

MODELS OF ETHICAL ACTING

THE FAIR TRADE AGRICULTURE AS AN EXAMPLE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND RESPECT OF CULTURES, NATURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Stefano Ristori and Lodovico Galleni¹

*Dipartimento di Chimica e biotecnologie agrarie, Università di Pisa,
Via San Michele degli Scalzi 2, I 56124, Pisa, Italy*

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Abstract

Many general aspects of relationships between humankind and nature are worthy of discussion and investigation also on the side of theology. In different papers the perspective opened by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in respect to Roman Catholic Theology and Environmental ethics was discussed. Confronting with evolution of matter, of life and of humankind Teilhard developed the concept of *moving towards*: of matter *towards* complexity, of life *towards* consciousness and of humankind *towards* the Omega point, the moment of the second incoming of Christ. To reach this final task there is the necessity of preservation of this very Earth, where the *moving towards* takes place and also of building the Earth in *Christo Jesu*.

The terrestrial realities acquire a new value and also the necessity to develop an approach to nature, which is regarding the stability of Biosphere and also more correct relationships between different human populations and cultures. From these hints the idea developed in a different way to approach the agriculture of the so-called third world and the fair trade started its experience.

As a consequence of colonisation, the exploitation of the rural area of the third world was among the reasons of the diffusion of malnutrition, famine and poverty. The fair trade paying the prices of goods not at the traditional trade price, but giving a minimum to survive in an honest way to third world farmers, allows a more correct relationships, the development of a sustainable agriculture and better living condition. In this way the first world consumers make an active choice and they become not any more consumers but citizens and persons; on the other side the farmer has better standard of life and he can come out by his/her condition of starvation and build his/her future becoming a citizen and a person too.

Keywords: environmental ethics, principles, criteria, sustainability, Christian view

¹ Corresponding author: e-mail: lgalleni@agr.unipi.it

1. Introduction

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and environmental ethics

Problems related to environmental ethics are now among the main topics in the discussion between Science and Theology. In the Roman Catholic Theology a clear change of attitude is mainly due to the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. His theological task was devoted to find new ways to reconcile the Church with the modern world. Teilhard de Chardin was not only a priest and a Jesuit, but also a scientist engaged in the first half of the XXth century in the field of palaeontology, geology and palaeo-anthropology. We have widely investigated these aspects of Teilhard de Chardin works and his proposal [1, 2].

Here we wish to remember that his contribution saw the evolution as a general *moving towards*, of matter towards complexity and life, of life towards cerebralization and the rising of consciousness. Teilhard de Chardin proposed the law of complexity and consciousness to represent this movement. The result was a different model in respect to the casual model of the radical Darwinists. Teilhard's evolution was mainly based on parallelisms and canalisations, the experimental evidences of evolution *moving towards* complexity and consciousness [3].

He also looked for new theoretical tools that represent a passage from a reductionistic method to the method of complexity applied to biology. He was one of the first scientists who defined biology as the science of complexity and he proposed a science of the Biosphere, Geobiology, to study evolution at a large-scale level. So far, two of the novelties brought by the biology of the XXth century, i.e. complexity and the science of the Biosphere, have Teilhard de Chardin as one of the founders [4].

Here we wish to underline that these topics were investigated quite in the same periods, by scientists, philosophers and theologians of East Europe and of the Orthodox philosophical and theological tradition. The Russian geneticists Vavilov developed a theory of parallelisms in biology, Vladimir Vernadskij a theory of the Biosphere and, together with Teilhard de Chardin and E. Le Roy, at Paris in 1920's, proposed the term Noosphere as the envelop of the thinking creatures. The theologian Pavel Florenskij developed the next step, the idea of the Pneumatosphere and finally the Russian geneticist, T. Dobzhansky agreed with Teilhard de Chardin that evolution was a *moving towards* and his hope was that it was a *moving towards* the city of God. As we can see many connections are present between the West and East European tradition and Teilhard de Chardin could be a good bridge for a synthesis [5].

Now, we wish to explore another point of view. Developing the idea of the *moving towards*, Teilhard de Chardin looked to the future of humankind on this very Earth. Here is the main link between evolutionary vision of the world and Christian theology: the *moving towards* of evolution is linked to the *moving towards* of the people of God towards alliance, redemption and salvation. But there is a future step: humankind evolution is going also on this very Earth and

Teilhard believes that it is possible to extrapolate evolution towards the future in an eschatological perspective which is related to the prosecution of humankind convergence towards the Omega point, the moment of the second coming of Christ [6].

