTH

For these institutions' Christian founders, this Universal One Truth would be taught in a way enabling novices to develop all their faculties. In whichever faculty a master operated, his influence on his disciples embraced six main characteristics, making his teaching definitely a religious practice (Gauchet et al. 2013, pp.95-102).

The first characteristic of a University Master was the *personification* of knowledge of this Universal One Truth, as acknowledged by peers and disciples. A real master, argue Gauchet et al. (2013, p.96) "*is the one who makes sense of what we ignore more than of what we already know*". The master was recognised through his hindsight capability regarding his own command of the Universal One Truth.

The second characteristic proceeds from the first: the master "*helps you understand yourself, not psychologically by epistemically: he brings you means of defining a finer position vis-à-vis knowledge*" of this Universal One Truth (Gauchet al. 2013, p.97)

The third characteristic of a master-disciple relationship relates to the opaqueness of knowledge whilst this Universal One Truth "*comprehends an initiatic dimension. The master is the one who enables entry"* (Gauchet al. 2013, p.97). The master was the one teaching the customs and habits, manners and language specific to his teaching. This would ultimately enable the disciple to become a *member* of this society. As Jesus' did through parables, the master would teach the enigmatic dimensions of the Universal One Truth. Cultivating a form of *teaching through secret* forced the disciple was to find answers in himself (Reboul 1989, pp.56-57).

The fourth characteristic proceeds from the latter: a certain father-son relationship in which the master operates like a *mentor* or a *spiritual father*. This relationships' fifth characteristic is found in the mode of teaching always based upon speech: "*the master-disciple relationships main peculiarity is that it holds on to the power of speech*" (Gauchet al. 2013,

p.100). Although the master's teaching could be in writing and publicly accessible, "*it is through personal and informal speech that its initiatic dimension is complete.*" (Gauchet al. 2013, p.101). This oral transmission would not only occur through truth telling but also and foremost "*through questioning, whereby he would constraint his disciple to quest*" (Reboul 1989, p.67) for the Universal One Truth. Sixthly, the master-disciple relationship was characterised by a personal implication from the master. In his transmission activity, he was giving his time and knowledge as well as his moral and spiritual legacy to the honoured young man.

In this special relation binding a master and his disciple, the process towards the Universal One Truth was full or *rites of passage*, become various forms of hazing since the 19th century, especially American universities (Gauchet et al. 2013). Each degree of command of a step towards the Universal One Truth was validated through a ceremony where the newly graduated was officially and solemnly delivered a parchment assessing his new title as acknowledged by his master and his peers. Next, admission to the next level was characterised by its own ceremony with peers in the same situation. At the beginning of each degree, some keys to the understanding of symbols and language were revealed to the novice, bachelor, master and then doctor. At each degree corresponded a certain level and amount of parcels of truth ceremonially unveiled. All this contributed to the sacral and esoteric dimension of admission into this world where the Universal One Truth would be studied (Gauchet et al. 2013).

1.4. Faculties and Universal Aptitudes towards the Universal One Truth

In the twenty-first century, hazing has been made illegal in a number of countries because of the excesses whither it could lead (Gauchet et al. 2013, 2016). Yet, to Gauchet et al. (2013), one merit of these rites of passage from one degree to another was that they reminded the young man that his quest for this Universal One Truth would be a long and difficult journey emotionally, physically, and morally.

For Gauchet et al. (2013) the physical hardship on novices could relate to Foucault's *embodiment* through *subjugation* (Foucault 1966, Foucault 1969). That is, given the master-disciple relationship's six characteristics, the novice would subject himself in full to his master and fulfil any obligation imposed on him. One of these would consist of doing a certain amount of handy works for him, *e.g.* carrying his teaching material, opening doors before him, etc. But also, as in prisons or in mental health institutions, novices' embodiment would consist of entirely relinquishing time control by living in communities where every

single action would was metred and execution controlled (Foucault 1972, Foucault 1975). Such seemed to be the case because this learning-as-a-journey-quest was difficult and unnatural. Masters were there to help novices "*overcome the intrinsic difficulty pertaining to the dominating of such highly artificial approaches*" (Gauchet et al. 2016, p.204). Therefore, daily activities were all scheduled, commencing with morning prayer, some physical exercising and then teaching. Embracing here a foucauldian perspective, Gauchet et al. (2013) tend to consider that such embodiment and subjugation in this journey to the Universal One Truth required a strict *discipline* from novices.

This is what took Gauchet (1999) to associate this disciplinary practice with the emergence of disciplines organised in faculties. The novice would learn a life discipline, itself having some topical dimensions characterising a university. With the establishment of the Paris University in particular, such faculties were spiritual and moral, but also intellectual and physical. A university was to develop colleges (*faculties*) where each of these dimensions would be taught. Any novice would be taught each of these: theology and prayer, Modern Latin and Ancient Greek, medicine and pharmacopeia, mathematics and sports. Physical education, though often forgotten when mentioning the role of universities, is central for Gauchet et al. (2013), for this evidences Robert de Sorbon's programme: *mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body).

