

*Summary of the discussion after the
papers of M. Schooyans and P. Morandé*

After the two presentations of Professors Michel Schooyans and Pedro Morandé, speakers praised the quality of the two papers, which may be read as complementing each other, both pointing to the unfortunate surrender of modern philosophy to an adaptive and self-regulating rationality to the detriment of a teleological rationality. In relation to the resulting moral crisis of democracies, one speaker suggested that the founding reference to God ("la référence fondatrice à Dieu" in Professor Schooyans' paper) should be at the center of the Academy's work and should be promoted by the Academy.

The discussion then concentrated on the critical evaluation of "neo-liberalism", which was offered by Professor Schooyans. Most speakers argued against the idea that the modern ideology was a form of totalitarianism, to be placed on the same level as nazism and communism: the basic principles of liberalism are compatible with priority of the Law (état de droit), with freedom of individual judgement and with respect for the autonomy of human persons. In fact the recent evolution of many societies toward liberalism cannot be said to have been on the whole detrimental to human values. While partly agreeing, Professor Schooyans also insisted on the negative aspects of this evolution where reference to God disappears and agnosticism becomes the norm.

Some speakers argued that the notion of a consensus on matters concerning the organization of society should not be dismissed. Confidence can often be placed in human judgment and natural moral values, particularly on questions of solidarity.

Some also warned against the risk of relying on emotional arguments, in particular on economic matters. Realism is required in the search for truth and in the comparative evaluation of alternative systems.

Concerning the more sociological approach of Professor Morandé and the relation between equalities or inequalities and justice or injustice, the question was raised to know whether the measures with which harm to human dignity currently evaluated by scientists are rooted in experience. The subject would deserve further attention.