It is a new perspective, which is able to connect the novelty of evolution together with the prosecution of humankind life on Earth. It is a new eschatological perspective related not only to the salvation of the individual in Paradise, but of all Humankind on this very Earth. To follow this task Teilhard proposal is to build the Earth *in Christo Jesu* [7]. And in this perspective, the Biosphere also presents a new interest for the theologians because it is the milieu necessary to complete the *moving towards* [8].

Teilhard de Chardin is one of the theologians of the Roman Catholic tradition who proposed the idea of the importance of the so-called terrestrial realities. From his papers together with those of many other theologians investigating the terrestrial realities, came out the theology which was at the basis of the Second Vatican Council constitution, dealing with the relationships between the Church and the modern world: *Gaudium et Spes*.

In this perspective every attempt to preserve the environment acquires theological value because it is the tool to go on with the *moving towards* the Omega point. Moreover the Earth must be constructed in the respect of the other cultures and eliminating the social injustices. In this way again, the theology that prepared the Vatican council was also at the very basis of the two encyclical letters which renewed the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards social justice: *Pacem in Terris* of Joan XXIII and *Populorum progressio* of Paul VI. From these magisterial documents sprung the experience of the so-called liberation theology and Teilhard de Chardin was one of its mentors [8]. In spite of some problems related to the use of sociological and political tools to have an analysis of exploitation [9], the liberation theology is a novelty of great impact: it is a theology made by theologians of the third world who lived the exploitation experience of their people and inserted this experience inside the Christian message. Then this theology asked for an Earth characterised by more correct and fair relationships between the different components of humankind. Some of the aspects of liberation theology could be revised but anyway it remains the most interesting contribution of Roman Catholic theology of the XXth century [10-12].

Side by side with the theological investigation were developed investigations about the quality of life of poor and exploited people, and also a relationship between the exploitation of people and of environment and Earth. Moreover proposal of ethical acting were developed, among them those related to fair trade. Of course fair trade is a multi religious and cultural project, but some of his roots are related to the evolution of the social and political attitude of the European Roman Catholic milieu towards new and honest relationships with the third world [13], and these attitudes found in liberation theology and in priests, religious and lay people the local partners [14].

One of the consequence was a precise model of social and ethical acting: the fair trade projects which is here presented as a tool not only to introduce equity in humankind relationships, but also to save Biodiversity and Biosphere stability. In respect to the problem related to a diffusion of biotechnologies [15], the fair trade looks as the best answer to the necessities of the poors of the worlds and to the defence of the Biosphere. In this way, it looks as a tool to be investigated on the side of Christian Theology and environmental ethics.

2. A brief foreword: the origins of fair trade

It is a fact that the colonial experience had a great importance in generating that general disequilibrium in economic relationship (and not only) visible between the two sides: The North (the rich 'First World') and The South (the poor part of the world, too often considered as 'The Rest' in opposition to 'The West', according to an occidental vision [16]). Of course, this is not the only reason for explaining the today's situation, but surely an essential one. During the last century, in spite of the progressive "de-colonization" brought by the colonial powers, there were little effective real changes in conditions applied to the ex-colonised countries not corresponding to the hopes of de-colonization and its policies [17-19]: in most of the cases it was maintained (inevitably, or voluntarily) the same influence and power typical to the colonial situation [17-20].

Thus, we have to remark the situation of the conditions for the labourers in the South of the World: lack of contractual power, bad working conditions and living environment, children's exploitation and a general sense of uncertainty about existence are just some examples too often verified by the facts and strictly linked to colonial policies (just as examples, we remand to [21-23]).

In particular, during the first decade after the Second World War, the European and North American Countries saw an economic resumption with a general improvement of life conditions, followed by a progressively discovery of the different conditions (with their problems and pains), of those countries considered before extremely far from occidental societies.

Moreover, as we have seen in the introduction, the Roman Catholic Church, but also in the other Christian denominations, came out the consideration that to help poor people was not only a problem of giving an help to survive one day, but mainly a change in relationships in order to have the problem solved for the future. Side by side with the virtue of Charity there was also the virtue of Justice. It is according to this comprehension that the idea of fair trade built up.