Supposedly, universities would educate future religious and political leaders in their respective countries, faithful people leading a holy life inspired by Jesus' Gospel. In every single course, novices were taught the right conduct, forms of life ethics being brought into each subject, even though it was not explicitly called such. This is how, a university came to be organised around separate faculties with specialists of each area teaching their subject. These specialists, Gauchet (1999) reasons, were acting mainly in four fields: Theology, Law, Arts, Medicine and Pharmacopeia. In their quest for this Universal One Truth, novices would first be to develop these four faculties in addition to their physical and moral aptitudes. They would therefore attend classes from the four core faculties until they could be admitted as *honoured bachelors* following the step of one master especially interested and authoritative in one particular field. A *faculty* in a university was in its essence a place where a special aptitude for searching this Universal One Truth would emerge and then develop, *viz.* novice's personal way of seeking and honouring the Lord (Gauchet 1999).

All told, a university, in its history and essence, has been a place devoted to a personal quest for the Universal One Truth revealed by God. A university has been an institution for novices from aristocratic families and therefore aimed at ruling the world following Jesus' path. By

their knowledge of God's Universal One Truth, they would be in a capacity of leading their people on the right track to the Lord.

2. UNIVERSITIES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

It could be reasonably objected that the university theorised by Gauchet (1999) has long disappeared and especially in this secularised, postmodern world. Interestingly, Gauchet et al. (2013, 2016) have also endeavoured to conceive of contemporary universities. The notion of Universal One Truth revealed by God has lost most of its meaning in our twenty-first-century Western societies; albeit, some leftovers remain…

2.1. UNIVERSITIES AS SECULAR INSTITUTIONS

Undoubtedly, universities' *raison d'être* in the twenty-first century has evolved, owing mainly to society secularisation, which Gauchet et al. (2013) call *the advent of democracy*. Whence it is relatively simple to identify what a university is not (anymore): an institution teaching the Universal One Truth. Yet, what a university's *raison d'être* is not subject to consensus, mainly two streams of thought competing on the matter (Gauchet et al. 2013, Reboul 1989).

Such competition pertains universities' subscribing to the dominant paradigm of their time (Gauchet et al. 2013, pp.115-143), resulting in their religious foundations being challenged. The challenging of such a long-standing tradition and well-established roots requires that a new, strong, alternative paradigm be devised (Gauchet 1999): Auguste Comte's philosophy. After the *religious* state, in the *positive state*, scientific methods based upon proof and refutation have modelled universities, where knowledge was to be proved and approved by the community (Comte 1844). In the *positive state*, universities are aimed at explaining the functioning of the universe through universal laws derived from scientific methods.

Thus, universities shifted from the place teaching the Universal One Truth to the place explaining and teaching the functioning of the Universe. Such would be achieved through the development and application of *scientific methods* in whichever field. The implicit assumption, highlighted by Reboul (1989), is that each field, faculty or disciplines separately does not explain the functioning of the universe; it is their conjunction that meets this aim. Separately, just a constellation within the whole universe is studied; whence the entire galaxy of knowledge would form the *Universe-city* whither two roles were assigned. On one hand, universities were expected to produce and validate knowledge explaining the functioning of the *Universe*. Secondly, they were to teach this knowledge and validate its effective learning

by students. This is what was found in traditional approaches to teaching and learning in Western universities until the May-1968 turn until entry into postmodernity and today's *post-positive* world (Gauchet 1999, Gauchet et al. 2013, Gauchet et al. 2016)

In the *post-positive* state, not envisaged at all by Auguste Comte, and accelerated by the collapse of the USSR in 1991, certainties have been deeply challenged: the new paradigm was characterised by what they call *the relativistic* profoundly affecting universities (Gauchet 1999, Gauchet et al. 2013, Gauchet et al. 2016). The postmodern era was theorised, fed and spread by prominent humanities scholars, those informing many of this journal's publications (*e.g.* Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, etc.)[1]. The main characteristic of this postmodern state university appears as the rejection of a certain amount of former laws explaining the universe, accused of failing to understand its subtleties. This is how, for Gauchet et al. (2013) new disciplines have emerged and developed autonomously, such as sociology or education sciences.

Any facet of the universe could become a separate discipline with specific approaches and views, the assumption being that none should prevail over the others whilst any form of obscurantism, including religious belief, were institutionally rejected (Gauchet 1999). In this postmodern state, there can be no universal truth, be it the One revealed or a set of laws ruling the universe. The university then became what Gauchet et al. (2013, p.205) noted as *a galaxy of constellations*: in each constellation, truth takes multiple forms and can even vary from one person to another; truth is not universal anymore but personal and contingent.

2.2. UNIVERSITIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ENLIGHTENED CITIZENS AND PROFESSIONALS

Gauchet et al.'s (2013) *advent of democracy* characterising twenty-first-century Western societies takes on a second and more tangible form when it comes to universities: mass-enrolment and a (quasi-human) right to education, resulting in a university's audience and functioning significantly departing from their origins.

The utmost manifestation of this mass enrolment in universities and new right to education can lie in the development of MOOCs whose name is a programme in itself: Massive Open Online Courses (Gauchet et al. 2016, p.214). With massive amounts of students enrolled in universities, these institutions are not educating a handful of young aristocratic men, whereof some would aspire to become monks. A question central to twenty-first-century universities'

[1] As it is not the purpose of this paper to engage in an epistemological discussion of postmodernism or highlight nuances between the various postmodern thinkers or their critiques, we just shed light on Marcel Gauchet's argument re their influence on twenty-first-century universities.

raison d'être has been left unanswered: whom are universities serving today? When they were first established, they were serving God through the teaching of His Universal One Truth. Nowadays, it is ambiguous at whom universities are aimed: society or students (Gauchet et al. 2013, Gauchet et al. 2016, Mercer 1996). The answer to this question is far from unanimous and reveals political splits. A leftist approach directly inherited from postmodern thinkers would consider that universities serve society by educating and making enlightened citizens. For leftists, education and universities in particular contribute to the construction of citizens and should also facilitate mobility across social classes. A rightist approach would rather consider that universities serve students by helping find their place in society and obtain a (well-paid) occupation. This political split is such that, in the case of the University of Michigan Business School for instance, "*implementing a Global citizenship program requires courage […] It's not easy*" (Mercer 1996, p.111). This unfinished debate has opened for new questions inexistent as the first universities established in the Middle Ages were serving God.

The first question asked is that of admission and requirements for enrolment. For Gauchet et al. 2013, pp.59-83), leftists see unconditional admission as compulsory in the construction of enlightened citizen: anybody willing to enrol should be allowed in and attend the classes he or she chooses. This approach is especially dominant in continental European countries, namely France, and is often associated with crowded lecture theatres and high failure rates at the bachelor's level (Gauchet et al. 2013). The original view backlashes by questioning whether failed students can be considered enlightened and capable of serving society… The opposite approach, that tends to characterise Anglo-Saxon countries or Japan, results in universities selecting the sole students they consider capable of succeeding. Resultantly, the vast majority of prospective students may find themselves with no access to the desired education and enlightenment. Seemingly, the original mutual choice of a master and his disciple no longer characterises the journey towards and within a university[2]. Students tend no longer to choose their master or mentor, when applying for an institution. In return, a committee or a board makes the decision, rarely by those who will be their master. Unsurprisingly, the master-disciple special relationship no longer holds in universities, partly because educators have so many students that they cannot follow their individual construction and progress (Gauchet et al. 2013, Gauchet et al. 2016).

[2] This point applies to Bachelors' degrees and to some extent to masters' degrees whilst the doctoral journey remains a master-disciple relationship. Some exceptions seem to remain at Oxford and Cambridge (Brockliss 2016).

The second question revealed by these debates re universities' audience concerns the format of curricula. Should these be à la Carte or standard? Should students enrol in a pre-conceived programme or should they build one of their own? On this particular account, Gauchet et al. (2013, 2016) note that the answer to this question does not necessarily fits within the leftist-rightist political debate, either position belonging potentially to one side or the other. Re à la Carte curricula, the proponents of citizens' construction consider that students can choose whichever subjects they want, since any of these will open their mind and make them good citizens. For almost the opposite reason, the proponents of personal development see in the free choice of courses the utmost expression of the student's free will, being sole knowing what is best for them. Re standard or set courses, the proponents of citizens' construction consider that fulfilling society's needs requires set contents and curricula: an enlighten citizen *must know* a series of things and acquire a series of skills. By definition, the aspiring student does not know yet what he or she needs and what is good for his or her construction. Conversely, the proponents of personal development and choice would borrow from Signal Theory and argue that standards are necessary in order for students to label themselves with something intelligible and comparable for employers: the necessity of similar characteristics should lead to set curricula.