In fact, the original fundamental input that originated fair trade was the will of overcoming and solving the disequilibrium and injustices that divided (and divide) The North and The South of the World. It was so for the Ten Thousand Villages (the first groups of people in the USA that started a direct

commercial relationship with poor communities in the South of the World, during the Forties [21]), like for all the following rising experiences of fair trade. Briefly, till the Eighties we can recognize the proposal and the realization of various development policies (with contrasting results [17, 18]), accompanied by the action of the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), who came with the proposal of realising development cooperation's policies.

Among those (or in parallel with) we can see the birth of the first organisations of fair trade, that wanted to overcome the idea of 'aid' from the rich towards the poor with the idea of equity, actualised directly *by means of* the commercial relationship, and not *beyond* that (concept well expressed during the UNCTAD Conference – Geneva, 1964 – by the same governments of the Developing Countries with the slogan 'Trade Not Aid' [21]).

We could remember here the first ones: the Dutch Stichting S.O.S. Wereldhandel (born in 1959 and become Fair Trade Organisatie in 1967), Oxfam UK (an English NGO who created the first Alternative Trade Organisation, ATO, in 1964) and nearer to our days (1988) the first Organisation of Guarantee Certification, the Dutch Max Havelaar [13, 14].

A brief report about the main organisations subsequently built up all over Europe should mention: IFTAT (International Federation for Alternative Trade, 1989), EFTA (European Fair Trade Association, 1990) [14], Transfair International (1992) and FLO (Fair trade Labelling Organisation International, 1997) [21, 24, 25].

Just for a better comprehension of the fair trade itself, we are going to present its principles, criteria, and actors.

3. Principles

Once seen the genesis of the idea of fair trade, we could sum up the main principles below [21, 24-28]:

- *Equity and social justice*

Each component in the commercial relationship has the same rights and dignity as any other; the equal contractual capacity is recognized, so that the final price needs to be 'equitable', 'fair', determined by the interaction between producers and importers, really looking at the needs of both the parties.

- *Solidarity and development*

Self development is a basic characteristic of the fair trade: the 'fair price', building up commercial partnership based on continuity along the medium or the long term, giving technical assistance in order to facilitate the access to international market, and promoting the diversification of production and of the local market are some instruments to realize the purpose.

- *Environmental sustainability*

Respecting the rights of the producers necessarily implies respecting the land, the environment where they live. Thus, environmental and resources' protection is considered an integrant and fundamental part for what concerns the organisational systems in fair trade, giving a preference to productive and

distributive processes that have a minor impact on environment. As a consequence these productive procedures preserve or reintroduce biodiversity. Moreover they are often based at least partially on the traditional agriculture and plants and this aspect maintain the cultural diversity.

4. Criteria

This section is developed starting partly from a comparison of the various standard at a national (for Italy) and international level from [21, 24-27].

The wide development of the fair trade practise has been accompanied by the need of defining the criteria required for really talking about 'fair' trade. Even if there are no countries with a reported regulation of these criteria, there are many private initiatives on this way (the Italian Chart of Fair Trade Criteria is a good example in this sense [29]). We must consider here:

- *Equity in commercial relationship (fair trade)*

Dialogue, transparency, respect for the human rights, aiming at wages able to satisfy basic needs (including health, education, etc.) are the basis for the relationships inside the fair trade circuit. Very often a pre-financing, up to 50% of the bought products, is provided.

- *Price*

Market's rules affirm that price represents the meeting between supply and demand, but the practice it seems to be really far from an equilibrium able to supply to everyone, at the present time, a dignified life [21].

Fair trade means including raw materials' cost, local work cost and basic needs satisfying cost as the categories required to reach a fair price. On this way fair trade organisations pay a surplus (corresponding, some way, to the satisfaction of producers basic needs) in respect to the price determined only by international stock exchange with its fluctuations. In addition, it is proposed for consumers a 'transparent price', standing to which consumers are able to know exactly the part of the final price due to producers or fair trade organisations or World's Shops, etc. In many countries the circuit of fair trade also comprehends the final distributors, often represented by shops where are present only fair trade products, usually maintained by active volunteers' (e.g. World Shops [28]).

- *Work*

Reaching working conditions respectful to the producers' rights is an indispensable fair trade condition, even considering that this is one of its initial ideas. This is guaranteed by the adhesion to the ILO regulation.