2.3. EDUCATING, TEACHING AND TRAINING

As the twenty-first-century university is no longer the place where the Universal One Truth is taught, it is a place where something else is taught. For Gauchet et al. (2016), even though nowadays' universities have very little in common with yesteryears', the journey to this part of knowledge re the functioning of a constellation within the universe remains: knowledge is still a construction made of bricks to be taught in a certain order and according to a certain protocol. Directly inherited from the time of universities' establishing, the journey landmarked with degrees of commands has not much changed: students enrol in bachelor's programmes for three to four years. During this time, they learn very scholarly material without interacting much with their instructors. What Gauchet (2016) highlights is that the specificity of this *bachelor's* degree is that students do repeat what they have read and heard in class. In this respect, a new linguistic digression seems necessary to Gauchet et al. (2016), highlighting the fact that, in French language, a verb characterises this type of work expected of students: *bachoter* (to cram in English). Exams determine the degree of absorption and their capability of delivering this basic knowledge. Passing grants higher education's first degree.

In some countries – *e.g.* the United States, Australia or New Zealand – undergraduates can then enrol in an honours' programme where they can conduct a research project opening for a masters' degree or a PhD (Scott 2005). On rare occasions, students choose a university because of a particular Master. Their application to a programme is assessed administratively and rests upon academic records. Those students targeting an academic life tend to enrol in programmes taught by research whilst those aiming at non-academic occupations tend to enrol in curricula based on coursework. In smaller cohorts than students in bachelors' programmes, aspiring masters more easily interact with their instructors expecting them to question their discipline and demonstrate willingness not just to learn but understand. They are supposedly critical and reflexive on their learning. Exams then serve to prove this ability to reflect on knowledge. Passing grants them the coveted degree (honours, masters, PhD).

As compared to yesteryears' universities organised around four faculties, twenty-first-century universities revolve around a number of faculties, varying from one institution to another (*e.g.* faculty of humanities, faculty of commerce, faculty of social sciences, faculty of public affairs, faculty of engineering, etc.) Likewise, each faculty in early time universities was delivering one degree at each level; nowadays there is potentially a multitude of degrees delivered by the same faculty. This dispersion of higher-education degrees contributes to the existence of a *galaxy of constellations* (Gauchet et al. 2013, p.205).

In the twentieth century, the notion of higher education itself has embraced a new *galaxy of meanings* as compared to yesteryears (Gauchet et al. 2016). In medieval universities, education was addressed to young men only enrolled when entering into adulthood. Nowadays, even though the path from secondary school to university is still the main way of entering into higher education, it is not the sole anymore. Executive education programmes are developed, some responding to a specific demand and others addressed to any experienced professionals, such as DBAs or MBAs (Mercer 1996, Mintzberg 2004). Universities nowadays are to respond to needs for constant education and updated knowledge, which was not necessarily that vivid when they were teaching God's Universal One Truth. Some students join a university after having worked for a while or had a significant life experience such as, for instance Australian or New Zealand youngsters' Big Overseas Experience. Some others do reenrol in an honours', masters' or doctoral programme after an interruption during which they have gained in maturity. Twenty-first century students' needs and expectations are certainly different from those of twelfth century young men, argue Gauchet et al. (2013) at the same time as they acknowledge a major difficulty in identifying right now what those are exactly. Something is certain: owing to the dismantling

of the Universal One Truth into a galaxy of relative truths and the availability of knowledge sources facilitated by the World Wide Web, universities' mission is confronted with a new major challenge.

2.4. FROM DEVELOPING APTITUDES TO SPECIALISING (HIGHLY SPECIALISED FACULTIES)

Rather than the Universal One Truth or ways to attain it, the twenty-first-century university, owing to its fragmentation and functioning in silos, educates specialists of one particular realm. Whilst Gauchet et al. (2013) highlight that the twentieth century university still taught generalists with core courses attended by an entire cohort of students the twenty-first century appears as the advent of the highly specialised university. In most institutions, students enrol with a specialism in their first-year of higher-education. For instance, in South African business schools, from the first semester of the first year, students attend classes in one subject only, neglecting all others, *e.g.* accounting at the expense of business economics, management, marketing, HR, strategy or finance. This hyper-specialised teaching often presents itself as highly technical at the expense of judgement formation and opinion argumentation, deplored by employers (Retief & Villiers (de) 2013). The case of South African business schools supports Gauchet' et al. (2016) point that contemporary universities have partly lost track of their original and core mission – enlightening – as though the rightist approach to studies were prevailing.

Gauchet et al. (2013) further reason that this increasing specialism and technicality in university curricula results in a major confusion as to what teaching and learning mean in our century. At the foundation of medieval universities, students would not necessarily require that their teaching be enacted and transformed into a skill expressed in a line on their resume. Yesteryears, masters had control over what needs to be known and in what order; nowadays, students seem to be placed at the centre of a university setting with their needs to be immediately fulfilled. There seems to be a myth according to which "there is no efficient learning other than the one coming from the learner, and grounded in his or her needs" (Gauchet et al. 2013, p.115). This makes "us forget the *raison d'être* of the institution" (Gauchet et al. 2013, p.116). By relinquishing its religious grounds, the twenty-first-century university has also and foremost abandoned the initatic dimension in teaching and learning, because "knowledge supposedly *scholarly,* precisely, has been opposed to a true culture the bourgeois class owns, and notwithstanding the simulacrum of democratisation organised by the system itself" (Gauchet et al. 2013, p.204).

Rather than being admitted as part of the university community seeking for the Universal One Truth, the student seeks for actionable teaching with immediate gains (Gauchet et al. 2013, pp.209-250). This may have led universities to engage in teaching and assessing *skills* associated with learning goals and *pedagogism*, *viz.* "a process of ideologisation" (Gauchet et al. 2013, p.73) purporting scientific approaches to teaching and learning with no grounds other than the justification of their discipline's *raison d'être* by education scientists. This is how universities have stepwise engaged in pedagogical engineering with a teaching focus on students' activities and outcomes. As a result, learning is not perceived anymore as a journey towards maturity and knowledge but an occupation until getting a paid job.

The *skills* taught belong to three realms: knowing, know-how, know-how-to-be. What is taught is a combination of hard skills presented as a discipline's common knowledge (Gauchet et al. 2013, p.232) and soft skills through numerous ludic pedagogical activities (*e.g.* serious games, Gauchet et al. 2013, p.225). Command of skills has resulted in the reign of marks based upon purportedly objective assessment grids and criteria, thereby enabling the rise of standards. Identifying this phenomenon, Gauchet et al. (2016) highlight a paradox in the twenty-first-century university: although the Universal One Truth is no longer taught, all universities converge to adopting the same teaching and learning standards. Eventually, there is no more difference across institutions: no Universal One Truth taught anymore but taught in a Universal One Way! This is something also often deplored by scholars working in AACSB-accredited institutions: the standardisation of teaching and assessing makes their institution lose its specificities in the galaxy of universities (Swanson 2004; Bennis O'Toole 2005). The same textbooks are used in most institutions, course contents are alike; so are case studies and exercises (Parker 2002).

Notwithstanding these concerns, Gauchet et al. (2013, 2016) see two real progresses in twenty-first-century universities: lifelong learning and the teaching of learning. As the original university was teaching the Universal One Truth, the teaching was resting upon the implicit assumption that this truth is set and does not really evolve. Once learnt, it was definitely acquired. Nowadays, scientific progress in most areas results in knowledge being potentially obsolete. In the mission of educating either future professionals or enlightened citizens, it seems beneficial to Gauchet et al. (2013, 2016) that students learn how to learn and update the knowledge they have gained. Twenty-first-century universities teach students to constantly adapt to their ever-changing world, which we understand under the combination of *reflexivity* and *critical thinking* (Howard et al. 2015, Nonet et al. 2016, Seele 2016). In sum, according to Gauchet et al. (2013, 2016), twenty-first-century universities have little in

common with the institutions established by monks to teach the Universal One Truth. Relative, the truth appears as specialised and functional: it should help students and graduates find their place within society. This new university paradigm has been accompanied with the development of business schools and business ethics courses they teach.

3. BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND ETHICS EDUCATION: IN LIGHT OF THE UNIVERSAL ONE TRUTH

Pursuant to discussions as to what a university is for in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, education philosophers wonder, "what is a business school for at all? Why should a university engage in the business of training for business? Who benefits from it?" (Abend 2013, p.184). Admittedly, money-making can be learnt, "yet for the business school it is more important to promote social progress and welfare. Its justification '*must*' be a social one" (p.185). A business school's mission was historically born from the womb of the overall university. In reaction to financial scandals, business schools rethink their mission, (1) which may bring them a tinge closer to their original roots. Ethics education was a justification for the business school's existence (2) that linked it back to the Universal One Truth (3). Nowadays, we are witnessing to a revival of ethics education in most business schools (4).

3.1. BUSINESS SCHOOLS' MISSION

Business schools' mission is not separate from that of the founding university; it is not separate from the Universal One Truth. Mission "provides a foundation for a search for greater meaning and exploration of human experience" (Feldner 2006, p.72). Just like "a business is not defined by its name, statute, or articles of incorporations" but rather by its mission, universities too will connect the teaching of business management to spirituality (Wilk et al. 2000). Currently, a handful of religiously missioned universities worldwide are reaching back to their religious/spiritual mission. Examples are Catholic universities with a mission grounded in spirituality, amongst which Santa Clara University whose mission statement claims: *"Santa Clara University will educate citizens and leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion to foster a more humane, just and sustainable world"* (Delbecq 2010, p.241). Launching from such a mission statement can eventually lead to managerial integrity and morality in any organisational culture, with very clear aims. The University of Navarra in Spain formally encourages staff "to seek and present the truth; contribute to the academic, cultural and personal education of its students; promote academic research and