- *Pre-financing*

Fair price is a stability factor for producers, especially for the producers of agricultural goods that particularly suffer from the fluctuations of the international market and its prices. In addition to this, we must consider that very often there are intermediaries between agriculture producers and importers and which have a considerable weight on the final price, apart from behaving too often as usurers in a powerful position (*coyotes*, standing to the definition given

by South American farmers [14]). Fair trade circuit tends to eliminate this component in the name of transparency and equity in the relationship [29].

Even more important is to build commercial relationships able to guarantee the respect of the payments for the producers. Small groups of producers have no access to credit but, unlucky, to various forms of usury or loans with too high rates, so that pre-financing is a way to avoid usurers (we mentioned before that some times the 50% of the final total price is paid at the beginning of the fair trade project or at the beginning of the year). This also gives to the small groups of producers the ability of planning (like buying raw materials, seeds, machineries, or anything else in order to improve their working efficiency and quality of life).

- *Direct and continuative commercial relationships*

In particular, it is referred as a ‘commercial partnership’ in which each component has the same decisional ability. This is another source of stability for the producers with its contribution to the possibility of planning. In addition to this, it is the realization of economic relationships based on reciprocal confidence, on the value itself of the relationship between the components. Obviously, this is a dynamic process and not always with immediate results [29].

- *Social justice*

Safe working environment, at least according to the local statute, protection of children from exploitation in the working processes, offering the same opportunity for working without sexual, racial, cultural discrimination are pursued.

- *Democracy*

The open and full participation to the decisional processes of all the different components is favoured by moments dedicated to the cultural exchange and by the adoption of organizing structures that best fit to that purpose (each case has its peculiarities, of course, so that the local producers are the ones who may choose the best form).

- *Environmental sustainability*

Those production techniques that have less impact on environment are privileged (e.g.: it is often favoured and encouraged the conversion to Biological Agriculture). Rare raw materials exportation is forbidden, as of their derivatives.

- *Cultural identity*

Producers’ cultural identity is supported with its artistic, technical and organizing knowledge. Typical and traditional productions are enhanced in value due to the being expression of local culture and intercultural vehicle.

- *Participation and information*

We said before that a special attention is put on participation to decisional processes for all the components, promoting the creation of associations or other in the producers’ community. In addition to this, the most transparent possible structures are searched at all the levels of the productive process, in order to support a cooperation among ‘reciprocally recognized subjects’ and to “guarantee a multidirectional flux of information suitable for recognizing the

working modalities, the political and commercial strategies and the socio-economical context of each organisation” [29]. In this direction are also included the information campaigns promoted by fair trade organisations for citizens and institutions, or the importance of the practise of the ‘transparent price’ for fair trade goods.

To sum up, we propose just two definitions of the fair trade:

1. Fair trade is a commercial partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that aims to more equity in international commerce. It contributes to sustainable development offering better commercial conditions to disadvantaged producers and workers, particularly in the South, and guaranteeing their rights. (Definition given by FINE in December 2001; reported in [21].)
2. Fair trade (in the original Italian text - *Commercio Equo e Solidale* - literally translated is Solider and Equitable Trade) is an alternative approach to conventional commerce; it promotes social and economical justice, sustainable development, respect for people and nature, by means of trade, the growth of consumers’ consciousness, education, information and political action.

Fair trade is a joint relationship among all the subjects involved in the commercial chain: producers, workers, world’s shops, importers and consumers [29].

5. Conclusive considerations: from the point of view of sustainability

Talking about sustainable development and sustainability we enter in a difficult field, due to its complexity and interdisciplinary character. We need to consider the limitation of our planet’s resources and its fragile equilibrium strictly linked to the perspective of building the Earth in respect of Biosphere’s stability, humankind cultural diversity and human rights.

One has to say that we need to reconsider what development means, and towards what we must think in term of development; secondarily we will be able of thinking in term of sustainability, after having rethought the necessary parameters in that sense [28].

Just a change of paradigm is hoped and invoked by many authors as the necessary premise to the needed change in the direction for our ‘development’ [28]. A particular and relevant importance is assumed by the principle of reciprocity, necessary to the realization of the man itself ([21, 28, 30-33]) and to the basic premises to any development hoped to be sustainable [34], because it would permit the realization of the intergenerational and intragenerational equity [32, 34, 35]. These two dimensions of equity are strongly coming up as referring points for the sustainable development, both starting from the work on sustainability by Bruntland’s Committee (with the famous definition of sustainable development published in its Report from 1987) [36, 37].