healthcare activities; provide suitable opportunities for the development of its professors and employees; and carry out broad cultural outreach and social promotion work with a clear goal of service" [3]. Christian values "form the basis of teaching, research and the university community"[4] at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Germany whilst the Private Pedagogical University of the Diocese of Linz in Austria is "supported by the Catholic Church of Upper Austria and is committed to the Christian-humanistic image of humanity and the world and its values"[5]. Seemingly, these universities feel a need for being loyal to their history and purpose, as explicitly pointed to by the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Italy. "Faithful to its original calling, the faculty still turns out technically and scientifically qualified graduates capable of giving an anthropological and Christian perspective to the profession, creating a work and study environment with a blend of scientific and religious visions of the world"[6]. These universities' students find themselves de facto encouraged to seek for the Universal One Truth, just like Medieval novices.

3.2 Initiation of Ethics Education

Partaking in business education in the early 1900's, ethics was initially internalised in the business schools' mission, purpose and *raison d'être*, which granted legitimacy and recognition. Ethics education was part of the "point, mission and self-understanding; it was not one additional objective that business schools should have, among others" (Abend 2013, p.191). There was no need to treat education re ethics as a separate subject; rather it was the driving force that took all its energy from early universities' Universal mission. Ethics was integrated in all school activities, implicitly instilled as part of the Universe, in contradistinction to the twenty-first century where it is explicitly taught in one course (Rutherford et al. 2012).

The term 'business ethics' in the U.S specified more ethics in corporations, while in Europe, the emphasis was on trade and business proceeding from the Protestant work ethic (De George 1995). Business ethics was dismissed in the first decades of the twentieth century and started to be taught in the 1970s when it emerged as an academic field. It developed in the 1980's and well established in the 1990's. Notwithstanding this erratic spread, "ethics was constitutive of the business school project one hundred years ago" (Abend 2013, p.172).

[3] https://www.unav.edu/en/web/conoce-la-universidad/ideario-de-la-universidad
[4] http://www.ku.de/en/prospective-students/why-choose-the-ku/the-ku-catholic/
[5] https://www.phdl.at/ueber_uns/organisation/profil/leitbild/
[6] http://www.ucsc.it/our-campuses-rome#content

Ethics was not one course given back than but rather "a lens through which the whole project is conceived and implemented" (Abend 2013, p.172).

From 1900-1936, more than 223 scholarly articles mentioned business ethics in terms such as 'business morality', 'business integrity', 'morals of trader' and 'commercial morality'. The University of California and Yale University began giving public lectures emphasising ethics in business: "those lectures were a major advance in terms of the legitimacy of the very claim that business ought to be conducted ethically" (Abend 2013, p.179). Until the 1960's, business ethics was iterated in the form of business philanthropy. It was not until the 1970's that the field of business ethics began to hold ground in academia with business schools offering a course in business ethics by 1980 (Abend 2013). Universities started to stress ethics in business as a way of launching their business curricula. The business school education evolved from trade schools teaching practitioners business as a profession to one of creating knowledge through research (Bennis & O'Toole 2005).

Not forgetting that a university existed to educate future devotees, whom willing to serve God will serve society (Gauchet 1999). Naturally, twenty-first-century "business schools with a religious affiliation will be more likely to require a business ethics course in the undergraduate curriculum" (Rutherford et al. 2012, p.179). Pursuant to this, students from religious missioned universities will be more receptive to business ethics than other students (May et al. 2014) where they and faculty members naturally embrace it (Sabbaghi & Cavanagh 2015)

3.3 A Return to The Universal One Truth

Reviewing ethics education in light of the original university mission reveals that teaching business ethics is necessary when no credible alternative is in view. This is especially vivid with the abstruse role of the modern secularised university highlighted by Gauchet et al. (2013, 2016). This is the case until an antithesis of some sort happens and leads universities to reconnect with their roots (Calkins 2000).

All in all, this appears as "why we value human life and why we value some aspects of human life more than others – questions that often lead to theological reflection" (Calkins, 2000, p.339). Affecting people's lives (Creation's lives), business decision-making can "evoke the individual and collective values questioning and theological reflections..." (p.342) calling for religion as a relevant matter with moral precepts and stories. Thereby, higher-education institutions would naturally "reclaim their religious identities...and enliven their interest in religious affairs..." (p.348).

Ultimately, "religion may be one of the possible last resorts for teaching business ethics and promoting ethical decision-making" (Chen & Tang 2013, p.548). For now, as long as this 'return to what was' (Abend 2013, Brubacher & Rudy 2004) does not see the light, ethics education immured in courses is here to stay. As long as "the important role of faith-based ethical systems" is under-estimated, something may well be missing in "frameworks for ethical business behaviour" (Epstein 2002, p.92). It is the distinctiveness of religion's "moral reasoning that should interest business ethicists concerned with methodological completeness" (Calkins 2000, p.347). A recent approach to teaching business ethics calls for this development of 'moral identity' whereby student's moral judgement can be strengthened more effectively than rule-based teaching (Gu & Neesham 2014).