For what concerns fair trade we can recognize in that particular practise some peculiarities essential for moving in the direction of sustainability. In fact, it is one of its moving principle and of its criteria the need of respecting producers' rights (as it is for the rights of all the components), as a consequence of setting back *person* in the core of economical relationship and making to come true the principle of equity in fair trade practise [28]. It is to say that the 'beneficiaries' are not merely assisted, but essential actors on the same level.

In this context, we showed before the importance of the producers traditions or of their different cultural identity, with a deep dialogue promoted by means of the various forms of participation at different decisional levels, but also by means of the testimonies directly reported by producers from the other side of the World during the meetings here in the North, organised by ATOs, either by fair trade importers or by World's Shops. Those moments concretely build and strengthen relationships among the components of fair trade circuit but are also an essential form of direct information about the situations in the South and, more over about their cultures.

All this is actively promoted by the World's Shops attitude in supplying adequate information by campaigns, but especially by the simple and daily contact with the consumers. In fact, in a World's Shop there are 'transparent prices' and brochures, etc., but above all is the consciousness that each product is a project, is a relationship in act with people from the other side of the World. This is certainly an active form of building a new vision, a new culture made for people.

Another particular aspect is represented by the environmental approach and impact. We introduced before the idea of environmental sustainability as a criterion of fair trade; in the fact, this means that is promoted the transition to Biological Agriculture practices and the obtaining of the relative certification. The products obtained with certification have a special price-bonus and where needed, the fair trade importers or organisations supply technical assistance. This is accompanied by the direct formation of the producers themselves, so that they could become completely independent even about this [24].

The best example in this sense is represented, in Latin America, by cooperative UCIRI (Unión de las Comunitades Indigenas de la Región del Istmo) constituted in 1983 by 500 families; number grown up to 1500 in 1985. In 1998, among the 2395 members of the cooperative 2160 of them obtained the certification of Biological Agriculture, so that UCIRI was the most extended area all over the World, documented to be cultivated according to the criteria of Bio-Agriculture. The entire cycle guarantees the compatibility of the production system, in force of the ecological agricultural system highly diversified and eco compatible. UCIRI produces and exports biological coffee certificated according to the directive UE 2092/91.

Biodiversity is seen as a fundamental value and specific projects of protections are realized; local varieties are preferred, standing to local traditions of the producers [38].

But there is another particular aspect about the impact of fair trade production on environment: it is frequent that producers use to practise biological agriculture's methods even if they don't succeed in obtaining the related certification [28]. This is because very often according to producers' cultures and traditions, nature has a fundamental role: Mother-Nature is a frequent concept, but however we often find a vision of nature different from the occidental one (with a consequent different approach). Many times there are too many difficulties in obtaining the certification: too elevated costs, difficulties due to the different systems for certification in the different countries (with the frequent consequence of needing to obtain the certification both in the origin country and in the country of importation, with doubling the costs), difficulties due to the absence of preparation in order to control the bureaucratic aspects of certification, etc.

In spite of all this, for many small groups of producers it is more important not to damage nature than an eventual economical advantage derived from the obtained certification. An example in this sense is represented by Tatawelo (Chiapas, Mexico), where producers don't want to hurt the earth any way, for any reason, using traditional, low-impacting cultivation methods without worrying about any form of certification [28].

6. World citizenship: the importance of choosing

World citizenship and its realization are a target and a journey at the same time. Humankind needs a deep and continuous active research about his/her condition, about the relationship with the Biosphere (whose constitutive component is) and its purpose. From the other side, it is necessary the continuous translation of the considerations and conclusions reached along the way into action.

The complete realization of each person must happen, being citizens of the World at all the effects, nevermore instrumentalised by a global market that is progressively less responding to that idea of a communicating community (yet anticipated as a *global village* by Marshall Mc Luhan [39]). The idea of citizenship of the World comprehends in itself both the idea of interdependence (among the habitants of the *global polis* and with the Biosphere as the complex) and the need of carrying into effect the responsibility principle [40], realizing the principle of equity (under penalty of failing the project of a city with habitants equal in dignity [28]).

An essential role in this sort of evolution towards citizens is depicted to consumers (especially for the ones of the rich occidental world), considered not yet as isolated elements inside the market-system, but as people looking for the construction of relationships, acting with care for the others, with their needs, with their rights, putting themselves inside the system with a different point of view: edifying the *global polis*.