The difficulty academia faces in incorporating religiosity within business education lies in the overemphasis on rationality and the general climate of shunning away such discussions. It is what Gauchet et al. (2013) refer to as the '*galaxy of relative truths*': no one wants to talk about the 'why' issues of life but rather wish to focus more on the 'how'. Students think in terms of competition and do not feel connected but rather fragmented and isolated (Epstein 2002). Although making business students more religious and ethical cannot happen overnight, educating them through "repetition may reinforce and crystallise religious and ethical values in their academic journey" (Chen and Tang, 2013, p.547). What is needed is "to help prepare students to consider the possibility that business endeavours, spirituality and religious commitment can be inextricable parts of a coherent life" (Epstein 2002, p.91). Encouraging students to actively participate in their religion of choice can be a fair way of spreading the non-procedural teaching of ethics in business schools (Conroy and Emerson, 2004). To date, ethics education devoid of religious roots is here to linger. It is a need no matter how far universities have dismantled the Universal One Truth (Gauchet et al. 2016); the one consequence of such desertion is ethics courses in business schools. Ethics courses form morals made up from naught, morals that are contextual and necessarily contingent upon the institution and its students. Even when the truth that is taught has become specialised and functional (Gauchet et al. 2013), ethics courses seemingly remain a necessity.

3.4 Reemphasis on Ethics in Today's Business Education

When universities retain an ambiguous identity relative to their history, religious values can only remain a moulded shadow crushed into ethics education, whilst Medieval universities would certainly not question this. In religiously grounded university business schools, ethics education was historically simple religious education, ethical and religious values conflating. Over time, as people started moving towards a more secular and *positive state*, ethics began

to take on a secular appeal devoid of religious connotations. This led to confusion and misunderstanding around the role of business schools and the status given to ethics education. After the financial market crash with scandals, it was realised that "the needs of today's and future generations were different from those of past ones" (Marques et al. 2014). A wide schism has taken place. Paraphrasing Aristotle on the corrupt youth of his time (Celano 2018), one could say that today's executives who fail do not fail because of a lack of expertise or knowledge; they fail because of a lack of morality, interpersonal skills and wisdom. In fact, "Aristotle taught that genuine leadership consisted in the ability to identify and serve the common good… It requires an education in moral reasoning" (Thomas Lindsay in Bennis and O'Toole, 2005, p.103).

Nowadays, business schools have responded to the latest crisis by placing more emphasis on ethics and corporate governance, so that missions at business schools are being communicated with new explicit wordings (Charafedine 2011). For example, at Stanford Business School, "one of the four essential components of a managerial mindset is Social Impact – developing innovative effective solutions to social problems for a more just, sustainable, and healthy world" (p.14).

The MBA oath with the purpose of responsible value creation is a first step in embracing spirituality in business (http:/mbaoath.org). It is aimed at ensuring that graduates become of great character and leadership, not mere close-minded technocrats. Because of the previous 'economic disruption' ascribed by many to business schools' programmes preparing future business leaders for the workplace, "the Deans of Harvard and Wharton have, each for themselves, been working on rigorous revisions of their curricula" (Marques et al. 2014, p.198). Resultantly, Harvard MBA programme has undergone a complete facelift, emphasising more ethics and teamwork. For its part, Wharton Business School has launched a "doctoral programme in ethics and legal studies" (Alsop 2006, p.13).

Outwith these two apparently isolated cases, two remarks can be made. Firstly, Ivy League universities have been facing the problem of making ethics more than a subject but something whereof students and graduates can make real sense. It can be hoped that, once this approach starts being effective, other universities will follow. Secondly, search on Google and one can find business schools offering 'conscious MBAs', 'ethical MBAs' and 'socially responsible MBAs' all in an effort to rebuild the "reputation of business practices in the eyes of stakeholders" (Marques et al. 2014, p.198). All these efforts are a result of acknowledging a problem with the status quo; acknowledging that the current education in business schools

needs an ethical component as the notion of Universal Truth revealed by God has lost its essence in twenty-first century Western societies (Gauchet 1999). Even as business schools, under guidance from accrediting bodies such as the AACSB, review their mission and incorporate ethics-related specialisms into curricula, business students are still rated as the most unethical compared to their colleagues in other disciplines (Devonish et al. 2009).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although the 1970's and 1980's saw business education entailing multidisciplinary research and teaching through staff holding advanced degrees in "mathematics, anthropology, sociology, engineering, decision sciences, economics and psychology" (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005, p.100), the last two decades have seen a hiring of narrowly specialised, discipline-based doctorates and a lack of humanities education in business schools, resulting in highly technical and procedural teaching (Retief & Villiers (de) 2013). Unsurprisingly, the reign of workable knowledge and immediate return on learning led students to seek quick wins with actionable knowledge (Gauchet et al. 2013). Even before financial scandals, business students spent "95% of their time learning how to calculate with a view to maximizing wealth. Just 5% of their time is spent developing moral capacities" (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005, p.103). Turning business studies into a pure science has suppressed moral considerations, values, and intentionality in the theories and prescriptions usually taught by business academics (Roca 2008). This has freed students from any sense of 'moral, responsibly'. *In lieu* of the Universal One Truth was a *galaxy of truths* (Gauchet et al. 2013).

Business school scholars have been teaching without a soul (Neal 1997) with their publishing activity mostly guided by the *Publish or Perish* imperative (L'Huillier 2012, Zamojcin & Bernardi 2013). Within this scheme, even academics have been implicitly encouraged to fabricate, falsify and plagiarise academic research in order to qualify academically (Bennis & O'Toole 2005). In this case, it is difficult to act as role models for young students. Knowing this, it is no real surprise that business schools have been critiqued for "failing to impart useful skills, failing to prepare leaders, failing to instil norms of ethical behaviour- and even failing to lead graduates to good corporate jobs" (p.96) revealing a "dramatic shift in the culture of business schools" (p.96) where measuring performance focuses solely on scientific rigour rather than graduates' competences or academic staff's business-savvy (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005).

In the corporate world, managers and leaders face complex situations with multifaceted ethical questions that cannot be explained by pure scientific reasoning or validation. Most ethical dilemmas appear as 'questions of judgment'. An apparently straightforward financial decision may have "implications for marketing, sales, manufacturing, and morale that can't be shoehorned into an equation" (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005, p.99). Notwithstanding these concerns, there is hope business ethics education improves when those in power reflect on their obligations to students, business and society (Floyd et al. 2013). Graduate students, who reach the corporate world to fill key positions, have the responsibility to make moral decisions which influence the quality of millions of lives around the globe (Swanson 2004).

Whether business ethics education is effective or not has been an area of interest for many scholars in the last two decades. Conspicuously identified are inconsistencies in the research findings. Although the efficacy of ethics education per se in business schools is not the aim of our paper, there is a deep-rooted debate going on whither ethics education could lead. On one side, scholars agree that business ethics courses foster ethical behaviour and awareness as well as moral reasoning (Lau 2010, May et al. 2014). On the other side, notwithstanding business ethics courses, graduates continue to behave unethically (McCabe & Trevino 1995, Rutherford et al. 2012) with cheating rates remaining high in business schools (McCabe et al. 2006). Deceived by the lack of improvement in business graduates' ethical behaviour, managers continue to blame business schools for unethical behaviour (Ghoshal 2005, Gioia 2003, Gu & Neesham 2014, Sigurjonsson et al. 2015). To date, the "value-free ideology of many business schools undermines both the university's mission of enhancing the intellectual developments of its students and the health of the financial system" (Swanson 2004, p.55). Business schools should be committed to succouring their students in becoming socially responsible and ethically sensitive especially when ethics standards have not improved since the 2008 financial crisis (Sigurjonsson et al. 2014, Sigurjonsson et al. 2015). Notably, the problem is not that business schools have "embraced scientific rigor but they have forsaken other forms of knowledge (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005, p.104). They have forsaken the Universal One Truth and its professing/prophesising; they no longer take learning as a journey, but rather a stop before a (well) paid job (Gauchet et al. 2013).

Today, business ethics education is finding its abode in ethics courses which seem necessary when the original religious purpose of a university becomes a narrated history.

This leaves open two challenges that research and universities need addressing to solve this as yet unresolved contradiction. If tertiary institutions, especially business schools, claim belonging to a university, they may need to return to their religious roots and thereby instil some

sort of economic theology into their teaching without necessarily creating specific business ethics courses. This opens three areas for future research. Firstly, not just in business ethics, but also in philosophy and education, work could be undertaken on the possibility of a twenty-first-century theology that would integrate university faculties and therefore curricula. What we here call theology may not necessarily be religious; to be inclusive, such a theology could be a universal humanist theorising, perhaps grounded in something derived from human rights (Cragg 2000, Harcourt & Harcourt 2002, Mena et al. 2010). Secondly, some more research questioning business schools' essence will be needed: given their mission and *raison d'être* be a university faculty or separate institutions, as in the case of INSEAD or French Grandes Écoles (Stolowy 2005). Thirdly, as we highlight business ethics courses' weaknesses, further research would benefit from investigating what a positive ethics means and how it can be instilled into students.

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