In the thirties of the XXth century, the French philosopher Emmanuel Mounier posed the problem of a personalistic interpretation of the property,

proposing the passage from the capitalistic property to a personalistic property [41]. In the same period Jacques Maritain created the philosophical basis for a democratic society linked to the Christian personalism [42]. Developments of his proposal took place both in Italy and in Latin America [43, 44]. Teilhard de Chardin gave to this personalistic view the global approach of evolution underlining the necessity of the perspective of the future of humankind not only in Heavens, but also on this very Earth. The task was to give to the Noosphere (a term proposed, among others, by Teilhard de Chardin with the intent to unify all the thinking creatures) a future task to a political acting. An important development of Teilhard de Chardin ideas, on the side of politics is that proposed by the African poet and statesman Leopold Sedar Senghor. In his research to present to African people a new politics based on their own values and cultures he underlined the necessity of a politics based on religious values because it was impossible for African people to do anything without robust religious feelings. During his researches he has found Teilhard de Chardin and he proposed a way to build the Noosphere with a progressive coalescence of local structures, from the community to the village, from the villages to the country and the nations. The result was a panhuman convergence obtained thanks to the dialogue among cultures [45, 46]. The fair trade is an attempt to give an operative answer to their proposals.

From the sixties we had a wide diffusion of the consumers will looking for goods more respectful for the moral values rather than for the economic ones. It occurred a cultural change: the number of consumers looking for the transparency of the products (with their quality, their story, that is to say the story of the producers with their working conditions, the consequences on the environment of the producing process) has remarkably increased. In addition to this, the associating tendency of the consumers has been accompanied by the birth of agencies or centres specialised in a constant and careful monitoring of companies' behaviour. For instance in 1969, was constituted the first consumers' association, the Council on Economic Priorities (CEP) [19]. On the other hand, the increasing number of more and more detailed publications about companies behaviour is representative for the importance of information for consumers and the coming out of a different consume culture, also reported as a *critic* or a *conscious* consume [23, 28]. Besides, it is a fact that consumers are under analysis (and influence) by the marketing agents of the companies that spend large amounts of money for marketing campaigns for products and for 'image' [19, 22, 23, 28].

Therefore, the consumers, before feeling themselves powerless in front of such industrial colossuses and an apparently irresistible market system, now discover their extraordinary power because the systems is depending on their decisions.

With these perspectives and acting inside the values of the fair trade, a consumer, with his/her buying decisions and with his/her behaviours, wants to give a contribution to the achievement of the supply of those products or services that he requires in the market. He is no more satisfied by the celebrated

ratio quality/price; he wants to know the way that product has been made and if during its production the company has violated, completely or partially, the fundamental rights of the person who works [47].

So, even if facing a binding journey, consumers in the North (i.e., occidental consumers) have a special role: from one side breaking with consumerism and its 'culture' represents an inevitable necessity in order to get individual freedom and realization, but on the other side it is required a direct interactions with international companies (with which it's needed to cooperate towards global citizenship, of course). In particular, consumers can make pressure on companies pushing for a change in their behaviour so that producers' rights and environmental preservation are guaranteed. Thus, if it is a fact that an isolated consumer has no power in himself for the companies' policies, a group of consumers cooperating in their choices and informing companies about their decisions have an unimaginable power: from one side we can express an active preference by choosing those products with the best characteristics we want (not only quality/price, as we told, but also products that are produced with the respect of producers' rights or with a particularly low impact on environment), or we can avoid the ones not fitting those characteristics. In this sense, there is another, ultimate practice able to demonstrate consumers' power and companies' fear about it: boycotting.

This way we can deeply reconsider our everyday choices' role, thinking about our responsibility towards environment and towards those people apparently invisible on the other side of the world (i.e., South producers), moving to realize the principle of intergenerational equity, at least in an aspect from its multiple ones.

7. Conclusions

The fair trade is a proposal to solve the problem of the exploitation of the third world and of the incorrect relationships between the North and the South of the World.

We have traced some of its theoretical basis in some writings of Teilhard de Chardin and his idea of building the Earth *in Christo Jesu*.

As a matter of fact the proposal of fair trade is useful (in our opinion) in order to develop better relationships between producers and consumers and to solve some of the problems posed by the liberistic and capitalistic problem of the market, in the respect of human person and avoiding the risk of a collectivism which destroyed the human person without constructing anything. Moreover it allows moving towards an agricultural technique mostly based on sustainability and on the respect of local cultures.

So far, in our opinion, the fair trade is a good example of theoretical analysis able to propose true suggestions for real acting.

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